

May 14, 2020

The regular meeting of the Ligonier Borough Council was held Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 7:00 PM via ZOOM amid the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.

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

Others Present: Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw, Street Supervisor Ron Ross, Mayor Ormond “Butch” Bellas, Engineer Ben Faas, Solicitor George Welty, Police Chief John Berger, Fire Chief Corey Blystone and Zoning Officer Rick Schwab. Absent was 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 April 9 2020 and special meeting minutes of April 18, 2020 as presented. All of Council was in favor.

BILLS PAYABLE

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Mariah Fisher to approve the Bills Payable. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT CALENDAR

A motion was made by Mariah Fisher and seconded by Jeff Craig to approve the Consent Calendar presented. All of Council was in favor.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carl Horman, Ligonier Borough Resident expressed his thoughts that Friendship Park should remain closed in the yellow phase which Westmoreland County is now in and comply with the guidelines provided by the PA Recreation and Park Society.

Parks & Recreation Chair Mariah Fisher agreed and stated that she was going to address the same as well.

Mark Sorice, President of Fort Ligonier Days Inc., was present in regards to Fort Days 2020. Sorice reported that a letter asking for guidance was sent to PA Secretary of Health Rachel Levine. Sorice asked Council to wait for her response before making a decision on the event.

Scott Haines, Executive Director of the LV Chamber of Commerce concurred with Mark Sorice. Haines is hopeful that all avenues can be looked at before a final decision is made.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ligonier Country Market – Night Market scheduled for June 18, 2020:

A letter was read from Cari Frei, Executive Director of Ligonier Country Market / Scott Haines, Executive Director of LV Chamber of Commerce informing Council of their plans for the previously approved “**Ligonier Night Market**” in accordance with the health and safety guidelines that are in place. Guidance from the PA Department of Agriculture was received including one with specific COVID-19 parameters for the vendors participating. Three vendor orientations will be held to which Council is invited to join.

“Ligonier Night Market” would take place June 18, July 16, August 20, September 17 and October 15. The hours would be from 5pm-9pm. Meters would be bagged on the Diamond and the first blocks of East and West Main Streets from 3pm-10pm to allow for setup and teardown. The goal of the event is to bring produce vendors and processors from the Ligonier Country

Market to the Diamond Park area giving the Ligonier Community an opportunity to shop merchant stores, purchase meals at restaurants, and procure their market favorites.

Scott Haines added that one way traffic is planned with orange cones and volunteers to direct visitors. One way directional signs will be placed at each corner. Scott noted that no groups will be allowed to congregate at more than 25 people. Visitors will be encouraged to keep moving. It was added that it will be advertised to have one person per family attend. CDC guidelines will be followed to only allow 5 people per vendor. There will be spaces between vendor's tables and people purchasing items. The tables will be wiped every hour. All volunteer will have a T-shirt stating such. All must wear masks.

Councilman Jeff Craig stated that you cannot force people to comply with the regulations and also had concern that the "Night Market" could turn into a "festival".

Executive Director of the Ligonier Country Market replied that all Country Markets are considered essential businesses such as that of a grocery store.

President Sam St. Clair noted that his concern is that Council initially permitted the request of the "Night Market" however, the Coronavirus is new and uncharted territory and he now is not comfortable going forward at this time. St. Clair felt it would be better to delay the Night Market until in the Green Phase.

Jr. Council Izabella Wentzell asked how many vendors would be present. Cari Frei replied that there would be 37 per week with 41 on the roster.

Nate Sylvester expressed his approval for waiting until green phase for Summer Band Concerts, Antiques on the Diamond, and other LV Chamber Events but feels that the Night Market falls more in line with Giant Eagle and encourages one member per family to go.

A motion was made by Matt Smith and seconded by Robert Barron to permit the Night Market to proceed following the guidelines.

A roll call vote was taken with Matt Smith, Robert Barron, Mariah Fisher, Judy Hoffer, Jeff Craig and Nate Sylvester voting to permit the Night Market and Sam St. Clair voting no. The Night Market will proceed with the June 18, 2020 date.

Parking Meter / Permit Parking:

The Finance Committee recommends to reinstate metered parking June 1, 2020.

A motion was made by Nate Sylvester and seconded by Judy Hoffer to reinstate parking June 1, 2020.

