

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

July 20, 2021

The regular monthly meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday, July 20, 2021, 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, Ms. DiPietro, Mrs. Siskind, Ms. Endicott, Ms. Welch, Ms. Henderson, and Ms. Sheedy. Mayor Sorg, Chief Borkowski, Solicitor Joe Bresnan and Borough Manager Aversa also were in attendance. Finance Manager Gail Gordon, Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Kucher and Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Russell were in attendance. Public Works Supervisor Marco Resente and the Borough's Gilmore engineer Jim Dougherty were in attendance. Mrs. Deininger was absent.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the June 15, 2021 Zoom Council Meeting. Motion Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Mr. DeRuosi reviewed public comment protocols for the public.

Mayor Sorg performed the official swearing-in of Police Chief Jeffrey Borkowski. A brief public reception followed.

Ms. DiPietro, Finance Committee Chairperson, introduced financial advisor Jamie Schlesinger of PFM Financial Advisors who made a presentation to Council on refinancing Borough debt. He reviewed that the Borough currently carries a 2016 Bond callable by September 15, 2021 which matures in 2043 for the municipal building and a 2015 bank loan for the water department. He stated a new money and financing analysis could yield 1 and ½ percent for interest payments. He suggested considering taking a \$3 million loan with 15-year amortization for future water projects. He noted that the net impact of refinancing with the new water loan would result in a \$60,000 impact annually. He advised refinancing by September 15, 2021 and stated the Borough should consolidate debt and issue a new municipal bond with the rate of new debt estimated at 1 and ½ percent. He stated a new debt ordinance would be prepared for consideration.

Bernadette Dougherty of 338 Tennis Avenue inquired about future water debt based upon how the Water Department is structured (as a municipal department or an Authority). Finance Manager Gordon stated the water account would pay water's share of the loan regardless of how the Water Department is structured. Anthony Giannetti of 116 Center Street asked how the Water Department intends to spend the loan money. Ms. DiPietro replaced there are a substantial number of pipeline and filtration projects.

Council then proceeded with the regular evening Agenda. There were no Committee Meeting held in July. At the Council Meeting this evening, the Committees conducted business as follows:

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 no actions this evening.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Police, Fire and Community Ambulance reports were received.
2. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were received.

Ms. Sheedy asked regarding the duration of certain line-items on the Code report. Code Officer Kucher responded that warrants had been issued for several minor items and until the properties were sold, he would not take any action on the warrants.

3. The Library Crosswalk upgrade at Race and Lindenwold is nearly complete. Signs have been installed and the remaining line painting is underway.
4. A draft Ordinance is being prepared by the Solicitor to address 2-hour parking and parking permits for residents.

Manager Aversa stated that streets currently being considered are Walnut, Rosemary (to Park), Lemon, Water, Forest, Mattison, Greenwood, Orange and Race. Ms. Endicott stated the actions being considered would ease the parking burden of residents. The Ordinance would not impact parking limits at metered spots or on street sweeping days. New signage will be required.

Ms. Endicott asked if there were further comments or questions from Council or the public. Megan Bustraan of 35 Orange asked whether resident addresses with more than one vehicle would be issued multiple permits. Manager Aversa stated they would, and she added that the permits would be issued only to residents and not businesses. Responding to an inquiry by Anna Lee Lapinski of 136 Rosemary Avenue, Manager Aversa stated there would be no charge for the permits. 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. Sheedy

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

The Committee will consider the following action this evening:

1. Consider authorizing approval of a Contractor Service Agreement with Bucks County Water and Sewer to handle emergencies if needed for maintenance of the Sewer Collection System.
2. Consider withdrawal of the application to the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission to form a Water Authority.

Discussion ensued. Manager Aversa stated an Executive Session had been held this evening to discuss the Water Authority litigation. Mrs. Siskind provided a brief review of the application process and pending litigation. Solicitor Bresnan stated the surrounding Townships have opposed the action and as such the Borough does not stand a good chance of having this be approved. He noted the Townships want the PA PUC to oversee water operations.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The WWTP engineer's report will be provided.
2. The MIRIA project bid document for Loch Alsh piping has been advertised.

