

SHICKSHINNY BOROUGH
WORK SESSION FEBRUARY 24, 2022
MINUTES

The monthly work session meeting of the Borough of Shickshinny Council was held on Thursday, February 24, 2022, in the Council room of the Shickshinny Municipal Building. President Jessica Bolles called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Per roll call, the following members of Council were present: Rosalie Whitebread, Jim Wido, Joe Buchalski, and Jessica Bolles. Councilman Kevin Kruczek was absent.

Others in attendance: Mayor Jordan Madl, Bobbi Titus, Attorney Sean Logsdon, Larry Frace, Kathy Llewelyn, Barry Noss, Rickey Noss, Jeff Noss, Holly Morris, Kevin Morris, Josh Gregory, Walter Sims, and Greg Shoemaker.

President Bolles welcomed residents in attendance and asked if residents had any comments on agenda items. There were no comments.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Front Bathroom – Jessica is awaiting a return call from Chapin on the status of repairs. There is presently an out of order sign on the door and it should be functional and accessible. It was noted that there is a blockage in the sewage line.

Sidewalk Subsidence – 15 W Butler St – Sidewalk Subsidence - Jessica referenced the report provided to Council on the Reilly Associates inspection of the property. Per the engineer's report, there was no change from when it was fixed in October 2021 to now. Jessica noted that she spoke to Mark Yeager from PennDOT, and he stated that W Butler Street was up for repayment this spring/summer. Jim Wido stated that he and Alex Blydenburgh also went to the site and did not see anything wrong with what was repaired. Jim did state that the area from the phone company on down was a problem with runoff/flooding as it is causing many problems and damage for residents. He further stated that the creek needs to be dredged and that the Borough should consider doing what is needed even if it means taking some money from the Garrison Fund as this would benefit the community. There was much discussion on this issue and dredging the creek will be added to the March 8th agenda.

MAYOR'S REPORT – Mayor Jordan Madl stated that there would be a fire victim meeting on 3/1/22 at 6:00 PM at the Borough Building.

ENGINEER'S REPORT – No report was presented.

ZONING OFFICER'S REPORT – Larry Frace stated his employees should not be harassed by any Council member for doing their job and negative comments should not be made against his company. Rosalie stated she was not making accusations or harassing, but simply asking a question for a resident. There was a heated exchange between Kathy Llewelyn and Larry on the condition of the property at 10 Nicely Street. Larry explained that he has requested access to inspect the inside of the property for several years and, since access has been denied, the issue is now in the hands of the

magistrate. Larry provides Council with a list of all properties he is reviewing each month demonstrating there is no targeting of any property owners. Council expressed to Larry that Council is pleased with the work he is doing for the Borough.

Jim asked Larry about the sink hole in the alley on West Union Street. Larry stated that it was on private property and up to the property owner to dig it up and determine the cause of the subsidence. Ralph Kelchner inspected the site and it is way off of the right-of-way. Until the property owner digs it up, there is nothing further for the Borough to do.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT – Solicitor Sean Logsdon provided the Solicitor's Report.

LSA Gaming Grant - An LSA Grant (DCED) from PA State Gaming Funds is now accepting applications with a deadline of March 15, 2022 and a \$100 nonrefundable application fee. He stated that no matching funds are required for this grant and approval to proceed with the application would be needed from Council at this March 8th meeting. There was discussion on possible projects including the purchase of a new truck and a new salt shed. Rosalie thought that the purchase of the truck, sewer authority, and Chestnut Street drain was included in the CDBG grant with Reilly. Sean will contact Reilly to confirm what is included in the previously submitted grant. Rosalie said Sean to also ask Reilly the status on the \$850,000 grant for the building. Jim noted that Furnace Street is also cracking and signs of wear and tear. Jessica suggested to find out what Reilly has included in their grant and what Union Township has planned for the repair of Chestnut Street and then decide what to include in our application. Costs of items, authorization of the person to apply for the grant, and authorization of payment of the \$100 application fee is needed at the March 8 meeting.

Furnace Street Fire Site – At issue is the payment of the Bdaric invoice for the demolition of the site. Sean contacted the DA's office and confirmed that there are no discretionary funds available to localities for this emergency expense. He also contacted Mark Hurst from Luzerne County to determine if any monetary allocations are available. He further noted that possibly the American Rescue Funds could initially be used for this purpose. Sean suggested a first step would be to notify the property owner indicating the Borough expended the funds for the necessary demolition and request reimbursement and/or insurance information. After discussion, Council agreed that a letter from the attorney be sent to the deeded Furnace Street property owner requesting insurance information and/or payment of this invoice. Sean will obtain the deeded property owner address from the Tax Claim Bureau.

Sean provided a copy of the final rule for the American Rescue Plan Fiscal Recovery Funds Program and explained there is more latitude with qualified expenditures under the category of "lost revenue" if under \$10 million and as long as we do not violate any of specifics items not allowed.

