

**Borough of New Stanton
Borough Council
New Stanton Council Chambers
February 6, 2023, 6 PM
Minutes of Council Meeting**

Attendance

Councilmembers: Todd Bartlow, Jeff Kerr, Tim Seale, Ray Strosko, and Edwina Zack. Also present Mayor Tom Smith.

Also in attendance: Borough Solicitor Alex Brown, Borough Engineer Steve Eby and Borough Manager Jeff McLaughlin.

The Meeting Began at 7 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was recited.

Prayer

There was a Moment of Silence for the passing of Linda Echard and Jeff M. recited a prayer.

Approval of Bills

Todd made a motion seconded by Edwina to approve the bills in the amount of \$145,056.22. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of the January 2, 2024 Meeting

Tim made a motion seconded by Todd to approve the minutes of the January 2, 2024 meeting. Motion passed with all voting in favor with the exception of Tim who abstained.

Bid Opening Sandworks Bridge Project

Steve opened the bids:

Bioni Drilling Inc.	\$85,500.00
CHD Enterprises	\$104,700.00
Hogen's Heroes, Inc. dba as J5 Construction	\$149,000.00
Gery Metzinger Cement Contractor, Inc.	\$109,900.00
J.F. Shea Construction, Inc.	\$199,200.00
KGD Contracting, Inc.	\$90,000.00
Lone Pine Construction	\$165,516.63
Piccolomini Development	\$85,000.00
Pugliano Construction Co. Inc.	\$109,430.00
Roger Suter and Sons Inc.	\$67,000.00

Opportunity for Public Comment -- Items Not on the Agenda

Kenneth Bacha, Director of Community Outreach, Mutual Aid Ambulance Service

Mr. Bacha gave an overview of Mutual Aid. He stated that they serve 33 municipalities, 28 in Westmoreland County and 5 in Fayette County, providing service to about 186,000 residents in those areas. He stated that in 2023 they had 492 911 emergency calls for an ambulance from New Stanton Borough. That did not include the routine non-emergency calls like patient transfers. He stated that they are hoping to get a liaison from the borough to whom they could provide updates.

He stated that the annual membership application will be mailed out to residents in February and March. He referenced an article from a Pennsylvania township magazine which states that there is a financial crisis with EMS providers. Mr. Bacha said that Mutual Aid's financial reserves have gone down by half over the last several years. He said that they would like to approach area municipal governments about possible donations. They are a 501(c)3 non-profit. Currently the only municipality giving Mutual Aid money is the City of Jeannete, which recently lost its ambulance service and contracted with Mutual Aid to provide coverage.

Rob Cammarata, Fire Chief, New Stanton Volunteer Fire Department

Rob stated that the agenda item regarding the testing of asbestos at the fire station is an important step in continuing to prepare for the bidding out of a new building. He said that the lack of a federal budget is holding up the possible awarding by the Department of Agricultural of the large grant that was applied for. Along with the asbestos testing, Rob said that some other pre-development steps need to be taken including the construction drawings and specifications. He said that the idea is to still build the station on the same location as the existing station so as to eliminate stormwater permits.

Opportunity for Public Comment -- on Agenda Items Only

There were no public comments.

Agenda

1. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action Awarding the Sandworks Bridge Project

Todd made a motion seconded by Ray to award the Sandworks Bridge Project to Roger Suter and Sons in the amount of \$67,000 with an alternate award to Piccolomini Development in the amount of \$85,000.00 pending review of the bids by the engineer and solicitor. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Discussion and/or Deliberation and/or Official Action on Resolution 2024-1067 Accepting the Resignation of Edward Lucas from Council

Todd made a motion seconded by Tim to adopt Resolution 2024-1067 accepting the resignation of Edward Lucas from council. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to Adopt Resolution 2024-1068 Increasing the Pay of the Zoning Hearing Board Members

Jeff M. stated that the current pay is \$10 per meeting. Alex pointed out that under the borough code, Zoning Hearing Board and Planning Commission members cannot make more than members of council. Borough council members currently earn \$1,200. Someone who is on both planning and council cannot get paid double.

Todd made a motion seconded by Tim to adopt Resolution 2024-1068 increasing the pay of the Zoning Hearing Board Members to \$50 per meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to Advertise Ordinance 2024-285 To Pay Planning Commission Members

Alex pointed out that currently Planning Commission members can request reimbursement for authorized, reasonable and necessary expenses by presentation of an invoice to borough council. He said that this seems convoluted and he has never recalled anyone requesting reimbursement. He stated that because paying Planning Commission members on a per meeting basis would be such a big change compared to the existing set-up, an ordinance is necessary as opposed to a resolution.

