

Borough of Somerset Committee of the Whole
February 12th, 2018 5:00 p.m.

Meeting was called to order by President Ruby Miller, opening with recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call:

Council Members present: Ruby Miller; Fred Rosemeyer; Judy Pyle; Pam Ream; Sue Opp; Steve Shaulis and Gary Thomas. Mayor Scott Walker was also present.

Absent was Junior Council Member Maria Weimer.

Also present were the following: Borough Manager, Michele Enos; Director of Finance, Brett Peters; Chief of Police, Randy Cox; Solicitor James Cascio and Consulting Engineers, Tom Reilly and Jake Bolby.

Announcements:

(a) None

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting:

(a) All minutes are approved at the regular Council Meeting.

General Public Comments:

(a) None Registered.

Policy Agenda:

Old Business:

(a) None

New Business:

(a) Request form submitted by Manager Enos:

1. Proposed Resolution No. 2018-04 – Apply for a grant through DCED for the Highland Park Looped Waterline Project.

Ms. Enos stated that this is an item that did not appear on the Capital Projects list, but it is something that needs to be taken care of. She stated that they thought this would be a good qualifying project through the grant application process. Ms. Enos mentioned that this waterline project, and the next item #2, "The grant to rehab the existing sewer lines in Brierwood", is a time sensitive matter, because the grant application is due February 27th, 2018. Ms. Enos stated that she's asking for action for these two items tonight, verses our normal Council Meeting, because it is time sensitive.

Motion

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mr. Thomas seconded to apply for a grant through DCED for the Highland Park Looped Waterline Project.

Motion Unanimously Carried

2. Proposed Resolution No. 2018-05 – Apply for a grant through DCED to rehab existing sewer lines in Brierwood area.

Ms. Enos explained that the same applies for this project as in the above item #1, “A grant for the Highland Park Looped Waterline Project.” She stated that this grant is for a small sewer project grant. She explained that this is to rehab existing sewer lines in the Brierwood area. The total project cost is estimated to be \$203,500.00. Ms. Enos stated that we are applying for a grant in the amount of \$172,975.00, which the Borough’s 15% match of that amount, is \$30,525.00. Ms. Enos explained that this project would help with the infiltration in the Brierwood area.

Mr. Reilly explained that it would have no effect on the storm water issues. He mentioned that this is for sanitary sewer rehabilitation. He explained that it would tighten up the sanitary sewer system, but not solve any of the storm water issues.

Motion

Mrs. Ream moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to apply for a grant through DCED to rehab existing sewer lines in Brierwood area.

Motion Unanimously Carried

3. 2018 Sewer Plant Projects – Authorization to appropriate budgeted funds for the Grit Chamber/Bio Tower Rotary Distributor Replacement.

Ms. Enos explained that these two items were included in the 2018 Capital Projects. She stated that Council had authorized the Capital request on both of these items.

Ms. Enos explained that if they paired these two items together, under one contract, they believe it would work better.

Ms. Enos mentioned that they wanted to start the projects with the Grit Chamber & Bio Tower Replacement. She stated that she’s not asking for action tonight, but will have this on the Council Meeting Agenda to appropriate the funds for this project. Ms. Enos stated that they have a proposed cost with the Bio Tower estimate at \$225,000.00, and the replacement of the Grit Removal equipment at \$150,000.00. Solicitor Cascio stated that funds were budgeted, so this is just appropriation of the budgeted funds, which Council already authorized.

Mr. Reilly explained that with a larger project, you may attract additional contractors. He also stated that he thinks there may be a mobilization/demobilization efficiency.

4. Public Works Department – Authorization to appropriate budgeted funds for the 2017 Ford F-550 Truck that was budgeted for 2018 Capital Projects.

Ms. Enos stated that this truck was part of the Public Works budget. She mentioned that we will primarily use this for a water/sewer truck, so it's multi-funded based on the use of the vehicle.

Ms. Enos stated that they already received a prior quote for the truck, for budget purposes. They received a formal proposal, from a Co-Stars provider, Allegheny Truck in Pittsburgh. She mentioned that this truck has an increase of \$724.00 more than originally quoted. The reason for this, is because the taxes and title were not incorporated in the quote when it was received for 2018's budget purposes.

Ms. Enos mentioned that this will be on the Council Agenda for the end of February.

5. 2018 Water Projects – Engineering agreement with EADS Group for 2018 Water Projects.