A roll call vote was taken with Sam St. Clair, Matt Smith, Robert Barron, Mariah Fisher, Judy Hoffer, Jeff Craig and Nate Sylvester all voting yes. Metered parking will commence June 1, 2020.

Declaration of Emergency – Phases for Town Hall Bldg. / Events:

President Sam St. Clair feels that Town Hall/ outside restrooms should remain closed until entering into green phase due to having to sanitize more regularly and the expense / time of doing such with no custodians working at this time.

A motion was made by Judy Hoffer and seconded by Mariah Fisher to keep the Town Hall / outside restrooms closed until in the green phase.

A roll call vote was taken with Matt Smith, Robert Barron, Mariah Fisher, Judy Hoffer, Jeff Craig, and Nate Sylvester voting yes. The motion carried to keep the Town Hall / outside restrooms closed until in the green phase.

LV Chamber of Commerce Events:

A motion was made by Nate Sylvester and seconded by Jeff Craig to not permit any other LV Chamber of Commerce Events until in the green phase.

A **roll call vote** was again taken with Matt Smith, Robert Barron, Mariah Fisher, Judy Hoffer, Jeff Craig, and Nate Sylvester voted yes. The motion carried to not permit any further LV Chamber events until in the green phase.

CORRESPONDENCE

Email request received from Donna Kiser of LV Food Pantry again asking permission for a shutdown of the East bound lane of West Vincent Street Saturday, May 16, 2020 from 8am – 10 am for food distribution to take place behind Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Judy Hoffer to approve the above request. The motion carried with all in favor.

Letter received from the LV Chamber of Commerce requesting permission to block off the Northeast quadrant of the Diamond to traffic for the Sunday Evening Band Concerts, **when and if they are held**. Also requested is to bag the first four meters on the North side of East Main Street for Laurel Highlands Antique Auto Club members to display their classic cars during the concerts.

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Mariah Fisher to approve providing the LV Chamber is responsible for bagging the meters and then also removing. The motion carried unanimously.

Letter received from Mark L Sorice, President, Fort Ligonier Days, Inc. regarding Fort Ligonier 2020 status with the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic.

An additional letter was read regarding the same from Henry C Scully Executive Director of Fort Ligonier.

A letter was received from Debbie Campayno of North Fairfield Street requesting an update on an earlier request for help with rodent issue on the 300 block. Campayno states that no response has been received and asks that Council reimburse for fees to hire pest control.

Sam St. Clair reported that Code Enforcement Officer Shawn Knepper notified the game commission and is waiting for a response.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PARKS & RECREATION

Mariah Fisher, Chair of the Parks & Recreation Committee reported that Street Supervisor Ron Ross has taken the hanging baskets for Diamond Park to be planted. The baskets are expected to be ready and installed for Memorial Day.

Repairs have been made to the roof at Friendship Park damaged from a wind storm last month.

Walk Works Grant:

Grant opportunity offered from the PA Department of Health which promotes physical activities. Bethany Caldwell of Ligonier Township reached out to the Borough to partner with the Township to expand our walking trail. A Letter of intent is asked from the Borough of

Ligonier if interested and is due May 22, 2020. Deadline for submitting application is July 2, 2020.

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Mariah Fisher to approve and refer to Parks and Recreation Committee for the Letter of Intent. All of Council was in favor.

TOWN HALL

Town Hall Chair Judy Hoffer thanked Council for voting to keep Town Hall closed to the public during the yellow phase of the pandemic.

Waiting to hear from roofers for Town Hall.

PUBLIC WORKS

Robert Barron, Chairman of Public Works Committee reported that the Public Works crew have found some small motors and generators in the garage that have been fixed up and will be placed on Municipal Bid.

The crew is also doing line painting on the streets.

JR COUNCIL

Izabella Wentzell reported that this would be her last meeting with Ligonier Borough Council. She reported that she has learned a lot and enjoyed her experience.

Council Mariah Fisher, Jeff Craig and Sam St. Clair thanked her for her service.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Chairman Jeff Craig had nothing to report in Public Safety.

Chief John Berger reported that LV Police Department had a busy month with domestic violence. Chief Berger reported that the Ford Explorer has been placed into service and are waiting on the Ford F150.

Fire Chief Corey Blystone reported that the fire department placed into service two new rescue tools: Genesis Battery Powered Rescue Cutter and a Battery Powered Spreader (Jaws of Life).