Todd made a motion seconded by Edwina to advertise Ordinance 2024-285 which would pay Planning Commission members \$50 per meeting attended. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Presentation by Prospective Council Members

Four residents applied for the two open council seats: Brandon Clawson, who was unable to attend the meeting, George Scott Miller, Cory Thoma and Steve Veliky.

Jeff K. invited the prospective council members to give a small presentation expressing why they are interested in joining council.

Steve Veliky, Chanticleer Circle

Mr. Veliky said that he is a 21-year resident of the borough. He is married and has two children. He was involved in youth sports for many years with his children. He is a hard worker being in the field of business since he was 19, first with UPS for almost 10 years, moving up into management and after that, he was in the corrosion resistant piping business for 20 years. He stated that he is a good communicator and believes in building relationships and would bring those talents to council.

Cory Thoma, Edgewood Dr.

Cory stated that he is 34 years old and has three children. He stated that he ran for school board twice and had the opportunity to meet many residents when he was campaigning. He is a graduate of Washington and Jefferson College and has his doctorate in Computer Science from the University of Pittsburgh. He is a senior software engineer for Arcadia. He stated that he works from home, which gives him more time to spend with his children. He said that he would welcome the opportunity to work with the council and feels that given his work experience he would have something to contribute.

George Scott Miller, N. Center Ave.

George stated that he goes by his middle name, Scott. He stated his family originally purchased a farm 97 years ago in New Stanton and that is where he currently lives,. After graduation he went to the Allegheny Training Center as a machine operator. He then worked at Central Westmoreland Career and Technology as maintenance supervisor. The position required him to be involved in the management of facilities including budgeting, maintenance staff supervision and overseeing contractors and subcontractors. He said that he was heavily involved in the school renovation which occurred in 2013. If appointed, he said that he hoped his experience and work history might benefit the community.

6. Discussion and/or Deliberation and/or Official Action on Resolution 2024-1069

Appointing _____ to Council

Todd made a motion seconded by Edwina adopting Resolution 2024-1069 appointing George Scott Miller to council. Motion passed with all voting in favor with the exception of Ray who voted *no*.

Jeff M. stated that before taking a seat on council appointed candidates need to take an *Oath of Office* and an *Oath of Residency*. These documents will be available at the borough office and will need to be notarized. Assistant Borough Manager Anita Hoffman can notarize these documents.

Jeff M. also went over the council meeting schedule.

7. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action on Resolution 2024-1070

Appointing _____ to Council

Edwina made a motion seconded by Ray that Cory Thoma be appointed to Council. Motion passed with all voting in favor with the exception of Todd who voted *no*.

8. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action on Resolution 2024-1071

Appointing _____ to the Planning Commission

Todd made a motion seconded by Tim adopting Resolution 2024-1071 appointing Steve Velicky to the Planning Commission. Motion passed unanimously.

9. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action on Resolution 2024-_____

Appointing _____ to the Planning Commission

Brandon Clawson was mentioned for this seat, but he was not present to ask if he would be interested.

Todd made a motion seconded by Edwina to table adoption of this resolution appointing another candidate to the Planning Commission.

10. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to hire A&B Accounting and Tax Services, LLC (Formerly Henninger Accounting Services to Perform the 2023 Borough and Tax Collector Audits at a Cost of \$8,500

Ray made a motion seconded by Todd to hire A&B Accounting and Tax Services, LLC (Formerly Henninger Accounting Services) to perform the 2023 borough and tax collector audits at a cost of \$8,500. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to Hire Widmer Engineering at the 2024 rates as the Borough Engineer

Edwina made a motion seconded by Todd to hire Widmer Engineering at the 2024 rates as the Borough Engineer. Motion passed with all voting in favor with the exception of Ray who abstained.

12. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to Advertise for Paving Bids for Shrader Hollow, Stratford Ct. and Hill St.

Jeff M. stated that these were included in the 2024 Budget. Only a portion of Shrader Hollow would be paved -- from the median to the borough line.

Todd made a motion seconded by Ray to advertise for paving bids for Shrader Hollow, Stratford Ct. and Hill St. Motion passed unanimously.

13. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to Award the Installation of Thermoplastic Stop Bars to Paving Marking Contractor's (PLP) Contract for Line Painting on Arona Road

Steve reviewed this proposal. He stated that the thermoplastic stop bars would last a lot longer at the Arona Road Center Avenue intersection. It was also recommended that these be installed at the Westinghouse N. Center intersection. Steve said that with council's approval the stop bars would be added to the N. Center Avenue line-painting contract with PLP which council approved previously.

