

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

June 15, 2021

Ambler Borough Council held their scheduled monthly meeting on Tuesday, June 15, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM Software Program. Consistent with Council President's and the Mayor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency, this action was taken to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of our community and to promote our commitment to maintain social distancing. As such, the meeting was not held at Borough Hall. A public copy of the meeting agenda was posted on the Borough website. The public was invited to access the ZOOM Meeting and offer questions or comments.

Roll Call – Present: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz (arrived 7:15 p.m.), Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro, Mrs. Siskind, 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. Ms. Endicott was absent.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the May 19, 2021 Zoom Council Meeting and the June 1, 2021 Zoom Committee Meeting. Motion Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Mr. DeRuosi reviewed public comment protocols for the public.

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 which matures in 2043 for the municipal building (currently \$205,000) and 2015 bank loan for the water department (currently \$330,000). He stated a new money and financing analysis could yield a 1 to 1 ½ percent in interest payments. He suggested considering taking a \$3 million loan with 15-year amortization for future water projects which would increase the cost from \$330,000 to \$400,000 annually. He stated the Borough has a AA Credit Rating. To benefit from low interest rates, Finance Manager Gail Gordon and Mr. Schlesinger encouraged Council to vote this evening to authorize him to proceed to move forward, including preparing a draft Ordinance, with the intention of Council to vote to approve this plan of action at their July 20 regular Council Meeting.

Solicitor Bresnan explained that should the Water Department become a Water Authority, Borough ownership would be retained and would not impact the terms of financing. Manager Aversa noted that should the Water Department not become an Authority and apply to the PUC for a rate increase, having debt would be in line with the need to have such a rate increase. Ms. Sheedy asked which water projects would be financed with the suggested loan. Manager Aversa replied water main replacement, well pumps and upgrades, and PFAS filtration.

Council then proceeded with Committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met via Internet vehicle ZOOM on Tuesday, June 1, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. Present: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Hertz, Mrs. Deininger, Ms. DiPietro, Ms. Endicott, Mrs. Siskind, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Welch, and Ms. Sheedy. Mayor Sorg, Chief Borkowski, Borough Manager Aversa and Solicitor Joe Bresnan were in attendance. Finance Manager Gail Gordon, Water Superintendent Steve Smallberger, Public Works Supervisor Marco Resente, Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Kucher, and Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Russell also were in attendance. Borough Engineer Jim Dougherty was in attendance.

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 Mrs. Siskind.

The Committee will consider the following action this evening:

1. Consider award of the contract for the Library Crosswalk upgrade at Race and Lindenwold to lowest quote GoreCon for the amount of \$115,100.

Discussion ensued. Public Works Supervisor Resente stated that two comparable quotes had been received, and while he acknowledged that the GoreCon quote itemized less detail, it was of a comparable scope. Engineer Dougherty stated the quotes were slightly high given the COVID timeframe but were not out of line. It was noted that GoreCon was the contractor for the Ambler Square project. Ms. Sheedy sought assurances that the two quotes received were comparable.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consider adoption of the Emergency Declaration for COVID-19 for the month of June 2021. Seconded. (9-Aye). Carried.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Police and Community Ambulance reports were received, and the Fire Department report will be provided.
2. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were received.

Mrs. Siskind asked if there were further comments or questions from Council or the public. Ms. Sheedy asked Chief Borkowski about an item on his monthly report, specifically