Mrs. Siskind asked if there were further 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. Sheedy

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

The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:

1. Consider that **June 2021** invoices in the amount of **\$707,836.60** be paid as follows: General (**\$224,851.17**); Street Lights (**\$2,973.80**); Fire (**\$786.18**); Refuse (**\$59,719.50**); Parks & Rec. (**\$5,248.36**); Water (**\$200,038.91**); Sewer (**\$25,830.02**); WWTP (**\$188,140.87**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Water Capital (**\$0.00**); Liquid Fuels (**\$247.79**).
2. Consider preparing a bond refinance for Water and General funds as recommended by PFM Financial Advisors LLC.
3. Consider executing the Montgomery County Head Start lease for classroom space at Borough Hall.

4. Consider adoption of Resolution 2021-07 Recognizing Martin Brown of Ambler Savings Bank.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. Joe Duda of Joe Duda Actuarial and Scott Repke of Alliance Bernstein will make at pension presentation at the August meeting.

Ms. DiPietro asked if there were further 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, 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. Ms. Henderson provided the following report: the Community Garden Committee message board is located at Knight Park and provides updates on the progress of the garden. More volunteers are needed. Flowers have been planted on the Church Street side of the park and at the bocci court. The next meeting will be held August 22 at 3:30 p.m. at Knight Park. For further information send out an email to amblergarden@gmail.com or go to the Ambler Community Garden's Facebook page.
2. Ambler Square construction is almost complete, with punch list items currently under review. A park dedication will tentatively be scheduled for late September.

Ms. Hertz asked if there were further 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 Ms. Henderson.

The Committee will consider the following action this evening:

1. Consider hiring Geno Nave for the vacant Public Works Laborer position.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. A public swearing-in ceremony was held this evening for Police Chief Jeffrey Borkowski.

Ms. Henderson asked if there were further comments or questions from Council. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as 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 authorizing approval of a Contractor Service Agreement with Bucks County Water and Sewer to handle emergencies if needed for maintenance of the Sewer Collection System. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider withdrawal of the application to the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission to form a Water Authority. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

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

Consider that **June 2021** invoices in the amount of **\$707,836.60** be paid. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider preparing a bond refinance for Water and General funds as recommended by PFM Financial Advisors LLC. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider executing the Montgomery County Head Start lease of classroom space at Borough Hall. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Consider adoption of Resolution 2021-07 Recognizing Martin Brown of Ambler Savings Bank. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

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

Salary & Personnel Committee – The Committee recommends and Ms. Henderson moves:

Consider hiring Geno Nave for the vacant Public Works Laborer position. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Allison Wolf of 318 Rosemary Avenue asked about the status of Ordinance preparation for the proposed ordinance on residential resale properties inspection program. Mr. DeRuosi stated more discussion was needed but the this would be put back on Council's agenda.

Erica Garvey of 213 Locust Street addressed flooding issues at Center and Locust. A resident from Orange Avenue stated she required four sump pumps in her basement to handle the chronic flooding situation. Manager Aversa stated that flooding is Ambler's reality. She noted that in the past FEMA has offered to purchase and tear down buildings that experience chronic flooding, but the residents were not willing to sell. She stated the SEPTA tracks are an obstacle for flood remediation. Ms. Endicott stated the Borough is a member of a Water Quality Improvement Partnership and that the Borough is trying to find a remedy to this situation. Manager Aversa noted that flood remediation could cost \$10-\$12 million.

Ms. Madge Monser of 372 Forest Avenue asked about the possibility of the Borough Holding hybrid meetings. Mr. DeRuosi stated that Council will continue to have staff research public meeting hybrid meetings or live video viewing. He noted the cost appears prohibitive.

A resident asked about the status of trash collection which currently is unsatisfactory. Manager Aversa stated many municipalities currently have the problem with all the haulers. She encouraged residents to continue to call the Borough with complaints, as well as calling our trash hauler directly.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Russell
Assistant Secretary
Borough of Ambler