Ms. Enos explained that the projects, and their cost amounts, were included in the packet handouts distributed to Council. She stated that they normally enter into an Engineering Agreement, with our Engineers, for water and sewer projects. She mentioned that the information in the packets are for the Water and Sewer Projects budgeted for 2018.

6. 2018 Sewer Projects - – Engineering agreement with EADS Group for 2018 Sewer Projects.

Ms. Enos stated that the same applies for the Sewer Projects as for the Water Projects.

7. Long Range Plan – Water Facilities and Operations - Distribution of study and Review.

Mr. Bolby mentioned that they have been working on pulling together a Capital Improvement/Long Range Plan. The list distributed to Council was a broad list of projects, specific to the water and sewer systems, that could be completed over 20 years or so. The list breaks down estimated years of a project, and gives a brief description of what each project will entail.

8. Long Range Plan – Sewer Facilities and Operations - Distribution of study and Review.

Mr. Bolby explained that the Sewer Facilities List is a combined list of Maintenance and Capital Projects. It entails 15-20 years associated with it.

He stated that it starts with a study that will need to be done in order to quantify the sewage flows within the system. Mr. Bolby explained that this would pair with all of the following projects, to determine the size, in making sure that it's being approached in the most economical way that it can. He stated that this is the first step to quantify the sewage flows in making sure not to provide oversized facilities or undersized facilities, whenever you're going through the planning process. Mr. Bolby stated that it's one of the things, recommended to Council, which can be looked at in proceeding forward.

Mr. Bolby mentioned that the list includes maintenance projects, which will fall into each year's Capital Budget List.

He mentioned that some of the other things, projected out farther, would be improvements to existing treatment processes to provide the most efficient method with the newest and latest technologies.

Mr. Bolby then briefly reviewed the "Long Range Water/Sewer Plan" lists distributed to Council. He addressed the Water Plant treatment and distribution aspects. He spoke about improvements to the existing facilities themselves, and also spoke about improvements to the current operations. He stated that improvements could potentially reduce costs on operations and, in some cases, liability.

Mr. Bolby stated that, on the distribution and metering side, the list included leak detection, meters and water line replacements. He mentioned that leak detection equipment is part of the 2018 budget list. This is pairing with the "Priority Water Line Replacement" list, which is a future project.

He stated that the Water Line Replacement Project is paired with a Water Allocation Permit. This permit was recently applied for, and approved, by DEP. One of the conditions that came with the permit, is a condition that we are to have an "unaccounted for" water percentage of 20%. Right now, ours is operating between 30% & 40%.

The permit has a 5-year timeline to it. He explained that, in a couple of months, we have to have a study, and report on what the potential plan of action will be. Mr. Bolby stated that this is due at the end of year 1 of the permit terms.

Mr. Reilly mentioned that, about a year ago, we had a permit renewal at the Sewer Plant. He mentioned that they didn't "tighten" the effluent limits up on the Flow Study and its associated improvements, that are now undefined. He stated that the driving force behind that, is DEP's and EPA's "tightening the screws" on what they consider to be excess flow in the system. Mr. Reilly stated that it's just a matter of time

before they continue to ask all municipalities to take action to either eliminate those excess flows, or to ultimately convey and treat those flows. Mr. Reilly explained that the lists distributed to Council are not directly driven by an NPDES Permit. It is more driven by what we believe to be the regulations for all municipal systems.

Mr. Bolby stated that on the condition of the 5-year timeline in the Water Allocation Permit, to prepare and move forward with reducing that “unaccounted for” water, they’ve already met with some of the staff to try and find anything that they can do to “tighten up” what the “unaccounted for” water percentage is at this point in time, they also wanted to make sure it was true and correct. Mr. Bolby stated that the percentage was as small as they could get it before a plan was put together to help reduce that “unaccounted for” water situation.

Mr. Bolby next reviewed some of the improvements they are planning for the existing system,

Mr. Rosemeyer stressed his concerns on whether we could take the list and have someone look over it to see if there are any grants coming up, in the future, that we could apply for in regards to the Water System Study.

Ms. Enos mentioned that the study is not yet complete to come up with a cold, hard cost on these projects. She stated that grants are typically for new construction. She explained that replacement of old lines, and things of this nature, is something you’re supposed to plan for, and is part of your routine maintenance and upgrade of infrastructure. Ms. Enos stated that, normally, you don’t qualify for a grant under those guidelines. She stated that they will continue to apply for grant applications with the projects that are listed.

Mr. Bolby stated Ms. Enos is sent every grant program that they become aware of. He stated that they always send it in to make sure they’re up to date.