Jeff Craig added that the Fire Department / LV Police Department has boosted the morale of several youngsters by participating in drive-by birthday parades.

FINANCE

Chairman Nate Sylvester reported that a CD has matured \$52,000 and will be moved to a money market account to keep it liquid if needed.

Electricity Contract expires for the Borough in 2021, if locked in and extend contract to 2025 we can achieve an 8.5% reduction in cost.

A motion was made by Nate Sylvester and seconded by Matt Smith to sign the electricity contract for the next four years to 2025. All of Council was in favor.

The finance committee has been looking into the sale of the old Borough building (old police station) and therefore it will need to be assessed for real estate value as well as have a market analysis completed.

A motion was made by Nate Sylvester and seconded by Mariah Fisher to look into receiving estimates for appraisal and market analysis for the Borough property at 112 N Fairfield Street (old police station) for possible sale. The motion carried with all in favor.

Nate closed by commenting that Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw and the finance committee have been reviewing the projected impact of the crisis on both revenue and expenses. Nate reported that Jan, Mariah Fisher and he attended a webinar put on by the Borough's Association to ensure that we are doing the correct things in managing the Borough in this crisis

and hearing what other Boroughs are doing. Planning, Personnel, Public Works and Town Hall are evaluating what expenses can be eliminated or reduced in align with the reduction in revenue we are facing with parking, parking fines, permits and Earned Income Tax.

PLANNING / PERSONNEL

Chairman Matt Smith had nothing on Planning but asked for an executive session for Personnel at the close of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Real Estate Tax Resolution: #2020-2

A Resolution to extend the Real Estate tax deadline due to COVID-19, discounting 2020 real estate taxes by 2% shall be extended to August 31, 2020. Penalties shall be waived if taxes are paid in full by December 31, 2020. After December 31, 2020, real estate taxes shall be subject to the normal delinquent penalties and fees.

A motion was made by Nate Sylvester and seconded by Judy Hoffer to adopt Resolution 2020-2. All of Council was in favor.

Fort Ligonier Days 2020:

A discussion took place regarding the decision to be made for Fort Ligonier Days 2020 due to concerns of the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic. President Sam St. Clair and Jeff Craig expressed their thoughts to cancel the event for this year for obvious safety reasons while others felt the need to wait another month to make the decision.

Councilwoman Mariah Fisher expressed that no one wants to cancel Fort Ligonier Days and everyone understands the impact that it has on our community and businesses. However we do not know what this virus will look like in the fall. Fisher agreed with Councilman Matt Smith that it is too early to make a decision. Fisher feels talks should be had with the Fort Ligonier Days Committee, the Fort, and the LV Chamber.

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Mariah Fisher for Ligonier Borough Council's Fort Ligonier Day Committee to meet with Fort Ligonier Days Inc. Committee and come back to June Council meeting with either a decision or framework for making a decision for no later than July 1, 2020. All of Council was in favor.

COMMENDATIONS and COMMENTS from OFFICERS & DEPARTMENTS

Secretary-Treasurer Jan Shaw reported that the June 2, 2020 primary election polling location has been changed from the Town Hall to the old town hall building (former Police Station) @ 112 North Fairfield Street. Due to the Covid-19 the decision was made to hold the election there because it will be easier to clean afterwards and shut down. It has been properly advertised.

Shaw also thanked Izabella Wentzell for serving as Ligonier Borough's first ever Jr. Council.

Engineer Ben Faas presented the proposed Stormwater Management Ordinance discussed at last month's meeting.

A motion was made by Mariah Fisher and seconded by Matt Smith to advertise the Stormwater Management Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.

Zoning Officer Rick Schwab reported that the zoning front has been quiet however two building permits were issued this month.

Mayor Bellas thanked Izabella Wentzell for her service as Jr. Council. Bellas also thanked Council for extending the free parking until June 1, 2020.

Mayor Bellas questioned the need to extend the Emergency Disaster Declaration to June 11, 2020.

A motion was made by Mariah Fisher and seconded by Matt Smith to extend the Emergency Disaster Declaration until the June 11, 2020 meeting. The motion carried with all in favor.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

A motion was made by Jeff Craig and seconded by Matt Smith to adjourn into executive for personnel with no action to be taken. The motion carried with all of Council in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Janette Shaw
Secretary-Treasurer