

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

November 19, 2019

The regular monthly meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday, November 19, 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. Pasceri, 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.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the October 15, 2019 Council Meeting. Seconded. Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met Wednesday, November 6, 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, Ms. Endicott and Mrs. Siskind. Mayor Sorg, Chief Hoffman, Solicitor Joe Bresnan of Dischell, Bartle & Dooley and Borough Manager Aversa were present.

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 (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 the following actions this evening:

1. Consider awarding WWTP paving work to include sealing around tanks to low bidder Apcon at the cost of \$24,250.
2. Consider advertisement to hold public meetings and for adoption of an Ordinance to Organize a Municipal Water Authority upon appointment of applicants to the nine-member Ambler Water Authority Board.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The WWTP Engineer's report was received.
2. The WWTP Engineer is proceeding with a design to convert the digesters from anaerobic digestion (without air) to aerobic digestion (with air). The blowers were purchased in 2018 and are ready for delivery.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consider awarding bid to build concrete pads and place the blowers on the pads at the WWTP to low bidder Zimmerman Environmental at a cost of \$44,000. Seconded. 9-0 Aye. Carried.
2. Consider purchase of diffusers to be installed in the WWTP digesters from Kappe Associates, Inc., through CoStars, at a cost of \$79,662. Seconded. 9-0 Aye. Carried.
3. Consider authorization to advertise for public bids for the electrical installation of the blowers at WWTP. Seconded. 9-0 Aye. Carried.

4. Consider authorization to advertise for public bids for a general contractor to remove the existing digester covers and install the aeration piping at WWTP. Seconded. 9-0 Aye. Carried.
5. Consider purchasing parts to rebuild the WWTP primary clarifier ET-8 from BDI at the cost of \$79,277. Seconded. 9-0 Aye. Carried.

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 **October 2019** invoices in the amount of **\$667,745.14** be paid as follows: General (**\$197,677.98**); Street Lights (**\$11,169.85**); Fire (**\$0.00**); Refuse (**\$37,749.65**); Parks & Rec. (**\$10,255.73**); Water (**\$165,455.25.**); Sewer (**\$57,804.47**); WWTP (**\$186,942.28**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Water Capital (**\$0.00**); Liquid Fuels (**\$689.93**).
2. Consider review of and revision of current parking violation fees.

Discussion ensued. Council had received copies of violation fee schedules from several neighboring townships and Boroughs. Ms. DiPietro proposed increasing all fees less than \$25 up to \$25. Manager Aversa requested that 'street sweeping days' fees not be increased. Mr. DeRuosi stated his notes showed that at the prior Committee Meeting Council also wanted to exempt 'parking meter' fees from an increase. Ms. Endicott requested that the required time to pay a ticket be increased from 5 days to 15 days with no grace period. Council considered reduction in fines for early payment of the fine. Eventually Council agreed that 'street sweeping' and 'parking meter' fines (ticket items #1-2) would be increased from \$12 to \$15, with the balance of fees (ticket items #3-11) to be increased to \$25, with fees currently set at \$50 remaining at \$50. It was agreed the new rates would go into effect April 1, 2020. Manager Aversa stated a Resolution authorizing a change in parking violation fees would be prepared by staff for adoption at the December Council Meeting.

3. Consider adoption of and authorization to advertise the 2020 Public Meeting Calendar.
4. Consider advertisement for adoption of an Ordinance Fixing the Real Estate Tax for 2020.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. The Draft 2020 Budget was prepared and the public meetings schedule is as follows: November 19 (6:00 p.m.), November 21 (10:00 a.m.) and December 3 (6:00 p.m.). The Budget is available for review on the Borough website and at Borough Hall and the Wissahickon Valley Public Library-Ambler Branch.
3. 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.
4. A parking meter upgrade estimate was received. [Mr. DeRuosi asked that discussion on parking meter upgrades be continued to another meeting so that Council would have adequate time to review the cost proposal. There were no further discussions.]

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 adoption of **Resolution 2019-11** Updating the Open Space Plan.

Mr. Brian Quinn of Valley Brook Road asked for clarification of §1.12.C (page 41) regarding curbing at the Edgewood Preserve. Manager Aversa stated that the vehicle path would serve as an access point to homeowners needing to access their properties. Code Enforcement Officer stated he would review the language to ensure that the Open Space Plan accurately communicated the Planning Commission's intention.

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. The Committee has prepare a second draft Single Use Plastics Ordinance.

Discussion ensued. Ms.Hertz stated that positive feedback was received from community response to the Committee’s ‘survey monkey’ survey. Ms. Endicott stated she was not comfortable with banning latex balloons. While she stated she had no problem with banning ‘balloon releases’ she was unsure of how to enforce this with businesses and residents. Ms. Deininger asked about plastic ‘produce bags’ and whether they would be banned along with plastic carry-out bags. Mrs. Siskind asked about ‘garment or dry cleaning bags.’ Mr. Bresnan reminded the Committee that the State had placed a moratorium on enacting ordinances banning plastics. Ms. Hertz stated that therefore there was sufficient time to thoroughly review the proposed ordinance. She stated she would prepare a third draft.

