

AMBLER BOROUGH COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 7, 2020

Ambler Borough Committees held their scheduled monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Internet vehicle ZOOM. Consistent with Council President's and the Mayor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency executed the prior Thursday, April 2, 2020, this action was taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our community and to promote our commitment to maintain social distancing in our community. As such, the meeting was not held at Borough Hall as previously advertised. A public copy of the meeting agenda was posted on the Borough website on Saturday, April 4, 2020. The public was invited to forward questions or comments to the Council President by 4:00 p.m. this evening.

In Attendance - Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott, Mrs. Siskind, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Welch and Ms. Marshall. Mayor Sorg, Chief Hoffman, Solicitor Bresnan and Borough Manager Aversa also were in attendance. Tax Collector Jenn Stomsky, Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Kucher and Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Russell also were in attendance.

Committee Meeting Reports -

Public Safety Committee - Ms. Erin Endicott, Chairperson

Committee members: Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Mrs Siskind

1. Public Works & Code Enforcement reports were received. Ms. Hertz noted that code violation notices sent out had included an Earth Day e-waste event flyer. That event has since been cancelled. Mr. Kucher stated the notices had been sent out the previous month prior to observing social distancing in the community.

2. A Declaration of Disaster Emergency for Ambler Borough, empowering the Borough to manage its emergency response was reviewed. The Declaration would be effective for 30 days from the proposed date of adoption which is April 7, 2020. Motion to adopt. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

3. The entire cost of a fully-equipped new police vehicle will be \$57,999.23. The 2020 Dodge Durango price tag is \$34,106.00 from the dealership. It was stated the upfitting cost is an additional \$12,723.12, and the two costs can be totalled at \$46,829.12, and financed. An additional cost balance of \$11,170.00 for equipment will be paid to the upfitter to complete the transformation (radios, modems, computers and cameras). Chief Hoffman stated there would be a 2-month waiting period to receive the modem and begin outfitting. Motion to approve. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

When asked by the Committee how the police department was presently functioning, Chief Hoffman stated they function day by day, that 24/7 PD services are being provided and that a change has been made in the ways they execute certain administrative

activities. He stated the PD has launched a crime watch website. He stated the PD is observing social distancing.

During the evening, Ms. Marshall asked whether building permits were currently being issued. Mr. Kucher replied that authorizing permits had been discontinued, with waivers only for emergencies. He noted the building inspector office is closed and will only consider high risk activities.

Mr. DeRuosi stated he had not received questions or comments on the Public Safety report.

Public Utilities Committee - Mrs. Glynnis Siskind, Chairperson

Committee members: Ms. Welch, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Marshall

1. The WWTP report will be provided to the Committee.
2. MIRIA (Military Installation Remediation and Infrastructure Authority) is a municipal authority formed by Horsham Township in conjunction with passage of PA 2019 Act 101. The legislation by statute provides for the utilization of PA State Tax Revenue generated from certain parcels in Horsham Township to be available to MIRIA to reimburse municipalities or municipal water authorities and their customers for surcharges and the costs related to remediation of PFAS contamination in drinking water as a result of the presence of a former military installation. A resolution for participation and project request with a match is to be submitted by May 15, 2020. Borough Manager Aversa stated she anticipates a buy-in of 20% of project cost and was considering a project for additional well facilities at Loch Alsh Reservoir. She noted that the Borough is currently within threshold compliance but anticipated that threshold changes will be determined by the state.
3. Authorization is requested to execute a DEP Grant Agreement for \$1 million which was awarded for the Well 2 PFOS/PFOA Treatment Project. Borough Manager Aversa stated she had worked with Sen. Collett's office to apply for the grant. Motion to execute grant agreement. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.
4. A sewer usage flyer was discussed regarding what is appropriate to flush in a sanitary sewer line. It was noted that wipes and personal hygiene products clog individual and community sewer lines. Solicitor Bresnan cautioned that wording of such public notifications should be carefully considered since lawsuits have occurred involving manufacturers whose products do technically meet the 'flushable down the drain' claim.

Mr. DeRuosi stated he had received one comment on this agenda item. Specifically, he stated that Joseph McDonough of 233 Candy Lane was concerned about sewage line back-ups caused by the Artman Home that caused a \$4,000 clean-up bill for his own basement. He wanted to ensure that manholes are checked regularly and that Artman

Home be held accountable for line back-ups. Ms. Endicott asked whether notices had been sent out to Artman Home. Mr. Kucher replied that notices had been sent and that permits have been discontinued until the issue is resolved. Manager Aversa stated it has been determined that clogs are not caused further up the line. Mr. Kucher is working with representatives of Artman Home to educate residents and staff. Artman Home will be conducting regular manhole maintenance to determine lines are not clogged. Ms. Aversa stated information will be shared on Facebook, Hometown News and the website.

