

November 9, 2023

The regular meeting of the Ligonier Borough Council was held Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 7pm in the Town Hall with Vice President Mariah Fisher presiding in the absence of President Matt Smith.

Members Present: Mariah Fisher, Judy Hoffer, Nate Sylvester, Jordan Frei, & Brad Chartier. Absent was Matt Smith, & Adriel Ginsburg.

Others Present: Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw, Street Supervisor Ron Ross, Mayor Ormond “Butch” Bellas, Engineer Ben Faas, Solicitor George Welty, Police Chief Mike Matrunic, & Fire Chief Corey Blystone.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Jordan Frei and seconded by Nate Sylvester to approve the minutes of October 10, 2023 as presented. The motion carried with all in favor.

BILLS PAYABLE

A motion was made by Judy Hoffer and seconded by Brad Chartier to approve the Bills Payable presented to Council. All of Council was in favor.

CONSENT CALENDAR

A motion was made by Jordan Frei and seconded by Nate Sylvester to approve the Consent Calendar presented. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

EV Ordinance:

A motion was made by Jordan Frei and seconded by Brad Chartier to move forward and advertise the proposed Electric Vehicle ordinance. The motion carried with all in favor.

Solicitor George Welty will take the proposed ordinance to the Law Library and a summary will be properly advertised. The ordinance will be ready for enactment at the December meeting.

Change Order for Public Works garage roof:

Street Supervisor Ron Ross reported that the Public Works roof is slanted and had to be built up and leveled in order to put the new trusses on. **Fort Construction** has put in a change order for \$11, 110.00.

A motion was made by Brad Chartier and seconded by Jordan Frei to approve the change order by Fort Construction in the amount of \$11,110.00. All of Council was in favor.

Township proposed sidewalk & pedestrian bridge project:

EADS Engineer Ben Faas reported that Ligonier Township is proceeding with a draft application for a PennDot multimodal grant for the estimated \$1.2 million sidewalk and bridge project along Carey School Road and Vincent Street. The Township had requested that Ligonier Borough agree to match the portion of the sidewalk to be constructed within the Borough. The funding requires a 30% local match of the grant award. The Borough would end up paying \$78,200 for their portion. The project cost is \$338,649.41 for the 710 feet of the project that would be in the Borough.

A motion was made by Nate Sylvester and seconded by Judy Hoffer to table the project until it is looked into further. The motion carried with all of council in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE

Email received from Photographer Asia Burkholder requesting permission to take photos on the Diamond on December 2nd, 3rd as well as December 17th. If only one date is permitted, she asks that it be December 17th. It is also asked if dogs are permitted for the family photos.

The request was discussed and noted that December 2nd & December 3rd is Cookie Walk and Town Wide Open House. The photographer is to be made aware of this.

Letter received from Mutual Aid Ambulance Services, Inc. asking for support to EMS for citizens of the Borough by budgeting \$5 per resident for emergency medical services.

The request was deferred to the Borough's Finance Committee. The Borough already has a proposed budget which will be discussed this evening.

Per Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw this is not something that was included in the budget. Council wishes to learn more about the Borough citizen's subscriptions to Mutual Aid Ambulance service.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PARKS & RECREATION

Chair, Mariah Fisher reported that Friendship Park restrooms have been winterized and closed. They will not re-open until spring. The Park will however be open when we have nice days and close at dusk.

Friendship Park Sport Complex: still working on spreading the word & getting public awareness.

Mariah closed by stating that the Diamond has been decorated and thanked Amy Beitel and the Chamber Board Members, Ron Ross and the Public Works Crew, along with the 8th grade class from Valley School of Ligonier for donating their time.

TOWN HALL

Town Hall Chair Judy Hoffer reported that everything is going smoothly with Town Hall.

PUBLIC WORKS

Street Supervisor Ron Ross reported that leaf pick up is still ongoing. December 4th or 5th may be last pick up. The last day will be posted on Savvy.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Chairman Jordan Frei reported that the boil advisory has been lifted by the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County after a recent water line break.

Frei spoke of working on two revisions to the Fire Service Agreement which was passed June of 2021. The first revision is concerning how to handle leftover annual funding and the second is equipment log requirements to be changed to as needed or after a call.

Frei asked Solicitor George Welty to help create an ordinance for a property tax rebate incentive for active Ligonier Borough firefighters. This ordinance would involve only active firemen. It is estimated that there are roughly 10 qualifying individuals with approximately \$3,000 financial impact on the Borough. Frei hopes to provide further information at next month's meeting.

Frei finished by stating that the Public Safety Committee has been speaking with the LV Chamber of Commerce on the safety concerns from the Borough, Fire Department, Mayor and Police regarding Ice Fest. Pedestrian traffic was discussed. Amy Beitel of LV Chamber reported

that signage, and volunteers would be available to help with the traffic. Beitel added that at this year's Ice Fest the committee is bringing back some live ice carving on Saturday and that it is also hoped to disperse the traffic as well as moving more ice sculptures off the Diamond area. Other ideas such as scavenger hunts & other activities will be added to move the traffic away as well.