Mr. Reilly stated that one of the important reasons why they wanted to start talking about this list, is because there is some significant projects that is going to have some significant costs associated with them.

He stated that some of the projects makes the operation of the system better, and more efficient, with some possible cost savings in places.

Mr. Reilly stated that some of these projects have to be done in some reasonable time frame, unless some grant opportunities are out there.

He mentioned that they wanted to give everybody a list of potential projects in order to start discussing it, and developing the process, so everyone can get a better understanding of why it’s being done.

Mr. Reilly mentioned the permit we have to address “unaccounted for” water. He stated that anyone with an Allocation Permit receives the same conditions, and the cost associated with that.

He brought out that the regulators are continuing to crack down on infiltration inflow in sanitary sewer systems. Mr. Reilly stated that there’s a cost associated with that, also.

Ms. Enos stated that they wanted to start identifying problems in all of these facilities, so that they could better prepare Council. She also mentioned that this would give them time to plan, time to cost it out, have time to shop for a potential bond issue, or a loan, to do some of these larger projects. They’d also have better control over how much this is going to cost, and how the rates would need to be structured.

Ms. Enos stated that we are dealing with a lot of old infrastructure, and because of that, our water loss ratio that we have right now is due in part to the old lines that are in the ground that need to be replaced. She commented that, unfortunately, that requires a lot of money to get there.

Ms. Enos stated that they will come up with a plan, and will put some costs together, for Council. She stated that they will then discuss it as a group with Council, and discuss where they would like to proceed.

(b) Donation Requests:

1. U.S. Veteran’s Museum – Letter requesting a donation

Due to the fact that this cause is not yet well established, Mr. Rosemeyer moved to make the recommendation to remove the donation request to the U.S. Veteran’s Museum, seconded by Mrs. Ream.

Motion Unanimously Carried

2. Somerset County Sheriff’s Tactical Search Team – Letter requesting a donation.

Ms. Enos explained that Somerset County Sheriff’s Tactical Search Team is undertaking fund raising to acquire a Rapid Response Thermal Imaging Drone. These assets give the Search Team the ability to assist fire and police, in addition to regular critical search missions. They have also requested to be present at February’s Council Meeting, as “persons to be heard”, to talk about this project.

All of Council agreed to have them attend the next Council Meeting, so they can discuss their project with Council, before the donation request is agreed upon by all members of Council.

3. Camp Cadet of Somerset County – Letter requesting a donation.

It was brought out that the Borough has never donated to this cause before. Chief Cox stated that the Police Department supports Camp Cadet in great measures. It was agreed that it is a wonderful program, but too narrow on how many people it actually affects. Therefore, Council agreed not to donate to this cause.

4. Daily American 10k/5k Fitness Challenge – Letter requesting a donation.

Ms. Enos stated that the Borough has donated to this cause, in the amount of \$200.00, in the past 2 years. She explained that this benefits the “Boys & Girls Club of Somerset County” along with “Meals on Wheels.” It was agreed upon to include this in February’s Council Meeting Agenda.

(c) Year to Date Financial Report – Provided through the month of January 2018.

Mr. Peters distributed the Year to Date Reports for January 2018 to members of Council. He mentioned that we are 1/12 of the way through the year, or 8.33%.

General Fund: Revenues – 2.87%; Expenses – 8.72%

Water Revenue Fund: Revenues – 7.41%; Expenses – 6.25%

Sewer System Operating Fund: Revenues – 7.56%; Expenses – 4.22%

Mr. Peters stated that all the details are included to follow with the General, Water and Sewer Funds, as well as the Balance Sheets. He stated that if Council had any questions, he’d be glad to answer them.

(d) Manager’s Report - Reports distributed to Council for all departments for the Month of January 2018.

Ms. Enos stated that she distributed all the Departmental Reports to Council. She stated that if anyone had any questions, on any of the reports, to let her know at any time.

(e) President’s Report - Given by Ruby Miller.

Mrs. Miller thanked Public Works for cleaning the snow Uptown, along with plowing and salting, when it was needed.

Mrs. Miller also congratulated Chief Cox on being elected to his new leadership role. He was elected Vice-Chairman of the PA Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission at the Commission’s Meeting on January 3, 2018.

(f) Somerset Inc. Report - Given by Judy Pyle.

Regarding Economic Development, Mrs. Pyle mentioned that they have 23-25 businesses committed to putting the historic plaques on their buildings.

She also mentioned that, in the Uptown real estate, the Hemminger House is under contract, and the person who is purchasing it has already contacted a contractor to do work in there, for upscale offices.