Finance & Planning Committee - Ms. Nellie DiPietro, Chairperson

Committee members: Ms. Endicott, Ms. Welch, Ms. Marshall

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. A Resolution offering residents an extension on payment of Property Taxes due to the state of emergency was discussed. The request is to consider an extension of the discount or to consider the removal of late penalty for the year. Discussion ensued. Tax Collector Stomsky stated that 95-98% of tax collection is during the discount period which currently ends April 31, 2020. We make approximately \$2 million during discount. She stated she receives approximately \$150,000 in late penalties. Solicitor Bresnan stated the Senate Committee was considering a bill to push back the school tax penalty for 60 days. Council determined that it would be best not to act on the Resolution until a decision had been made by Harrisburg. Mrs. Stomsky advised Council not to concern themselves with the discount at this time and consider the face payment timeframe by the end of June. Ms. Hertz asked that the Borough Finance Manager prepare a revised revenue forecast for the Borough to consider lost revenues anticipated from property tax collection, earned income tax, business privilege tax and permits issued.
3. Authorization is requested to prepare and advertise for the trash and recycling collection bid contract. The current contract expires September 30,2020.
4. The February bills were paid in the amount of \$902,024.83 per the emergency authorization by Mr. DeRuosi. Such authorization should be ratified at the April Council Meeting.
5. Consideration to extend the due date of the Business Privilege Tax (BPT) from July 15 until October 15. Discussion ensued. Ms. Marshall asked that consideration be given to waive the tax for 2020 given the current economic situation. Ms. Hertz asked as to the financial impact of doing so. Ms. Aversa stated approximately \$150,000 is collected annually. Mr. DeRuosi stated he favored pushing back the due date to October 15 and consider at that time waiving the tax for 2020 if the economy does not recover. Ms. DiPietro concurred. It was determined not to take action this evening.
6. The Borough Planning Commission is working to create a preliminary energy transition plan in line with the Ambler Borough Ready for 100 Renewable Energy

Resolution adopted by Council in March 2019. Mr. Kucher stated he had been working on the plan and was moving forward. Ms. Marshall stated due to the importance of this matter and its long-term implications, her preference was not to act on this matter until a regular public meeting could be held. Mr. DeRuosi concurred. Ms. DiPietro stated Earth Day was simply a target date for preparation.

7. At the March 3, 2020 Committee Meeting the contract for Lawn & Grounds Maintenance at Ambler Borough Facilities was awarded to M&M Lawn Care East for the total five-year bid of \$115,330.

Parks & Recreation Committee - Ms. Sara Hertz, Chairperson

Committee members: Mrs. Deininger, Ms. Endicott, Ms. DiPietro

1. All Ambler Borough events have been cancelled until further notice.
2. A presentation of the final plans for Ambler Square construction was made by Gilmore and Associates at the February 18, 2020 Council Meeting. A recommendation to move forward and advertise was made. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Regarding park closures, Ms. Welch thanked public works and the Borough Manager for securing the parks, specifically the skate park, during this emergency. Ms. DiPietro noted that basketball is still being played. The Committee determined that the rims should be removed. Chief Hoffman stated the PD is encouraging social distancing and does patrol the parks.

Salary & Personnel Committee - Mrs. Nancy Deininger, Chairperson

1. The vacant position of Equipment Operator has been advertised. Interviews will be scheduled.
2. The Committee discussed the progress of Water Superintendent interviews. It was agreed that the remaining two candidates could be interviewed via Zoom later this month.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Marshall asked what the community is doing for senior citizens. It was discussed that the Community Cupboard, SACC (Meals on Wheels) and the County Department on Aging and Adults serve the senior community. Ms. Aversa stated the Wissahickon School District is providing grab-and-go-lunches every Tuesday and Thursday from 11-1 p.m. in the Borough parking lot. This announcement will be made as part of the Public Safety Committee agenda for the month of April. Ms. Aversa stated Boys and Girls Clubs are also providing lunches on Mondays.

Solicitor Bresnan stated the Senate is considering how these emergency Council meetings will function in the future. He stated Council should know soon as to any new procedural requirements.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Russell
Assistant Secretary
Borough of Ambler