3. Montgomery County has partnered with **Curb My Clutter**, a convenience service that picks up electronics and clothing right at a resident’s doorstep. Residents can text “pickup” to 610-TEXT-CMC or may call directly to schedule. Convenience fees on TVs (\$35-\$100), Monitors (\$35) and Microwaves (\$10) will apply. Residents can earn rewards from **Curb My Clutter** for participating in the program.
4. Concerns about the use of Pickering Field were presented by Borough residents Mark Armstrong and Susan Spencer.

Discussion ensued. The Committee had met with representatives of Ambler Junior Baseball (AJB) to explore options, yet no decisions have been made. Ms. Hertz clarified that AJB does not sublet the playing fields and added that AJB also uses Knight and Penn-Ambler Parks. She stated consideration was made to make a Quick Ball field at Ricciardi Park. She stated AJB agreed they could remove one of the scoreboards at Pickering Field and could put in an additional hose bib to keep dust down. AJB also would install gutters on the blockhouse and would install rain barrels. Manager Aversa stated that through grant money received, sidewalks would be laid on three sides of the park and would look at containing erosion at the park. Mr. DeRuosi stated Council could not simply shift the park usage problem to other parks but must look at all the parks and consider space utilization. Ms. Hertz stated a Five Year Parks Plan was needed and suggested that the Planning Commission and/or County Planner assist.

Mr. Rob Cardillo of 300 E. Park Avenue stated residents are looking for balance, that there was room for discussion and that he wanted parks to be available to residents in the park neighborhoods. He asked Council to consider reducing the number of playing fields. Ms. Debbie Greenstein of 259 Highland Avenue stated there are far too many crowds and far too much disruptive noise on weekends. She asked Council to consider using playing fields at the public schools instead of at Ambler’s parks. Mark Armstrong of 258 Highland Avenue asked Council to conduct an impact study on the parks and create a Master Plan.

Ms. Karen Sheedy of 223 Overlook Drive stated AJB is a wonderful organization that sponsors T-Ball, Softball and two Baseball teams. Mr. John Luskin of 281 E. Butler Avenue stated that AJB is good for families. He noted that the baseball season is only from April to June.

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 appointment of applicants to serve on the Board of the Ambler Water Authority being organized by the Borough Solicitor.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. An Executive Session had been held prior to the Council Meeting regarding an employee issue.
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 or by mail to Borough Manager.
3. One seat for a 6-year term on the Civil Service Commission will expire at the end of the year. One Alternate Seat also remains vacant. The Commission Bylaws require the Commission to meet the first Monday in January in even-numbered years (January 6, 2020). Therefore, appointment to the CSC must be made in December so that the Commission is fully seated for their January meeting. Interested candidates for appointment to the CSC are asked to send a letter of interest & resume to the Borough Manager by December 6th so that Council may appoint a Commissioner and Alternate at their December Council Meeting.

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 recommends and Mrs. Siskind moves:

Consider awarding WWTP paving work to include sealing around tanks to low bidder Apcon at the cost of \$24,250. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider advertisement to hold public meetings and for adoption of an Ordinance to Organize a Municipal Water Authority. Seconded. All Aye. Carried. [Vote taken after appointment by Salary & Personnel Committee of applicants to the nine-member Ambler Water Authority Board.]

Approved at Committee Meeting:

Consider awarding bid to build concrete pads and place the blowers on the pads at the WWTP to low bidder Zimmerman Environmental at a cost of \$44,000. Seconded. 9-0 Aye. Carried.

Consider purchase of diffusers to be installed in the WWTP digesters from Kappe Associates, Inc., through CoStars, at a cost of \$79,662. Seconded. 9-0 Aye. Carried.

Consider authorization to advertise for public bids for the electrical installation of the blowers at WWTP. Seconded. 9-0 Aye. Carried.

Consider authorization to advertise for public bids for a general contractor to remove the existing digester covers and install the aeration piping at WWTP. Seconded. 9-0 Aye. Carried.

Consider purchasing parts to rebuild the WWTP primary clarifier ET-8 from BDI at the cost of \$79,277. Seconded. 9-0 Aye. Carried.

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

Consideration that October 2019 invoices in the amount of \$667,745.14 be paid. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consideration of revision of current parking violation fees and authorization for a Resolution Establishing Revised Parking Violation Fines to be prepared for adoption at the December Council Meeting. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of and authorization to advertise the 2020 Public Meeting Calendar. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider advertisement for adoption of an Ordinance Fixing the Real Estate Tax for 2020. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

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

Consider adoption of **Resolution 2019-11** Adopting Amendments to the Borough Open Space Plan, striking §1.12.C “Edgewood Preserve” language from the Plan. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

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

Consider termination of employment for a Borough employee effective November 30, 2019 as discussed at the Executive Session earlier this evening. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider appointment as first members to the Board of the Ambler Water Authority as follows: Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

From Ambler Borough:	Salvatore Pasceri	One Year Term
	John Oswald	Two Year Term
	John Luskin	Three Year Term
	Peter A. Amento	Four Year Term
	Louis Orehek	Five Year Term
For Whitpain Township	Carol Benigno (of Ambler Borough)	One Year Term
From Upper Dublin:	Paul Dooley	Two Year Term
From Lower Gwynedd:	Charles Baily	Three Year Term
From Whitemarsh:	Antonio Bevilacqua	Four Year Term

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