Mrs. Pyle stated that “Somerset Drug” was sold, and will become “Value Somerset Drug.”

She also mentioned that “Mystic Moonlight Yoga” went into Glades Court. Mrs. Pyle stated that there’s also an investment bank going into Glades Court.

Mrs. Pyle stated, in Uptown Works, the “Old World’s Attic”, that some of the young people, opening up these businesses, have some fabulous ideas.

She mentioned that discussions are being held by Somerset Inc. to try to seek different ways that they can aide in getting new businesses open. She stated that she will present these discussion points to Council in the future.

Mrs. Pyle stated that they were not going to do anything with Trinity Park this year. They are just going to leave it open and use it. She stated that they are applying for another DCNR Grant. She mentioned that the park looks good to use for the summer, and they plan to use it all summer long. They hope to get the DCNR Grant so they are able to finish Trinity Park next year.

She also mentioned that they may be moving Somerset Inc.’s office’s downstairs from where they are now.

She brought out that the Eagles have donated money, and are interested in putting a portion of it toward the Public Arts. They also donated money for “Fire & Ice”, and sent another donation for Somerset Inc., which was greatly appreciated.

Mrs. Pyle also mentioned two individuals, from Somerset Galleries, donated \$700.00 to be raffled off. Proceeds will specifically go toward the Art Project.

Chief Cox mentioned that the Harley Davidson Owner’s Group (H.O.G. Club) is having their Muscular Dystrophy Annual Event at Seven Springs this year. It’s the first time it has been East. He mentioned that it’s going to start with a motorcycle procession, starting at Highland Harley Davidson, proceeding to Seven Springs. This will be held Saturday May 5, 2018.

(g) Somerset Volunteer Fire Dept. Report - Given by Steve Shaulis.

Mr. Shaulis mentioned that the Fire Department had 42 calls during the month of January 2018.

He mentioned that the “Cash Bash” Fundraiser was on February 17, 2018 at the Fire Hall.

Mr. Shaulis also mentioned that the timing on the Act 172 comes at a good time, because they are having a Recruitment & Retention Meeting on February 20, 2018 at the Fire Hall. He stated that manpower is an issue.

Mr. Shaulis mentioned that there are only 3 people who respond during a daytime fire call. His fear is, if there is a large dangerous situation during daytime hours, someone may get injured, lose a life, or more lives will be lost. He stated that it is really a serious situation, and he hopes we can come up with some answers.

He stated that funding for instructors is the problem with getting a fire program started at Vo-Tech. Equipment costs would also be needed. Mr. Shaulis mentioned that, right now, a lot of their training comes out of Buck's County Community College. He stated that we have to look at other options, because he cannot see the Borough looking at the option of a paid Fire Department.

(h) Engineer's Report - Given by Tom Reilly or Jake Bolby.

Mr. Bolby stated that everything they wanted to cover was already discussed.

Discussion was held about new businesses going into various buildings throughout the surrounding area.

Discussion was also held about purchasing new Christmas decorations, in the near future, for the Borough.

Mr. Shaulis mentioned that the Eagles made an additional donation for the new Christmas Decorations, and donated \$8,000.00 for "Fire and Ice."

Mr. Shaulis mentioned that the total donations to the community received from the Eagles in 2017 was \$215,000.00.

Mr. Rosemeyer explained a PSAB concern he had. He stated that the Borough of Edinboro had a zoning violation, and the PSAB had given them \$4,000.00 for their court costs.

He explained that there was a zoning issue where a gentlemen replaced his porch and built a larger porch that violated both front, side and back zoning requirements. He did not apply for a variance or a permit. When he did go for it, after the work was done, the Zoning Officer discovered this and addressed the issue. This individual appealed to the Zoning Board. They denied his appeal. The individual reappeared and appealed it. They denied it and it went to court.

He stated that, by law, the Zoning Board is put in place by PA Law. The courts now have said that the Zoning Board is not a legal body, which is incorrect because the State Law says it is. The courts are saying that the Zoning Board is only an Advisory Committee.

Mr. Rosemeyer stated that if this goes state wide, it is really going to affect the authority that Tom has, and our Borough, and all the 2,000 other areas that deal with this issue. This could really affect zoning, and what the future is of zoning.

He stated that he would keep the Council informed of new developments that arise from this issue.

Executive Session – *None requested.*

Adjournment

Motion

Mr. Shaulis moved to adjourn, motion seconded by Mrs. Opp.

Motion Unanimously Carried

6:45 p.m.

Michele A. Enos, Borough Secretary