

## AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

December 17, 2019

The regular monthly meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania, 19002.

Council President DeRuosi called the Council Meeting to order. Mayor Sorg led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call** – Present: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mr. Zaccone, Ms. Tomlinson, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott and Mrs. Siskind. Mayor Sorg, Chief Hoffman, Solicitor Joe Bresnan of Dischell, Bartle & Dooley and Borough Manager Aversa were present. Mr. Pasceri was absent.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the November 19, 2019 Council Meeting as corrected. Seconded. Carried.

**A presentation** was made by Ambler Rotary to the Ambler Police Department with a check for \$10,000 for the purchase of bullet-proof vests. Chief Hoffman commended the Rotary Club for their civic efforts and thanked them for the gift.

**A presentation** was made by Mayor Sorg to outgoing Councilpersons in attendance, Ms. Tomlinson and Mr. Zaccone, for their service to the Ambler Borough community by serving on Council.

### **Public Comment Period: At Issue, Pickering Field**

Given the large public turnout of residents this evening, prior to hearing Committee Reports, Council heard public comment on the use of Pickering Field. At a prior meeting some residents who live across from the field had asked Council to consider limiting Ambler Junior Baseball (AJB) use at the field, including potentially removal of at least one baseball field. They cited congestion, lack of parking, noise and lack of ‘walkability’ among other concerns.

This evening, Scott Miller, President of Ambler Junior Baseball for the past 10 years made a presentation to Council in support of AJB activities. He stated he was aware that these neighbors had circulated a letter dated December 8<sup>th</sup> and that this had prompted him, along with an estimated 50 members of the public to come out in support of the AJB programs. He stated that AJB is willing to spread out its playing schedule, add trees and more grass. He noted that a request had been made to install rain gardens, benches and picnic tables. He stated that the installation of crushed aggregate walking paths would disrupt ball-playing activities. He stated AJB could not limit playing time to 11-4 on Saturday only and from 3-5:30 on weekdays. He stated that with 350 children participating in the organization’s activities AJB cannot exist within those parameters. He added that AJB sets

its playing schedule which is weather dependent, and that it would be burdensome for the Borough for AJB to obtain written advanced permission to use the fields as has been requested by these Pickering Field neighbors.

Mr. Miller noted that Pickering is called a “Field” and not a “Park” or “Playground.” He stated that prior to being named Pickering Field, the area was called Lindenwold Park and had been established since before 1925. He stressed that this is not a field for ‘passive activities.’ He felt that the neighborhood complaints were ‘attacks’ on the kids. He stated that AJB does not use cancer-causing chemicals on the field, but rather vinegar, salt, dish soap and water. He state the field is 95 percent permeable surfaces and that AJB is not responsible for creating stormwater runoff. He noted that the residents have driveways and that on-street parking actually slows traffic. He urged Council to look at Ambler’s parks system as a whole, stating that Pickering Field is also used for basketball, soccer and even throwing a football. He stated the baseball/softball season runs mid-April until the end of the school year (approximately six weeks) and that use of the field for Fall Ball and girls’ softball is limited.

Members of the public in attendance spoke in support of AJB, the value of youth sports to this community and the importance of AJB activities to themselves and their children. Speaking were Borough residents from 312 Rosemary Avenue, 353 Rosemary Avenue, 151 Walnut Street, 40 School Street, 144 Greenwood Avenue and 333 Euclid Avenue as well as speakers from 425 Francis Avenue (Lower Gwynedd), 245 Ridings Way (Whitpain), 205 Carpenter Lane (Blue Bell), a speaker from Blue Bell, and a speaker from Horsham.

In contrast, Alex Gionta of 322 Highland Avenue stated that while he recognized the assembly’s real passion for the sport and the field, both parking and trash accumulation were a problem. He stated he was looking for suggestions that would improve the Borough’s facilities such as the addition of a walking path at the Field.

In closing, Scott Miller stated that Pickering Field is not exclusively for AJB use but is for all kids who play any sports.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania, 19002. Present: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mr. Pasceri, Mr. Zaccone, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. Tomlinson, Ms. DiPietro and Mrs. Siskind. Mayor Sorg, Chief Hoffman, Solicitor Joe Bresnan of Dischell, Bartle & Dooley and Borough Manager Aversa were present. Ms. Endicott was absent.

### **Public Safety Committee – Mr. Claudio Zaccone, Chairperson**

Committee members: Mrs. Deininger, Mrs. Siskind

The Public Safety Committee report was given this evening by Mr. Zaccone.

**The Committee will consider no actions this evening.**

**In other business the following was reviewed:**

1. The Police, Community Ambulance Association and Fire Department reports were received.
2. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were received.
3. The next Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled for Thursday, December 26 from 2-7 p.m. in the Borough Hall Gym. An appointment to give may be made at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) (keyword 'ambler') or by calling 1-800-Red Cross. Walk-ins welcome.

