

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

April 21, 2020

Ambler Borough Council held their scheduled monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Internet vehicle ZOOM. Consistent with Council President's and the Mayor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency executed Tuesday, April 7, 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 Sunday, April 20, 2020. The public was invited to forward questions or comments to the Council President by 4:00 p.m. this evening.

Roll Call – Present: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro, 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, Finance Manager Gail Gordon, Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Kucher and Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Russell also were in attendance. Ms. Endicott was absent.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 18, 2020 Council Meeting. Seconded. All Aye. Carried. Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the April 7, 2020 Committee Meeting. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met via Internet vehicle ZOOM on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. 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 in attendance. Tax Collector Jenn Stomsky, Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Kucher and Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Russell also were in attendance.

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 Mrs. Deininger.

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.

Discussion ensued. Chief Hoffman stated that there was a lower volume of calls this reporting cycle due to, he assumed, less neighbor to neighbor interaction.

2. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were received.

Mrs. Deininger 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. 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.

Discussion ensued. Manager Aversa stated she would request that Council vote on adopting the resolution authorizing the project which would seek a grant amount of \$360,000 with a \$90,000 Local Effort Contribution by the Borough. The funds are available in the Water Reserves account. Ms. Aversa stated that if MIRIA denied the project the \$90,000 would be returned.

2. Council had reviewed a flyer giving some direction on what is appropriate to put in ones sanitary sewer line.
3. Water customers will be given additional time to make water billing payments or payment arrangements. Customers experiencing a hardship will be given a payment extension and interest will not be charged to their accounts. There will be no water shutoffs during this emergency period.

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 ratification of payment of the February 2020 bills in the amount of \$902,024.83.
2. Consider that **March 2020** invoices in the amount of **\$617,945.60** be paid as follows: General (**\$230,120.04**); Street Lights (**\$4,783.22**); Fire (**\$691.36**); Refuse (**\$35,459.99**); Parks & Rec. (**\$795.11**); Water (**\$129,602.02.**); Sewer (**\$24,077.59**); WWTP (**\$192,416.27**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Water Capital (**\$0.00**); Liquid Fuels (**\$0.00**).
3. Consider adoption of **Resolution 2020-02** offering an extension in the Property Tax collection period due to the present state of emergency.

Discussion ensued. Tax Collector Stomsky stated this would be a good will action on the part of Council. She stated she has already received more discount period payments this year than this time last year. She advised extending the discount period for a month until May 31st. She further recommended pushing back the penalty period and extending the face until December 31st, thus avoiding the penalty. She calculated a maximum loss of between \$6,000 and \$7,000 in penalty payments if Council gets rid of it altogether this year. After much discussion, Council determined that this policy would not be applied to 'interim assessments.'

4. Consider extending the due date for Business Privilege Tax to October 15, 2020.

Discussion ensued. Council determined that they would reconsider collection of the tax for 2020 at their July Council Meeting.

5. Authorize preparation of bid documents and advertisement for bids for the trash and recycling collection contract which expires September 30, 2020.
6. Consider adoption of **Resolution 2020-03** calling on the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the Governor to enact legislation that automatically sends mail-in voter ballots for both the PA Primary and General Election to residents who complete an application. The PA Primary has been rescheduled for June 2, 2020.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. 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 March 2019.

Ms. DiPietro asked if there were comments or questions from Council or the public. A discussion was held regarding the potential purchase of a property in the Borough which could allow for an additional 16-17 parking spaces per Manager Aversa. This had been discussed at an Executive Session. Solicitor Bresnan stated if required, monies could be put in an escrow account until Council votes on an agreement of sale at the May Committee. Ms. Aversa stated this subject will be placed on the May Committee agenda to allow the public to comment and Council to deliberate. 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 no actions this evening.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. All Borough events have been cancelled until further notice.

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 no actions this evening.

In other business the following was reviewed.

1. The vacant position of Equipment Operator has been advertised. Interviews will be scheduled at a later date.

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.

Public Utilities Committee – The Committee will make no recommendations.

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

Consideration ratification of payment of the February 2020 bills in the amount of \$902,024.83. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider that **March 2020** invoices in the amount of **\$617,945.60** be paid. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of **Resolution 2020-02** offering an extension in the Property Tax collection period due to the present state of emergency by extending the ‘discount period’ until May 31, 2020 and extending the ‘face and penalty period’ until December 31, 2020 with the exclusion of interim bills for this extension. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider extending the due date for Business Privilege Tax to October 15, 2020. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Authorize preparation of bid documents and advertisement for bids for the trash and recycling collection contract which expires September 30, 2020. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of **Resolution 2020-03** calling on the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the Governor to enact legislation that automatically sends mail-in voter ballots for both the PA Primary and General Election to residents who complete an application. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Parks & Recreation Committee – The Committee will make no recommendations.

Salary & Personnel Committee – The Committee will make no recommendations.

NEW BUSINESS / PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. DeRuosi stated he had not received any emails or contact from the public as regards this evening meeting's agenda. Ms. Henderson stated she had received a comment from a resident on the new LED streetlights. Manager Aversa stated that once the streetlights have all been installed the Public Works Superintendent will be able to access the control panel and dim-down the light fixtures.

Mayor Sorg spoke about a letter she received from a student who stated she liked the name "Ambler" for this Borough and asked that Council never change the name of the Borough. The Mayor reminded the public about the importance of social distancing, noting that a couple in town recently acknowledged their 65th wedding anniversary and that hopefully in the near future they would be able to celebrate the occasion.

Mr. DeRuosi stated Council will be reviewing meeting formatting and protocols for future ZOOM Meetings.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Russell
Assistant Secretary
Borough of Ambler