

March 12, 2020

The regular meeting of the Ligonier Borough Council was held Thursday, February 12, 2020 at 7:00PM in the Town Hall with James St. Clair presiding.

Members Present: James St. Clair, Matt Smith, Robert Barron, Mariah Fisher, Judy Hoffer, Jeff Craig, Nate Sylvester, Izabella Wentzell – Jr. Council Member.

Others Present: Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw, Street Supervisor Ron Ross, Mayor Ormond “Butch” Bellas, Engineer Greg Elliott, Solicitor George Welty, Police Chief John Berger, and Zoning Officer Rick Schwab. Absent was Fire Chief Corey Blystone and Code Enforcement Officer Shawn Knepper.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Mariah Fisher to approve the minutes of February 13, 2020. All of Council was in favor.

BILLS PAYABLE

A motion was made by Judy Hoffer and seconded by Robert Barron to approve the Bills Payable as presented. The motion carried with all in favor.

CONSENT CALENDAR

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Matt Smith to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Mariah Fisher to enter into a brief executive session @ 7:02 PM for personnel matters. All of Council was in favor.

Council returned from executive session at 7:18 PM.

Personnel Chairman Matt Smith announced that the Personnel Committee has met over the past couple of weeks to discuss the candidates for mechanic position for Public Works. The committee has decided on Gary Roberts of Ligonier who has great experience in a lot of the work public works deals with.

A motion was made by Matt Smith and seconded by Judy Hoffer to hire Gary Roberts effective immediately, as soon as he is able to begin and contingent on drug testing. The motion carried unanimously.

President James St. Clair announced that Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Public Works Director Paul Fry has officially retired from the Borough.

Rotary – Tennis Courts

Mike Vernon, past president of LV Rotary was present to give a brief history of Friendship Park / Tennis Courts in the Borough and the Rotary’s involvement over the years.

Vernon stressed through the process that if Council decides to move on with or without the Rotary, that everyone should work together as a team for what is best for the community.

Eric Elek of Elek Wealth Management in Ligonier Borough reported that the Ligonier Valley School District is receptive to establishing a tennis program for grades 6-12 and the Ligonier Valley YMCA is also interested in providing youth and adult classes and private lessons. To do this Elek noted that at least 3 tennis courts would be needed for this. Elek feels that tennis tournaments would draw visitors to Ligonier. Elek asks Council to have further discussions regarding this.

Council woman Mariah Fisher appreciated all comments and proposed a public forum Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at 7PM in the basement of the Town Hall for anyone who wants to come and speak whether they want tennis courts or a skate park.

A motion was made by Mariah Fisher and seconded by Nate Sylvester to hold a public forum Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at 7PM in the Town Hall Community Room. All of Council was in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE

Email received from Gene Stouffer of Ligonier Hose Co. #1 requesting to close off one block area in front of the Fire Department to put trucks on the street for their Meat Bash March 21, 2020 from 1-11PM.

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Robert Barron to approve. The motion carried unanimously.

Letter received from Debbie Campayno of North Fairfield Street regarding a groundhog problem in the 300 block specifically at 312 and 316 and that nothing has been done to resolve the matter despite numerous calls.

Jeff Craig will contact Code Enforcement Officer Shawn Knepper.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PARKS & RECREATION

Mariah Fisher, Chair of Parks & Recreation Committee reported that she is excited to have the public meeting here on April 1, 2020.

Final Payment Application has been received for Darr Construction for the Diamond Park Renaissance Project in the amount of \$14,500.

A motion was made by Mariah Fisher and seconded by Matt Smith to pay Darr Construction \$14,500 contingent on receiving all manuals and paperwork regarding maintenance of the Diamond. The motion carried with all of Council in favor.

Mariah Fisher read a statement regarding Coronavirus:

Our primary responsibility as a council is to make informed decisions and take actions that are in the best interests of our citizens, and we will fail in that responsibility if we avoid major issues, be dismissive of things that could happen to us or worse, neglect to address something that could affect every Ligonier Valley citizen.

The rapid spread of the coronavirus and the predictions and warnings from the CDC, World Health Organization and our government, make it clear that this pandemic should be taken very seriously. It is affecting people's health, travel, and daily routines. Events are being cancelled or postponed and people are advised to adhere to social distancing as a means to prevent further spread. There is now a high likelihood that the virus will directly affect the citizens of Ligonier Valley -- it may affect our health and/or our businesses.

