

December 14, 2023

The regular meeting of the Ligonier Borough Council was held Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 7pm in the Town Hall with President Matt Smith presiding.

Members Present: Matt Smith, Mariah Fisher, Adriel Ginsburg, Judy Hoffer, Nate Sylvester, Jordan Frei and via ZOOM Brad Chartier.

Others Present: Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw, Street Supervisor Ron Ross, Mayor Ormond "Butch" Bellas, Engineer Ben Faas, Solicitor George Welty, and Sgt. Friscerella.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Jordan Frei and seconded by Adriel Ginsburg to approve the minutes of November 9, 2023. All of Council was in favor.

BILLS PAYABLE

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

CONSENT CALENDAR

A motion was made by Jordan Frei and seconded by Adriel Ginsburg to approve the Consent Calendar provided. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2024 Proposed Budget:

A motion was made by Brad Chartier and seconded by Jordan Frei to approve the 2024 budget as advertised. The motion carried with all in favor.

Tubmill Liquor License Transfer Resolution:

Attorney Chris Nichols was present and explained that council has already approved the initial resolution for Tubmill and they are now currently asking that the name and resolution be changed because the applicant; still the same members, formed a new entity and this is done for liability purposes. Tubmill owns the real estate and this entity (Laurel Highlands Hospitality Group LLC) will own the liquor license. There is a separation between the two.

A motion was made by Judy Hoffer and seconded by Mariah Fisher to approve the resolution. All of Council was in favor.

EV Ordinance:

Solicitor George Welty stated that the ordinance is ready for action as Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw noted that she has received the proof of publication as well as the acknowledgement letter from the Westmoreland County Law Library.

A motion was made by Jordan Frei and seconded by Adriel Ginsburg to approve the Electric Vehicle Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.

Revisions to Fire Service Agreement to address leftover annual funding & equipment log requirements:

Councilman Jordan Frei reported that the first change is 10% carryover to be retained by Fire Department annually. The second change is that daily inspection records be changed to monthly unless apparatus manufacturing calls for something different.

A motion was made by Jordan Frei and seconded by Adriel Ginsburg to proceed with the two above mentioned changes to the Fire Service Agreement. All of Council was in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter received from Diana Price of Fort Ligonier Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution inviting Ligonier Borough to a Wreath Laying @ Ligonier Cemetery followed by a Boston Tea Party event at the Ligonier Library on Saturday, December 16, 2023 beginning @ 10am.

Email received from Allison & Doug McCormick with concerns in regards to Clean Air Act recommendations pertaining to smoking in the outside area of Diamond Café.

President Matt Smith stated that the Clean Air Act does not necessarily say it is a required distance of 20 ft. but recommended. Smith suggested to go to individual business owners / merchants and ask them if they do not want people smoking right outside their business to then put up some signage.

Request from Gay Wasserman for a resident handicapped parking space on 212 North Fairfield Street.

A motion was made by Judy Hoffer and seconded by Jordan Frei to approve the handicapped parking space on North Fairfield Street. It will be advised that the handicapped spot is not private and may be used by anyone else with a handicapped placard wishing to park there. The motion carried unanimously.

Request from Ligonier Valley Chamber of Commerce to use Town Hall Auditorium for Soup's On registration from 10:30am to 12:30pm on Saturday, March 16, 2024.

A motion was made by Judy Hoffer and seconded by Adriel Ginsburg to use the Town Hall Auditorium Foyer only for the Soup's On registration Saturday, March 16, 2024 from 10:30am to 12:30pm. The motion carried with all of Council in favor.

Request from Ligonier Valley Chamber of Commerce to close Bank Alley from North Market Street to Oak Alley from 4:00pm to 7:00pm on January 19 & 20, 2024 for Ice Fest activities.

A motion was made by Mariah Fisher and seconded by Judy Hoffer to approve the request to close Bank Alley from North Market Street to Oak Alley from 4:00pm to 7:00pm for Ice Fest 2024. The motion carried 7-0.

Resignation letter was read from Solicitor George Welty resigning as Ligonier Borough Solicitor effective January 2, 2024. Solicitor Welty served the Borough for 40 years. Welty will be available until the Borough appoints a new attorney.

President Matt Smith thanked George Welty for his service.