Mr. Zaccone asked if there were comments or questions from Council or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

**Public Utilities Committee – Mrs. Glynnis Siskind, Chairperson**

Committee members: Mr. Pasceri, Mr. Zaccone, Ms. Tomlinson

The Public Utilities Committee report was given this evening by Mrs. Siskind.

**The Committee will consider no actions this evening.**

**Approved at Committee Meeting:**

1. Consider awarding the project bid for the WWTP electrical installation of blowers (digester conversion) to Cedar Electric for the low bid of \$149,000. Motion to approve. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

**In other business the following was reviewed:**

1. The WWTP Engineer's report was received.
2. Authorization was granted to advertise for public bid for a general contractor to remove the existing digester covers and install the aeration piping.
3. Proposed Ordinance 1115 regarding the establishment of the Ambler Water Authority was advertised. A public meeting is scheduled for January 6 at 7:30 p.m. to consider the ordinance. Council shall consider compensation of Board members to be set at \$1,200 per year at the January Meeting.

Mrs. Siskind asked if there were comments or questions from Council or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

**Finance and Planning Committee – Ms. Francine Tomlinson, Chairperson**

Committee Members: Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott

The Finance and Planning Committee report was given this evening by Ms. Tomlinson.

**The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:**

1. Consideration that **November 2019** invoices in the amount of **\$620,095.36** (corrected total) be paid as follows: General (**\$143,030.81**); Street Lights (**\$8,756.93**); Fire (**\$8,024.00**); Refuse (**\$35,189.80** – corrected); Parks & Rec. (**\$13,870.91**); Water (**\$223,325.93.**); Sewer (**\$132,029.77**); WWTP (**\$51,309.55**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Water Capital (**\$0.00**); Liquid Fuels (**\$4,557.66**).
2. Consider adoption of the proposed 2020 Municipal Budget.
3. Consider advertisement for adoption of Ordinance 1114 Fixing the Real Estate Tax for 2020.
4. Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-12 Authorizing the Appropriation of Specific Funds for the Purposes of the Municipality in 2020.
5. Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-13 Revising Parking Violation Fines.
6. Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-14 Revising the Annual Trash Collection Fee Per Dwelling Unit.
7. Consider adoption of the PennDOT Winter Services Agreement.
8. Consider authorization to purchase refurbished parking meters to upgrade parking meters for the Borough.

**Approved at Committee Meeting:**

1. Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-15 authorizing application for a grant amount of \$355,093.02 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for installation of storm sewer along Edgewood Drive and Cove Road to mitigate flooding and the property and habitat damage frequently experienced in the vicinity of Ambler Borough Park and Rose Valley Creek. Motion to approve. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

**In other business the following was reviewed:**

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. The Planning Commission is preparing language to amend the Wireless Ordinance and fee schedule to comply with an FCC order as well as develop design requirements for wireless facilities in the rights-of-way to prevent aesthetically obtrusive facilities.

Ms. Tomlinson asked if there were comments or questions from Council or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

**Parks and Recreation Committee – Ms. Sara Hertz, Chairperson**

Committee members: Mrs. Deininger, Ms. Endicott

The Parks and Recreation Committee report was given this evening by Ms. Hertz.

**The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:**

1. Consider advertising for adoption a proposed Ordinance placing limitations on the use of certain single-use plastics and expanded polystyrene products, such advertisement and consideration to be made once the State ban on plastics and expanded polystyrene legislation has been lifted.

**In other business the following was reviewed:**

1. The Ambler Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) would like to give homeowners a rain barrel and will assess residential property storm water needs to see if the property qualifies for a reduced-cost rain garden, downspout planter or permeable conversion.
2. Borough has received notification that a '2020 Frostbite 5 Miler' will be held February 22, 2020. That organizing committee will notify neighbors along the course so that they are aware of the race.

Ms. Hertz asked if there were comments or questions from Council or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

**Salary and Personnel Committee – Mrs. Nancy Deininger, Chairperson**

Committee members: Mr. Pasceri, Mr. Zaccone, Ms. DiPietro

The Salary and Personnel Committee report was given this evening by Mrs. Deininger.

**The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:**

1. Consider reappointment of Cleneth Williams II to serve a full six-year term on the Civil Service Commission. Appointment is scheduled for consideration this evening so that the Commission is fully-seated for their January Reorganization Meeting scheduled for January 6, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Siskind asked the Borough Solicitor whether there is a conflict of interest having Mr. Williams serve on the Commission given the fact that his wife is a Police Department employee. Mr. Bresnan replied that since there is no immediacy of benefit gained, there is no conflict.

2. Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-16 Recognizing the Service of Councilperson Tomlinson.
3. Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-17 Recognizing the Service of Councilman Zaccone.
4. Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-18 Recognizing the Service of Councilman Pasceri.
5. Consider appointment of Nancy Roecker-Coates to the Ambler Environmental Advisory Council.

**In other business the following was reviewed:**

1. An Executive Session had been held prior to the Council Meeting regarding a grievance filed under the Police contract.

Discussion ensued. Resident Judy Baigis of 172 Tennis Avenue noted that the Executive Session held at the December 3, 2019 Committee Meeting did not appear on this evening's agenda. She stated she had filed and had received a response to her Right to Know request regarding the Executive Session concerning the issue of a salary increase for an employee. She requested that Council offer an increased degree of specificity as to the nature of their meetings regarding 'personnel issues.'

2. Several volunteer committee positions expire at the end of the year. Appointments will be made by Council at the January Meeting for Committees with expiring terms which include: Environmental Advisory Council (2 seats – 3 year term); Human Relations Commission (5 seats, 1 alternate seat – 3 year term); Planning Commission (3 seats – 4 year term); Vacancy Board (1 seat – 1 year term); and Zoning Hearing Board (1 seat plus 1 alternate seat – 3 year term). Interested candidates for appointment by Borough Council are asked to send a letter of interest & resume by December 10th to the Borough Manager at [manager@borough.ambler.pa.us](mailto:manager@borough.ambler.pa.us) or by mail to Borough Manager.

**Approved at Committee Meeting:**

1. An Executive Session was held prior to the December Committee Meeting regarding the issue of a salary increase for an employee. A motion to approve was made to raise the employee salary to an amount discussed at the Executive Session. Seconded. 8-0 Aye. Carried.

Mrs. Deininger asked if there were questions or comments from Council or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the report be accepted and filed. Seconded, carried.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Public Safety Committee** – The Committee will make no recommendations this evening.

**Public Utilities Committee** – The Committee will make no recommendations this evening.

*Approved at Committee Meeting:* Consider awarding the project bid for the WWTP electrical installation of blowers (digester conversion) to Cedar Electric for the low bid of \$149,000. Motion to approve. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

**Finance & Planning Committee** – The Committee recommends and Ms. Tomlinson moves:

Consideration that **November 2019** invoices in the amount of **\$620,095.36** (corrected total) be paid. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of the proposed 2020 Municipal Budget. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider advertisement for adoption of Ordinance 1114 Fixing the Real Estate Tax for 2020. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-12 Authorizing the Appropriation of Specific Funds for the Purposes of the Municipality in 2020. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-13 Revising Parking Violation Fines. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-14 Revising the Annual Trash Collection Fee Per Dwelling Unit. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of the PennDOT Winter Services Agreement. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider authorization to purchase refurbished parking meters to upgrade parking meters for the Borough. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

*Approved at Committee Meeting:* Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-15 authorizing application for a grant amount of \$355,093.02 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for installation of storm sewer along Edgewood Drive and Cove Road to mitigate flooding and the property and habitat damage frequently experienced in the vicinity of Ambler Borough Park and Rose Valley Creek. Motion to approve. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

**Parks & Recreation Committee** – The Committee recommends and Ms. Hertz moves:

Consider advertising for adoption a proposed Ordinance placing limitations on the use of certain single-use plastics and expanded polystyrene products, such advertisement and consideration to be made once the State ban on plastics and expanded polystyrene legislation has been lifted. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

**Salary & Personnel Committee** – The Committee recommends and Mrs. Deininger moves:

Consider reappointment of Cleneth Williams II to serve a full six-year term on the Civil Service Commission. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-16 Recognizing the Service of Councilperson Tomlinson. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-17 Recognizing the Service of Councilman Zaccone. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of Resolution 2019-18 Recognizing the Service of Councilman Pasceri. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

Consider appointment of Nancy Roecker-Coates to the Ambler Environmental Advisory Council. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

*Approved at Committee Meeting:* Consider approval to raise a Borough employee's salary to an amount discussed at the Executive Session. Seconded. 8-0 Aye. Carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

At the conclusion of the public meeting, Council allows the public time to comment on matters of interest or concern. Comment is not limited to current agenda items. During the Public Comment Period, Council will not answer questions or engage in dialog with the speaker. Residents are asked to state their name and address. Comments regarding any and all employee issues are not entertained. Council may address items or questions raised at the next scheduled Committee or Council meeting, but reserves the right to determine agenda items. Council requests those in attendance refrain from engaging the speaker during public comments.

**There being no further business**, Mr. DeRuosi moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Russell  
Assistant Secretary  
Borough of Ambler