Todd made a motion seconded by Ray to award the installation of thermoplastic stop bars to Paving Marking Contractor's (PLP) contract for line painting on Arona Road. Motion passed unanimously.

14. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to Adopt Resolution 2024-___ to Apply for a Grant for the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Jeff M. stated that this may have been put on the agenda prematurely, because the purpose and amount of the grant request has not yet been determined. The PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources accepts applications once a year. Eligible projects include parks, trails and other recreation. The application is due in April.

Jeff M. stated that the borough was awarded a \$209,000 grant from the Commonwealth Financing Authority thanks to Rep Eric Nelson and Senator Kim Ward. Steve stated that the grant was for completion of the walking trail, ADA bathrooms, a new pavilion and two bridge abutments

Steve asked if council would like to hold off on spending the \$209,000 and use it as a 50% match for a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant application. Jeff M. stated that the grants would be announced in September and if awarded, the money would

be available at the beginning of 2025. Steve said that there is a three year window for the \$209,000 to be spent.

Tom expressed concern about adding too much to the park because of the limited parking. He stated that a comprehensive plan needs developed. Todd suggested getting the committee together to prioritize the plans for the park.

There was agreement to use the existing \$209,000 grant as a match toward the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources application.

Todd made a motion seconded by Tim to table adopting this resolution. Motion passed unanimously.

15. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to have a Building-Wide Asbestos Analysis of the New Stanton Fire Station

Jeff K. stated that regardless of whether the fire station is replaced, the building needs tested for asbestos.

Tim made a motion seconded by Ray to have a building-wide asbestos analysis of the fire station using the existing grant funds. Motion passed unanimously.

16. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to Install and Monitor GPS in Borough Public Works Trucks

Jeff K. stated that the purpose of installing GPS in the trucks is not to check up on the workers, but rather to let us know their whereabouts in the event of an emergency. He said that GPS trackers would also allow the borough to determine if a road has been salted in case a resident calls saying that their road was not salted. He reported that the monitoring fee is \$15 per month per truck.

There was a discussion about the merits of installing GPS in the trucks.

Council decided to take no action.

17. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action Regarding Borough Requirements for Paving Repairs by Utility Companies

Jeff M. said that John Barnes suggested that the borough require that utility companies patch roads at least half the width of the street or the full width of the street when making repairs. Jeff M. stated that this came up because the gas company put in a PA One Call to replace the gas line on Arona Road from the intersection with Northeast Drive to the end of the cul-de-sac, which the borough just paved. Jeff M. pointed out that Steve notifies all utility companies to make any necessary improvements before a paving project starts and the gas company did not inform the borough of this plan.

Jeff M. stated that the code of ordinances does not spell out a specific size of patch required after repairs by utility companies. Alex stated that he would review the ordinance and bring suggestions back to council.

Todd made a motion seconded by Edwina to authorize Alex to draft an ordinance for council's consideration regarding the patching of roads as a result of utility work. Motion passed unanimously.

18. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action Readvertising New Planning Commission meeting date for February

Jeff M. stated that the reasoning for advertising a new meeting date is that the scheduled February Planning Commission meeting falls on February 14th and after contacting members about the date he found out that there was not enough for a quorum.

Todd made a motion seconded by Tim to readvertise a new Planning Commission meeting date for February. Motion passed unanimously.

19. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to Have the Borough Pay for Representative(s) to Attend the PSB Annual Conference

Todd made a motion seconded by Ray to have the Borough pay for representatives to attend the PSB Annual Conference. Motion passed unanimously.

20. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action Authorizing the Purchase of a Plaque and a \$100.00 gift card for Former Solicitor John Campfield

Todd made a motion seconded by Tim authorizing the purchase of a plaque and a \$100.00 gift card for former Solicitor John Campfield. Motion passed unanimously.

There was discussion about doing something to honor Linda Echard. Alex stated that an expenditure of funds in order to honor Linda should be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

21. Discussion and or Deliberation and/or Official Action to Purchase Embroidered Jackets, Shirts and Pins for Council Members

After discussion, council decided to take no action.

22. Discussion and or Deliberation on Whether to hold an Easter Egg Hunt

Jeff M. stated that typically the Easter Egg Hunt is held on the Sunday before Easter.

Todd made a motion seconded by Edwina to hold the Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday March 24, 2024. Motion passed unanimously.