A motion was made by Mariah Fisher and seconded by Judy Hoffer to accept Solicitor Welty's resignation with regrets. All of Council was in favor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PARKS & RECREATION

Chair Mariah Fisher reported that information booths were manned during both Light Up Night and Town Wide Open House and received approximately \$200 in donations for Friendship Park Phase II.

Mariah Fisher again thanked Ron Ross, Ligonier Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Amy Beitel, Valley School 8th grade class and everyone else that helped to decorate the Diamond.

TOWN HALL

Town Hall Chair Judy Hoffer reported that the Borough has been receiving some inquiries as far as renting office space at Town Hall.

Judy wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year.

PUBLIC WORKS

Chairman, Adriel Ginsburg reported that Public Works roof has now been completed. The Public Works garage also has a new generator.

Adriel further reported receiving some complaints from resident's being ticketed in the middle of the night on Main Street on days when the street sweeper is not actually running. Currently, tickets can be written for parking on Main Street Mondays & Fridays between the hours of 3am & 7am.

Street Supervisor Ron Ross stated that while the street sweeper is not being run every week, the Public Works crew uses those days for clearing snow removal, clearing curbs and whatever else needs done.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Chairman Jordan Frei thanked Council for the positive votes in regards to the Fire Service Agreement amendment. Last month Frei presented to council the possibility of making a service tax credit available to the members of Ligonier Hose Co. #1 who reside in the Borough. More information is to come at next month's meeting. Frei wished everyone a great holiday and New Year.

FINANCE

Chairman Brad Chartier thanked both Councilman Nate Sylvester and Solicitor George Welty for their service.

PLANNING / PERSONNEL

Chairman Nate Sylvester wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

NEW BUSINESS

Westmoreland County Transit Authority Share Assessment for 2023-2024:

Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw noted that there has not been an increase in the fee amount in 5 years with the fee amount at \$924.00.

A motion was made by Judy Hoffer and seconded by Adriel Ginsburg to accept the fee for our community. The motion carried with all in favor.

Resolution to fix the 2024 tax rate at 24.5 mills:

Finance Chairman Brad Chartier explained that the resolution states that the Borough is not changing the municipal tax rates.

A motion was made by Jordan Frei and seconded by Judy Hoffer to accept Resolution 2023-06 fixing the tax rate for the year 2024 and to remain at 24.5 mills. All of Council was in favor.

COMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS from OFFICERS and DEPARTMENTS

Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw thanked both Nate Sylvester and Solicitor Welty for all they have done for the Borough. Jan also acknowledged employees Carole Henderson, Toni Ulery, & Custodians Debbie Finley and Tom Gibson for a fine job they do for the Borough.

Solicitor Welty wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Street Supervisor Ron Ross reported that 77 loads were picked up during the annual leaf pick up with 367 man hours.

Ron Ross asked for permission to place the old generator at Public Works Garage on Municibid since the new generator has been installed.

A motion was made by Mariah Fisher and seconded by Judy Hoffer to advertise and place the old generator on Municibid. All of Council was in favor.

Fire Chief Corey wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Engineer Ben Faas wished everyone a Merry Christmas and thanked Solicitor George Welty for all his help and advice over the years.

Sgt. Jimmy Friscarella mentioned the recent Bit Coin scam going on. Sgt. Friscarella and Chief Mike Matrunics have gone to all the banks in Ligonier and gave them a print out of the article with advisement of what to do if someone comes in asking to withdraw large amounts of money that seem out of the ordinary.

Sgt. Friscarella noted that the department is now up to full staff.

Sgt. Friscarella thanked Ron Ross and the public works department for their help with Light Up Night.

Sgt. Friscarella asked everyone to not park on Main Street during snow storms to help Public Works get the roads cleared.

Mayor Butch Bellas thanked everyone serving on Council and thanked Solicitor George Welty for his years of service. Mayor Bellas closed by thanking Ron Ross and the public works crew and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

President Matt Smith thanked Solicitor George Welty and Councilman Nate Sylvester for their years of service as well as all Borough employees for their hard work all year. Smith wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The next meeting of the Ligonier Borough Council will be held Tuesday, January 2, 2024 @ 7pm.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion was made by Judy Hoffer and seconded by Jordan Frei to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34pm.

Respectfully submitted

Janette Shaw
Secretary-Treasurer