

BOROUGH OF AKRON COUNCIL MEETING – February 22, 2021

Council Members present – Nathan Imhoff, President; Justin Gehman, Vice-President; Paul Swangren, Jr., and Randall Justice. (Thomas J. Murray, Sr. and Kleon Zimmerman not present)

Others present – Mayor John McBeth; Susan Davidson, Borough Manager/Secretary, and Sean Molchany, Assistant Borough Manager.

Meeting opened at 6:34 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Randall Justice made a motion to approve the February 8, 2021 Borough of Akron Council Meeting minutes. Paul Swangren, Jr. seconded the motion.

Paul Swangren, Jr. noted that he was not present at the February 8, 2021 Council meeting.

Visitors – Eric Higgins, West Earl Township Police Chief, and Larry Alexander, Ephrata Review.

Police Report

Chief Higgins had nothing to report, except that they posted information on their Crimewatch page regarding two vandalized vehicles on Main Street, but have not received any information on the incidents.

Chief Higgins presented the Council with dates and times for the police liaison meetings for 2021. Their first liaison meeting will be held at the Akron Borough building next Monday, March 1, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Paul Swangren, Jr. made a motion to pay March 2021 Police Contract Services to West Earl Township in the amount of \$58,728.63. Randall Justice seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Borough Manager

The Borough Manager reported that the past two weeks with Sean Molchany on board, things have been moving very well. They have met with Parks, Personnel, Public Utilities, and still need to meet with Streets. They have also met with Handi-Vangelism, with the Akron Mennonite Church, as well as with Hanover Engineering to discuss their plans.

The Borough Manager also shared some projects that she is working on with Mr. Molchany, such as putting storm boxes on Front Street. They also discussed making a motion to approve a construction company to do work for the Borough.

They also met with Randall Justice, Parks/Property Committee, to discuss projects for 2021. One of the projects that was discussed is the Rail Trail Embankment project. The Council will need to make a motion to advertise the bid.

They also discussed the Firehall Driveway project, which is the paving of the driveway and some of the parking lot area.

They also discussed the Colonial Park Pavilion project. They will request a quote to be done to see how much the materials will cost.

Parks/Property

Randall Justice made a motion that the Council would advertise the bid for the Phase II Rail Trail Embankment Project. Paul Swangren, Jr. seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Paul Swangren, Jr. made a motion to advertise for bid for the Firehall Driveway project. Justin Gehman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Randall Justice reported that he met with Abigail Balmer, Ephrata Public Library Assistant Director, to talk about their desire to put a progressive Storybook feature in Roland park. They originally came with three design ideas about what the signs could look like. There is a company that makes professional signs on an installed podium. For 20 of those posts the cost would be around \$6,000. The library is looking to carry that cost.

The library is asking that Akron Borough would approve the project, so that this occurs. They are also asking that Public Works would do the installation because the company that sells the signs does not do the installation. And they are also asking that the Borough would specify a location where they want the signs to be installed. Ms. Balmer was proposing that it would be near one of their playgrounds.

Personnel

Paul Swangren, Jr. Reported that Personnel Committee met this evening. They had no action items, but they had a few discussion items. Paul Swangren, Jr. made the Council aware that when they began their Assistant Borough Manager position, their Solicitor encouraged them to change the Akron Borough Code/Ordinance to allow for this position. Now that they have hired an Assistant Borough Manager, they have done some investigation, and they believe that their Akron Borough Code/Ordinance is well suited for the position and the position is not in violation. The Akron Code does allow, in the absence of the Borough Manager, to put somebody in that position for a short time. At this time, they are not looking at any action on that.

The Personnel Committee also discussed the performance evaluations, and there was no action on that. They also discussed future performance evaluations for Borough employees. They are looking at doing some new evaluation forms. In October, during budget season, they will get those performance evaluations done.

The Committee discussed some goals and objectives for 2021. Their intention is to bring up a motion next month to make the Assistant Borough Manager the Zoning Officer.

They also discussed the Crossing Guards. Personnel Committee was in charge of that in 2020

after the Police Services contract was awarded. They are looking at investigating that and making it a better program.

And they also talked about the IBEW contract.

Public Utilities

The Borough Manager reported that she met with Kleon Zimmerman two weeks ago to discuss and to set up a plan to work on a couple projects, which was reported at the last meeting.

Paul Swangren, Jr. would like to find out what happened after the Susquehanna River Basin Commission violation. They sent a response back to Susquehanna River Basin Commission with an explanation of a leak detention and a violation where someone is stealing water. Mr. Swangren asked if anything was done about that. The Borough Manager stated that the person was cited. Mr. Swangren wants to make sure that they are following the water ordinance.

Nathan Imhoff asked whether 708 New Street is still having issues with dirty water. The Borough Manager stated that they have been flushing the line. Next, they will have to do the loop, and then get the easement from the School District. The Assistant Borough Manager will be meeting with the School District on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 to discuss that.

Streets

Justin Gehman would like to meet with the Borough Manager and the Assistant Borough Manager to discuss a project for 2022.

Mr. Gehman brought up some parking issues with the snow along Main Street. His biggest complaint is the section between 11 and 12 hundred blocks of Main Street. The residents are not digging their parking spaces up, and then they are parking four feet away from the curb, which creates a safety issue. Mr. Gehman is proposing they make a portion of Main Street, if not all Main Street, Snow Emergency. He stated that the Westbound lane of Main Street is wider than the Eastbound, so he believes that the Westbound lane would be a safer alternative for parking. The Assistant Borough Manager offered to discuss this issue with Public Works to investigate it, and then come back with a recommendation.

New Business/Old Business

Handi-Vangelism – 60-daytime extension

The Borough Manager stated there is a 60-day time extension letter form the Handi-Vangelism in the packet tonight.

A Handi-Vangelism representative was present at the meeting two weeks ago to grant the Borough a 60-day extension until April 12, 2021 for the Borough to act on their plans; however, they still have not submitted their plans as of yet.

Justin Gehman made a motion to approve the time extension for Handi-Vangelism to April 12, 2021. Paul Swangren, Jr. seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Akron Mennonite Church Stormwater Plan – 90-day time extension

Randall Justice abstained from the discussion.

The Borough Manager stated that this is a time extension until May 10, 2021.

Paul Swangren, Jr. made a motion to grant the Akron Mennonite Church the 90-day time extension. Justin Gehman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2021 Real Estate Tax Bills

The Borough Manager will be picking up the 2021 real estate tax bills at the County Tax Office tomorrow, Tuesday, February 23, 2021.

The Borough Manager included in the packet some information on petitions, as well as information on the Tax Collector. Going forward, all Tax Collectors will have to be certified before they can take their oath.

Paul Swangren, Jr. is pleased to see that the sewer flows are steadily going down, and to know that the Borough is out of penalty.

Randall Justice conveyed to Council that the Comprehensive Implementation Committee brought to Council the idea that they were exploring a Town Center Concept. They are still working with Ten Thousand Villages on that; however, the Borough is not ready to do anything yet. It appears that the next step in the process would be an Economic Feasibility Study. The cost of that study is around \$17,000. They are working on getting a more specific work proposal to bring to Council to explain why they need it. They are going to ask if Council will support that action by funding it.

Paul Swangren, Jr. made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Randall Justice seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lydia Kovalchuk
Minute Taker

LK