Sean asked if a zoning amendment for a set-back issue was approved at the last meeting. Council confirmed the amendment was approved. Sean explained that the local planning commission and Luzerne County Planning Commission receive proposed zoning changes in advance and have 30 days to comment before approval by council. Presently the Shickshinny Planning Commission is vacant.

Sean asked Council if there were any issues with short-term rentals in the Borough. He further explained that this is becoming an issue with many municipal leaders who do not want transient residents. Sean indicated that leaders should stay ahead of this issue and establish any appropriate amendments or supplement existing zoning ordinances.

A meeting needs to be scheduled with the Historical Society to finalize the existing LSA grant. Rosalie noted she is unsure of the amount remaining in the grant with Ashburn Associates. Jim Bach was supposed to attend the last meeting but he did not attend. Jessica indicated a meeting with Jim Bach is needed.

Rosalie asked the status on the \$16,000 invoice from John Ackerman, Twin Oaks, for the unfinished Rock Street paving/guiderails project. Sean suggested he send a letter to Twin Oaks stating the remaining grant money available of \$4,000 be used to satisfy the open invoice. All agreed with the approach.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT – Bobbi Titus presented the following:

- Draft Minutes of the General Council Meeting – February 8, 2022 (written by Jessica Bolles) – for review
- Financial Report/Bank Balances as of February 24, 2022 – for review
- February 2022 Bills Paid to be Ratified – for review

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Email from Harvis Inc. – Jessica explained that rate information was provided was for any employee recruitment needed for the Borough. Jessica noted that the services were not needed at this time but the information would be retained for possible future use.

Paul Burr – Jessica stated an email was received from a retired Marine requesting any historical patches from Shickshinny PD and FD. Jessica responded to the email noting we did not have anything from the Borough and forwarded the email to Fire Chief Stephen McDaniels.

Susquehanna Greenway Partnership – participation in cleanup during Earth week (4/16-4/24) – There was discussion on community participation noting that Shickshinny was not involved last year and getting community volunteers could be an issue. Jessica stated she would reach out to Susquehanna Greenway for more information and the deadline for participation.

Successlandbuyer Inc – It was noted that the bulk of the properties are FEMA properties which cannot be sold. No further action to be taken.

OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PSAB Final Rule for American Rescue Plan Fiscal Recovery Funds Program – This topic was previously covered by Attorney Logsdon.

US Census Bureau BAS Survey – 3/1/22 & 5/31/22 Deadlines – The voluntary survey and deadlines were noted by Jessica.

NEW BUSINESS

Luzerne County EMA Radiological Emergency Response Fund (RERF) Grant – Deadline 5/20/22 – Rosalie explained that this was an annual \$1,500 grant where purchases are made and receipts are submitted by the deadline for reimbursement. She noted that a base station and two handhelds are needed. There was discussion on the cost of the needed equipment as compared to the grant amount. It was stated that Jay Smith is the EMA director. It was suggested to talk to Tina Remensnyder or Hower's in Berwick for equipment specs and pricing. Joe Buchalski noted that digital radios would be the requirement by the end of 2022 and would render traditional scanners ineffective. Joe stated he will obtain information on the needed equipment.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE

Walter Sims commented on the “No Parking” signs on Baer Street near his Nicely Street property. He stated there have been complaints about his tenants parking there. There was a heated discussion among the residents in attendance, Council, and Mr. Sims. Mr. Sims has requested that the no-parking signs be removed and the street be made into a one-way street. Council will consider the request to make it one-way.

Rickey Noss asked if Kevin Kruczek can be replaced on Council for absences. Attorney Logsdon explained that a Council member can only be replaced under very extreme circumstances, per Borough Code and payment cannot be stopped.

Rickey Noss asked if \$5,000 of the American Rescue Funds received can go to the Shickshinny Sewer Authority. Jessica asked that the Sewer Authority submit an official request to Shickshinny Borough Council for consideration. There was discussion about the \$400,000 grant to the Sewer Authority from Retreat. Sean noted that the \$400,000 grant was to take care of specific projects, not disburse direct payment. Also, it was stated, that the Sewer Authority can come through Shickshinny Borough for grant requests.

There was further discussion on dredging the creek. Rosalie stated that the creek was not the Borough responsibility. Jim stated that the Borough used to maintain the creek and suggested taking money from the Garrison Fund or the American Rescue money to do this.

Holly Morris would like to know how much was spent on Christmas lights by the Borough. Bobbi will look into this.

Josh Gregory asked about the sink hole near his property. Jessica stated that the project to resolve this is on hold. Jessica will contact Reilly for a status on the project, why it was halted, and how to proceed.

Josh Gregory asked about removal of the junk cars on the back alley (next to Jack Wall's house). He said the vehicles were not inspected and asked if there were ordinances in place for this. Jessica will have Ralph Kelchner check into this.

Holly Morris stated that the parking situation on Baer Street is serious and asked for a copy of any Borough Meeting Minutes when the placement of the no-parking signs was decided. Bobbi will check the minutes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – No executive session was held.

Adjournment – Joe moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Rosalie. The meeting adjourned at 7:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta J. Titus, Secretary
Borough of Shickshinny