

Borough of Somerset Committee of the Whole

July 8th, 2019 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.

Present was Mayor Scott Walker.

Also present was Junior Council Member Jonathan Wagner.

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. Agreement with PennDOT – Discussion concerning entering into an agreement for Winter Maintenance Services for North and South Franklin Avenue.*

Ms. Enos brought out that we've been involved in this Agreement with PennDOT for several decades. She mentioned that it is for the Winter Maintenance Service Agreement for the winter season of 2019-2020.

Ms. Enos disclosed that PennDOT contracts with the Borough to take care of the winter maintenance on North & South Franklin Avenue. The reimbursement we will be receiving from them for the 2019 -2020 winter season is \$4,341.00, which is an increase of just under 2%.

Ms. Enos stated that a part of the Agreement that we have with PennDOT, is that if we *do not* wish to continue in this Winter Maintenance Agreement with them, we must let them know before the end of this month.

Ms. Enos expressed that she didn't have any just cause to discontinue this agreement with PennDOT, unless Borough Council had any concerns or questions.

(No concerns or questions were expressed by Borough Council)

Ms. Enos added that this Winter Maintenance Service Agreement with PennDOT, will appear on the next regular Borough Council Meeting Agenda, in July, for Council to consider executing.

2. Transportation Alternative Program Grant – Discussion regarding unavailability of this Grant.

Ms. Enos brought out that this Grant is no longer available.

Discussion was held in regards to applying for a Multi-Modal Grant through DCED to incorporate the North & South Center Avenue Sidewalk Projects.

Ms. Enos brought out that Mr. Bolby was asked to come up with a cost estimate to do the North & South Center Avenue sidewalks, similar to what was done on West Main Street. The total project cost for North & South Center Avenue is roughly \$800,000.00.

Mr. Bolby added that the deadline to apply for this Grant is July 31, 2019. This will be included on the next regular Borough Council Meeting Agenda, in July, before the deadline.

3. Donation Request – Somerset Volunteer Fire Department is requesting a donation for their Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser.

Ms. Enos brought out that last year the Borough had given the Fire Department a \$100.00 donation, by sponsoring a golf course hole, for their Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser.

The Borough once again received a donation request from the Fire Department asking the Borough if we would consider doing the same thing this year as part of their fundraiser.

Borough Council agreed to add this donation request onto the next regular Borough Council Meeting Agenda, in July, for consideration.

(b) Request from Councilman Thomas:

1. Stray Cats in Brierwood – Discussion concerning creating or adding cats to the existing dog ordinance.

Mr. Thomas disclosed that the stray cat issue is not isolated to the Brierwood area. He added that other parts of the Borough are experiencing the same problem. Mr. Thomas disclosed that there are as many as 15 stray cats, or more, that reside on a

certain resident's front porch, and are being fed by the individual. He stated that the cats travel throughout the neighborhood. One resident complained that these cats are digging up their flower planters and using them as a litter box. Another resident complained that their little dog was cornered by stray cats, in the fenced-in area, of her own backyard.

Mr. Thomas asked Ms. Enos if she would contact the County to see what could be done to help control the amount of cats that people are permitted to have. He added that something needs to be done.

Solicitor Cascio mentioned the Nardecchia Program. This program includes catching stray animals, and spaying them, so they cannot reproduce. After spaying them, they release them. He stated that this is a humane way of dealing with the situation.

Discussion was held about how this Program was used in the Borough in the past, with success. Discussion also included the difficulty in claiming ownership of a stray cat that, by State Law, does not have to be licensed.

Chief Cox brought out other Municipalities approach stray cat problems in one of three ways. The first is the Nardecchia approach, which is very expensive. He stated that funds would have to be raised for this. The second, is the humane trapping of cats. Chief Cox stated that this can become a problem if you unknowingly trap someone's pet cat, and it is subsequently destroyed. The third way, is approaching the problem as a nuisance.

Solicitor Cascio disclosed that it is a "legal" issue with licensing of cats as opposed to dogs. He stated that there is specific authorization in PA Law for licensing dogs. There are statutes that regulate specific requirements for dogs and cats for vaccination. There are also laws on "Cruelty and Neglect" of animals.

Further discussion continued on this subject.

Mr. Thomas stated that he feels that Borough Council needs to continue to look into something that is going to take care of the stray cat problem. He added that he is open for any suggestions.

