

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

February 18, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday, February 18, 2020 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, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott, Mrs. Siskind, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Welch and Ms. Marshall. Mayor Sorg, Chief Hoffman, Solicitor Jessica Torres of Dischell, Bartle & Dooley and Borough Manager Aversa were present.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the January 21, 2020 Council Meeting. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

A presentation was made by Mayor Sorg on Census 2020. She stated the aim of the Census is to count every person, that one does not need to be a U.S. citizen to be counted, that the Census determines Congressional and State Legislative representation, and guides \$675 billion in Federal funding. Mayor Sorg stated the Census is confidential with no social, income or citizenship questions asked. Beginning March 12 and through April, one can go on-line, communicate by phone or mail-in a response to the Census. Non-responsive households will be visited in person by Census Takers starting in May 2020.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania, 19002. Present: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott, Mrs. Siskind, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Welch and Ms. Marshall. Mayor Sorg, Chief Hoffman, Solicitor Joe Bresnan of Dischell, Bartle & Dooley and Borough Manager Aversa were present.

Public Safety Committee – Ms. Erin Endicott, Chairperson
Committee members: Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Mrs. Siskind

The Public Safety Committee report was given this evening by Ms. Endicott.

The Committee will consider the following action this evening:

1. Consider authorization for Police Department to purchase a new Dodge Durango to serve as a marked vehicle in the fleet at a CoStars cost of \$34,106. [budgeted 2020]

Discussion ensued. Ms. DiPietro asked whether the police department had considered purchase of a hybrid or electric vehicle. Chief Hoffman replied that the industry was not quite prepared to offer many of these vehicles but that he hoped to consider such a vehicle when purchasing a new vehicle next year.

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.

Ms. Endicott 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: Ms. Welch, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Marshall

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

The Committee will consider no action this evening.

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. Bid documents will be prepared when the electrical specifications are received.
3. The Water Authority Board met January 23, 2020 and held an Organizational Meeting. Lou Orehek is Chairperson and Peter Amento is Vice Chairperson. Solicitor informed the Board the Authority's Certificate of Incorporation had been filed with the PA Department of State. They adopted Resolution 2020-01 Authorizing the Execution of a Lease of the Ambler Borough Water System to the Water Authority. After completion of the evening's business the Solicitor stated he does not anticipate the Authority involving with further matters while the status is being reviewed by the PA PUC.

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. Nellie DiPietro, Chairperson

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

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

The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:

1. Consideration that **January 2020** invoices in the amount of **\$630,687.17** be paid as follows: General (**\$255,003.23**); Street Lights (**\$4,750.52**); Fire (**\$0.00**); Refuse (**\$40,014.97**); Parks & Rec. (**\$4,147.57**); Water (**\$122,852.63.**); Sewer (**\$76,619.87**); WWTP (**\$127,298.38**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Water Capital (**\$0.00**); Liquid Fuels (**\$0.00**).

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. A Town Hall Meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 11th at 7:00 p.m.
3. The bid for Grass Cutting/Lawn & Grounds Maintenance at Ambler Borough Facilities has been advertised. Bid opening is scheduled for February 26, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.
4. EV charging stations have been installed on Lindenwold & Race and on Poplar Street near the Cavalier Lot and are available for public use.

Discussion ensued. Chief Hoffman stated he would like to set a fine of \$25 (“where signs prohibit”) for non-EV vehicles parked in the spaces reserved for charging. Council considered the matter and agreed to levying the \$25 fine for such occurrences.

Ms. DiPietro asked if there were comments or questions from Council or the public. Councilperson Marshall stated that signage in parking lots should be improved, requesting that specific signage (or stickers) be placed for every ‘reserved’ space available to the public after hours. Manager Aversa stated that new signage is being ordered with the new parking meters but was unsure as to whether such specific information could be included with the meter signage. Mr. DeRuosi suggested that signage be prepared for the upper lot at Borough Hall indicating public parking is allowed after hours or at least on weekends. Mrs. Terri Williams of the Police Department stated she was hesitant to publicize parking is available at Borough Hall due to the number of activities involving families with young children at Borough Hall. She noted that frequently children are crossing the parking lot while vehicles are entering and exiting. 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, Ms. DiPietro