23. Discussion and or Deliberation and or Official Action to Designate April 2024 as Pennsylvania 811 Safe Digging Month

Todd made a motion seconded by Ray to designate April 2024 as Pennsylvania 811 Safe Digging Month. Motion passed unanimously.

24. Reminder: Ethics Forms are Due 5/1/24

Jeff M. stated that he had the ethics forms available.

Reports

Administrative

Borough Manager's Report

Jeff M. reported that:

- He put together a list of vacant and dilapidated properties in the borough for Rep. Eric Nelson as per Jeff K. request. There is a group that is interested in developing houses for veterans on these lots.
- It appears that there will be variance applications being submitted to the zoning hearing board by 4 property owners.
- He has been contacted by a company that is interested in purchasing and moving the electronic billboard that is visible from I-70. The developer will be submitting a sign application.
- All of the bank signature cards have been updated.
- Mason began January 8th and is doing a good job.
- With the winter weather, the public works crew has been doing some inside work, painting the garage.
- The public works crew also cut down some shrubbery and trees in preparation of the elimination of the *No Turn on Red* signs at the intersection of Arona and Center.

Planning Commission's Report

No report.

Code Enforcement Report

Jeff M. reviewed Mark Cypher's report.

Todd asked if a lien could be placed on a property if the owner does not pay a fine levied due to a code violation. Alex stated that it depends on the situation.

Solicitor's Report

Alex stated that he put together the resolution to increase the pay of the Zoning Hearing Board members, drafted the ordinance to pay the Planning Commission and has been keeping up on the Stipkovic matter. He stated that he has reviewed all of the transcripts from the Stipkovic proceedings and is currently awaiting the brief from Mr. Stipkovic's attorney. He stated that the borough's brief is due on March 18, 2024, and oral arguments are scheduled before Judge Smail on April 18th 2024. He mentioned that he will be working on the utility street opening repair

ordinance. He stated that he has been reviewing the borough zoning ordinance and realized that in the R-2 zoning district, the permeability requirement is 95%. He stated that this makes properties in that zoning district essentially unbuildable. He said that if council is okay, he could put together an ordinance amending the requirement for council's consideration. Council agreed.

Engineer's Report

Steve brought up the idea of approaching the owners of properties across the creek from the park about possibly donating their property to the borough for the expansion of the park.

Council of Governments Formation

Jeff K. reported on the most recent meeting. He stated that he is learning more about the group and has questions.

For the new council members, Jeff M. gave an overview of the group and of the former council of governments that seems to be defunct.

Fire Department Liaison

Ray stated that the fire department needs help. They had 463 calls last year and each call takes at least an hour.

Tim stated that his son in law who is a fireman responded to 5 calls on a recent Saturday. Tim said that the fire department needs more members. Ray said they recently received two new volunteers and it seemed like a miracle.

Tom said that lack of manpower is common throughout fire departments.

Steve mentioned the idea of a tax credit which has seen another community provide to its fire department. Jeff M. stated that this was brought up to council several years ago, but it was not acted on because there were concerns about how to monitor it.

Ray said that the state used to pay fireman \$5 per call but that program ended and in its place the fire department is proving a stipend of \$4 per call.

Council President

Jeff K. said that with the new council members appointed, he will be reviewing the make-up of the committees once again. He will be reaching out to them to see which committees they would prefer joining.

Mayor

Tom reiterated the need for a park plan. He also stated that he would be against a bridge going over the creek at the park.

Council Committees

Administration/Personnel

Jeff K. stated that he is working with Jeff M. on establishing an evaluation system so as to have documentation at the end of the year to determine if any raises are to be given.

Public Works/MS4 & Parks

Jeff K. stated that the first check was cut for the new splash pad.

Community Engagement

Jeff K. stated that the next activity of the Community Engagement Committee is the Easter egg hunt.

Workplace Safety Committee

Jeff M. said that the next meeting of the Safety Committee will be on February 20th.

Finance Report

Todd reviewed the financial report: as of January 29, 2024, there was a checking balance of \$849,070.19; the total of all savings accounts was \$867,212.08 and the taxes remitted from December 28, 2023 through January 29, 2024 were \$23,263.47.

Additional Opportunity for Public Comment

Announcements

Jeff K. stated that if necessary, the second meeting of the month will be on February 20, 2024, if necessary, otherwise the next meeting will be on March 5, 2024 at 6 PM.

Adjournment

Todd made a motion seconded by Ray to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey McLaughlin
Secretary