Ms. Enos said that she talked to those involved with the Nardecchia Program, and they are willing to help us. They would have to contract with the Borough to come in for at least half the cost of the spaying and neutering. She disclosed that it's \$80.00 for a female animal and \$100 for a male animal.

Ms. Enos also mentioned that it takes time, because they have to trap all the stray cats. Nardecchia also told her that they are willing to do the spaying and neutering. Ms. Enos brought out that Nardecchia also gave her contact phone numbers, for possible placements, because the Humane Society does not take in feral cats. As soon as the cats would be spayed or neutered, these individuals would be willing to take some of them. Concern was raised on how the proposed Nardecchia approach would be funded to cover the spaying and neutering fees.

(c) Year to Date Financial Report – Provided through the month of June 2019.

Mr. Peters stated that the Year to Date Financial Reports are not finished at this time. He added that they will be included in the next Borough Council packets.

(d) Manager's Report – Reports distributed to Council for all departments for the month of June 2019.

Ms. Enos stated that if Borough Council had any questions, feel free to give her a call.

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

Mrs. Miller mentioned that the Somerset County Boroughs Association Banquet is on September 19th, 2019 at the Somerset Volunteer Fire Hall. Food and entertainment will be provided.

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

Due to the fact that the Somerset Inc. meeting will be held tomorrow, Mrs. Pyle had no updates to report at this time.

(g) PSAB Report – Given by Fred Rosemeyer.

Mr. Rosemeyer mentioned that he attended the PSAB Conference, which went very well. He added that the Governor was present at the conference.

Mr. Rosemeyer brought out that he personally was in attendance for informative courses on Police Departments; Medical Marijuana; and Police Liabilities.

He explained that the Keynote Speaker was a young lady that was born with a congenital abnormality, resulting in absence of her legs. He mentioned, that in spite of her disability, she was a gymnast. He added that she was an excellent speaker.

Mr. Rosemeyer also said that the Governor was present for the Awards Banquet as well. He mentioned that he received an award.

Mr. Rosemeyer explained that a scholarship was given out to a young lady through the Borough's Association. She attended the conference, with all of her expenses paid, by the Borough's Association. He mentioned that this was the second or third time the Association has awarded this scholarship.

Mr. Rosemeyer recommends that individuals attend this Conference, but also realizes it is time-consuming and expensive, nevertheless worthwhile.

(h) Somerset Volunteer Fire Department Report - Given by Steve Shaulis.

Mr. Shaulis brought out that from January 1st – June 30th, the Fire Department answered 193 alarms. 73 of those were in Somerset Borough.

\$14,000.00 was recently spent for 5 sets of fire gear. Almost all of the money was covered by a State Grant.

Mr. Shaulis also mentioned that the Fire Department recently purchased a few backpack air blowers, which will be used on vehicle accidents to remove broken glass, metal and other plastics on the street. He said they work really well.

Mr. Shaulis also brought out that the Fire Department provided a “standby crew” for the recent Fireworks Display in the Borough. The Fire Department will also assist the Police Department with the “Somerset Night-Out” event on August 13th, 2019.

Mr. Shaulis sadly mentioned that Ken Sube, a 40-year member of the Fire Department, passed away on June 15th, 2019. Among his various Administrative positions, he once served as President of the Fire Department. He was also one of the Fire Departments primary operators, who frequently was among the Top10 in number of answered alarms.

(i) Engineer’s Report – Given by Jake Bolby.

Mr. Bolby mentioned that there are currently three ongoing projects that are all in the Administrative phase before they start into construction. They are the grant-funded Highland Park Waterline Loop Project, and the two Sewage Treatment Plant Projects, which consists of replacement of the pumps, and replacement of the one baffle in the clarifier.

(j) Mayor’s Report – Given by Mayor Walker.

Mayor Walker mentioned that the “Somerset Night Out” event will be on August 13th, 2019 at the Police Department. It begins at 6:00 pm.

He mentioned that if any Council Member can attend, the Officer’s would greatly appreciate their attendance.

Executive Session – None requested.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Mr. Thomas moved to adjourn, motion seconded by Mr. Shaulis.

Motion Unanimously Carried
5:59 p.m.

Michele A. Enos, Borough Secretary