FINANCE

Chairman Brad Chartier reported that the Finance Committee announced that the committee has balanced the 2024 budget with no tax increase.

Nate Sylvester thanked both Brad Chartier and committee as well as Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw.

Chartier asked for a brief executive meeting for personnel after the meeting with no further business to be added.

PLANNING & PERSONNEL

Chairman Nate Sylvester had nothing.

Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw reported that Ligonier Borough is currently looking for a new member to serve on the Shade Tree Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Request to amend Zoning Ordinance pertaining to noise:

Nate Sylvester reported that Sandy Podlucky has made a request to amend the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to noise by reducing the decibels permitted from 90 to 60 on West Main Street in the C2 General Commercial District. The request was to also reduce the hours of operation in neighboring businesses from 11pm to 9pm and prohibit tents.

The Planning Committee has met regarding this and have decided to table the request and not take any action with the decision to not pass it on to the Planning Commission. Reasons being is that Council does not have a qualified way to enforce the limitation on decibels. Sylvester added that this is a commercially zoned area and 11pm on weekends is very reasonable for service industries. Tents and outdoor bar areas should be landowner issues and not council. Sylvester finished by adding that the real issue is that we have a commercial building on a commercial block that at some point was turned into a residence. It is not an R1 Single Family Residential District; it's C2.

Weeders & Seeders Garden Club: Valley Veterans Park:

Angela McDonnell of 224 East Main Street & Weeders & Seeders was present and expressed the Weeders & Seeders wishes to renovate Valley Veterans Park in the Municipal Parking Lot. The Valley Veterans Park established in 2010 is now showing decline with worn concrete benches, stained and pitted patio and overgrown shrubs. Weeders & Seeders plan to look for grant money for the project and will work with Street Supervisor Ron Ross to fit their work in with the Borough's planned parking lot improvements.

A motion was made by Judy Hoffer and seconded by Jordan Frei to write a letter confirming that the Borough is willing to cooperate with Weeders & Seeders on the Valley Veterans Park renewal. The motion carried with all in favor.

Ligonier Valley Police Department Budget:

(Due to the timing of the Police Commission meeting their proposed budget was not yet approved)

A motion was made by Brad Chartier and seconded by Jordan Frei to approve the 2024 LVPD Budget with the contingency of no increase in the numbers. All of Council was in favor

Ligonier Borough Proposed Budget 2024:

A motion was made by Nate Sylvester and seconded by Jordan Frei to adopt the 2024 proposed budget and advertise for 10 days. The motion carried unanimously.

Zoning Hearing Board Vacancy:

Letter of interest has been received from Karl Horman.

A motion was made by Nate Sylvester and seconded by Jordan Frei to appoint Karl Horman to fill the vacancy on the Zoning Hearing Board.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Sandy Podlucky of 227 W Main Street addressed the proposed noise ordinance amendment. Podlucky stated the 90 decibels will blow your ears out. Sweet Rust music plays at 90 decibels; with her house situated next door and the house shook. 90 decibels is unacceptable.

Councilman Nate Sylvester stated that the committee has met regarding this matter and that no one on Council is making a motion to change the ordinance.

Dawn Metz of The Colonial House on Main Street asked what their next course of action should be in regards to the noise complaint.

Nate Sylvester answered that they must get a member of Council to make the motion for what they need and vote on it.

Dawn Metz spoke of her disappointment in Council's decision to not amend the noise ordinance.

Vice President Mariah Fisher explained that Councilman Nate was trying to explain that there are different zoning districts within our community. Within the commercial district, businesses are allowed to run their businesses.

COMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS from OFFICERS and DEPARTMENTS

Police Chief Mike Matrunics reported that Fort Ligonier Days worked out very well with zero incidents.

Chief Matrunics added that LVPD has hired a new officer with hopefully another coming toward the end of November. It is hoped to be fully staffed by mid-January.

Mayor Bellas reported that Saturday, November 11, 2023 will be the Veteran's Day service on the Diamond.

Street Supervisor Ron Ross stated that the detour is in place.

Vice President Mariah Fisher congratulated both Judy Hoffer and Adriel Ginsburg for being re-elected as well as congratulations to Carol Barton who will be joining Council in January.

Fisher ended by reminding all that the next Ligonier Borough Council meeting will be held Thursday, December 14, 2023.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion was made by Judy Hoffer and seconded by Brad Chartier to adjourn the meeting into executive session for personnel with no action to be taken afterwards. All of Council was in favor.

Respectfully submitted

Janette Shaw
Secretary-Treasurer