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

The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:

1. Consider commissioning Artwork’s Collective to design and install a statue of Mary Ambler for Ambler Square.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. Jim Dougherty of Gilmore & Associates presented final plans for Ambler Square. As an overview he stated the Borough had received \$102,000 grant funding from Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund. He stated Ambler Square is located in a floodplain and as such permitting had been involved and lengthy. He stated DCNR would need to review and approve of final plans before the Borough could go out to bid on the project. He stated he would prefer to go out to bid by May so that time would allow for construction and planting and so that project completion would be before the winter. He stated his concern that the project would be over-budget and advised a number of park features could be listed in the bid as “alternatives”.

Discussion ensued. Council members discuss the proposed solar lighting panels and park lighting in general, discussed whether the pervious pavers could be purchased, engraved and dedicated by contributors, discussed park benches and other amenities, and reviewed proposed trees and plantings. Mr. Dougherty stated we would email his powerpoint presentation to Council so that they could make final plan determinations at their next meeting.

Referring back to the proposal to install a statue of Mary Ambler at Ambler Square, Ms. Hertz and Mrs. Deininger stated that would like to defer making a determination on that matter until the bid was final for Ambler Square since the total cost of that project had yet to be determined. Ms. Marshall stated she was concerned about the scale of the statue. Resident Anna Lee Lapinski of 136 Rosemary Avenue stated she did not find Ambler Square to be the appropriate location for the statue. It was agreed that Council would table any further action on this matter until the costs for Ambler Square construction were known.

2. The Ambler Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) has contractors ready to install rain gardens, permeable pavement for walkways, driveway and patios, and to install downspout plants and rain barrels at residential and commercial properties throughout the Borough. An extended neighbors-to-neighbors effort in 2020 seeks to identify new ‘champions’ on each street to host gatherings at their homes that will include a stormwater presentation. Information on these events and subsidized stormwater features is available at www.growingamblergreener.com.
3. Borough has received notification that a ‘2020 Frostbite 5 Miler’ will be held February 22, 2020. That organizing committee notified neighbors along the course so that they are aware of the race.

4. The Planning Commission is preparing a conceptual plan incorporating identified community needs and improvements for each park in the Borough to be used as part of a larger Master Park Plan.
5. Movies in the Gym lineup for 2020 includes: Toy Story 4 (May 8); Aladdin (June 5); Elf (July 24); Playing with Fire (September 18); The Addams Family (October 23); and Polar Express (December 11).

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: Mrs. Siskind, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Henderson

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

The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:

1. Consider approval of a Police employee's contract.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. An Executive Session was held at the Committee Meeting regarding the separation agreement for an employee. Motion to consider. Seconded. All 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 recommends and Ms. Endicott moves:

Consider authorization for Police Department to purchase a new Dodge Durango to serve as a marked vehicle in the fleet at a CoStars cost of \$34,106. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Public Utilities Committee – The Committee will make no recommendations.

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

Consider that **January 2020** invoices in the amount of **\$630,687.17** be paid. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

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

Consider commissioning Artwork’s Collective to design and install a statue of Mary Ambler for Ambler Square. TABLED

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

Consider approval of a Police employee’s contract. Seconded. All Aye. Carried

Approved at Committee Meeting: Motion to approve the separation agreement for an employee. Seconded. All 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.

Kevin McGarth of 342 Euclid Avenue stated his dismay that trash receptacles were left in the road by our trash hauler and that receptacle lids were not closed which resulted in water build-up. Manager Aversa suggested residents drill a few holes in the bottom of the rollcarts to prevent this. She stated numerous residents place their rollcarts on the road to leave room on the sidewalks for pedestrians. She stated this issue had been discussed before with the trash hauler.

Anna Lee Lapinski of 136 Rosemary Avenue inquired as to how new councilpersons are educated about council matters. In response, Ms. Aversa stated Council is guided by By-Laws, that she and senior Councilmembers are available, and that the Pennsylvania Association of Boroughs offers ‘boot camp’ for new councilpersons.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Russell
Assistant Secretary
Borough of Ambler