To ensure our readiness likelihood Mrs. Fisher proposes that Ligonier Borough form a multi-agency committee comprised of representatives from the Borough, the Township, the School District, and the Chamber of Commerce as well as our Emergency Response coordinators to develop a response and communication plan in the event of a local outbreak. The Borough needs to be proactive and create a committee to address these potential issues.

President James St. Clair appointed Mariah Fisher to put a committee together.

Ligonier Borough Emergency Management Coordinator Gene Stouffer reported that Westmoreland County Public Safety has not yet received anything through the County Commissioners. Their take as of right now is "Business as Usual" as by the Governor's directive to try and avoid large crowds of 250 people or more. Wash your hands and take precautions.

Chief John Berger reported that 911 sent out an email at 11:00 am today stating that if you are not an employee you are not getting in.

TOWN HALL

Town Hall Chair Judy Hoffer reported that the soffit/fascia on the courtyard side of Town Hall needs addressed. Someone will be brought in to look at it.

PUBLIC WORKS

Chairman Robert Barron reported that the ad for tar and chip is out.

Brush pick up will start back up on Mondays.

Barron suggested to place the old high lift for sale on Municipal Bid and would like to start out at \$5,000.

A motion was made by Robert Barron and seconded by Matt Smith to place the old high lift on Municipal Bid asking \$5,000. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Nothing

FINANCE

Nate Sylvester, Chairman of Finance Committee reported that the markets are suffering significantly with the Coronavirus pandemic. GUYASUTA is watching Town Hall Fund.

PLANNING / PERSONNEL

Chairman Matt Smith thanked all for the new hire for Public Works.

Planning Commission had a meeting last month and heard concern regarding Air BnBs short term rentals. Planning Commission at this point does not feel the need to address this unless Council decides otherwise.

JR. COUNCIL

Jr. Council Izabella Wentzell reported receiving approval last month from the school board to conduct 2 surveys. Results have been received.

The first survey: Potential Skate Park had 570 responses showing the youth are more in favor of a Skate Park than tennis.

The second survey: Perspective on Ligonier pertaining to what we want to see move forward in Ligonier.

Izabella urged all to read.

NEW BUSINESS

Memorandum of Understanding Approving the Transfer of Street Sweeper:

A motion was made by Robert Barron and seconded by Mariah Fisher to accept the Memorandum of Understanding from Ligonier Township and transfer of ownership of the Street Sweeper which is then to be operated by a Borough employee when used in the Township. The motion carried with all in favor.

LV Joint Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee member - William Wolford:

A motion was made by Mariah Fisher and seconded by Jeff Craig to appoint William Wolford as 3rd member of the LV Joint Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. All were in favor.

Special Counsel:

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Mariah Fisher to hire Mark Hamilton of Tremba and Kinney with a capped spending of \$2,500.00 as special counsel to review certain Borough ordinances. The motion carried with all in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Plummer of 321 E Main Street thanked all the youth for being present at the meeting. Plummer urged all to continue researching the matter for what is best for the Borough.

Maureen Ittig of 223 Washington Street stated that she is in support of the possibility of a skate park in the Borough.

COMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS from OFFICERS & DEPARTMENTS

Street Supervisor Ron Ross reported receiving all paperwork back from the awarded DEP 902 Municipal Recycling Program Grant and a new Loader and Chipper was purchased to help with the brush pick up in the Borough.

Cleanup of brush at the sewage plant will be taken care of. Any individuals in Borough who want woodchips will be able to contact public works and Borough crew could deliver.

EADS Engineer Greg Elliott announced that EADS Group, Inc. and Ligonier Borough were named as the 2020 Special Project winner for the completion of the Diamond Park Renaissance project, at the ACEC/PA organization's annual Diamond Awards for Engineering Excellence gala at the Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square.

Police Chief John Berger reported that the new police cruiser and truck are at Black Out Tinting getting outfitted and hopefully will be in service next week. The old cars are getting traded in. Effective March 1, 2020 Matt Shearer was brought back on as full-time officer.

Mayor Bellas proposed to Council to make an addendum to parking ordinance to add loading zone time limit for five loading zones around the borough.

This was sent to Public Safety for advisement.

President St. Clair thanked the youth for coming to the meeting.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion was made by Mariah Fisher and seconded by Jeff Craig to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janette Shaw
Secretary-Treasurer