‘disorderly conduct.’ Chief stated that there had been one occurrence and that a typo appeared on his submitted report. 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 a grant allocation request from American Rescue Plan funds. Water infrastructure projects are allowable, and several items were including water main replacement and well upgrades. It was detailed that the Borough’s initial application was to get the Borough’s interest in receiving funds on the books. The Borough Maximum Allocation which is based on population is set at approximately \$679,000 half of which would be disbursed relatively soon with the balance delivered approximately 12 months later.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Welch asked if these funds were received whether the Borough would need to take out a loan. Manager Aversa stated the Water Department could use these funds, could take out a loan and could still use additional funds for its projects.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The WWTP engineer’s report will be provided.
2. An application of the Borough of Ambler for approval of the abandonment of public water service to the public in Pennsylvania has been filed and a notice has been advertised. Formal protests and petitions were received. The Borough Solicitor stated he had read Township testimony and suggested Council members give him a call for further details.
3. The MIRIA project bid document is being prepared by Gilmore. An estimated timetable for the project is: advertise for bids (late June); award contract and execute agreements (July-August); pre-construction meeting, submittal review (September); and piping construction (October-November).
4. PFAS sampling an analysis took place April 5, 2021. Sampling will again be taken in July. All samples continue to be below the EPA Health Advisory threshold of 70 ppt (parts per trillion). Range in % of 70 ppt was between 13% and 37%.

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 **May 2021** invoices in the amount of **\$978,502.06** be paid as follows: General (**\$161,061.27**); Street Lights (**\$13,733.73**); Fire (**\$111,978.87**); Refuse (**\$59,022.31**); Parks & Rec. (**\$40,627.30**); Water (**\$444,033.67**); Sewer (**\$23,763.65**); WWTP (**\$124,256.28**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Water Capital (**\$0.00**); Liquid Fuels (**\$24.98**).
2. Consider granting approval of the Preliminary / Final Major Subdivision Plan to create two separate parcels each containing an existing building at 34 & 38 E. Butler Avenue – Simono Properties, LLC (no development is proposed). Applicant made a presentation at the June 1 Committee Meeting. Planning Commission letters and the Engineer’s Review letter were received. The Borough Engineer reviewed the Plans again and found there is not an available option in the right-of-way for tree planting.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consider adoption of Resolution 2021-06 authorizing the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) application for the Public Library. Seconded. 9-Aye. Carried.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Borough Engineer’s report was received.
2. Staff and the Solicitor a preparing Ordinance language for a residential resale properties inspection program. The draft Ordinance will be available for review at the August or September Meeting.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Welch inquired about how involved a process is a sewer lateral inspection. Mr. DeRuosi asked how involved electrical inspections are. Further, he stated his viewpoint that sidewalk and curb inspections would be fairly standard. Ms. DiPietro asked that the guidelines set in the Ordinance be similar to those of surrounding communities. Mrs. Siskind asked whether the Borough could differentiate between type of housing, such as a single unit or a row home. Solicitor Bresnan advised against setting uneven treatment or criteria which could be considered elitist. Code Officer Kucher stated that companies with video camera trucks would inspect sewer laterals and that certified electrical inspectors would look at the ‘box’ and check electric. He stated was preferable for Borough itself not to enter residences looking for violations.

3. Northern Montgomery County Recycling Commission has prepared a draft of a revised Protocol for Act 101 Violations and a 2021 Protocol Resolution. The Commission seeks to receive all comments from Council prior to NMCRC's July 15, 2021 meeting.
4. Joe Duda Actuarial will make a presentation to Council at the July 20 Council 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. YMCA Knight Park Summer Day Camp registration is available at the Ambler YMCA. Camp runs June 21 to July 30. Cost is \$50 per week per child.
2. The Community Garden Committee and interested members of the public met Sunday, June 5 at Knight Park. The Community Garden was awarded a MONTCO Grant for \$43,000.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Henderson announced that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the Conshohocken Community Garden, 499 E. Elm Street, Conshohocken, PA 19428. Updates on the Garden's progress are posted on the message board at Knight Park. A Logo Contest will be held for the Garden, with announcement of the winner to be made at the Garden's August meeting. The Logo must state "Ambler Community Garden", must state 'Growing Together', and may be any size but must be prepared to meet T-Shirt and Letterhead needs. The Contest is open to all ages. Submissions are due by July 17. Voting will take place July 18 to August 6. For further information send out an email to amblergarden@gmail.com.

3. Ambler Square construction is almost complete, with punch list items currently under review. A park dedication will tentatively be scheduled for 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 Mrs. Deininger.

The Committee will consider no actions this evening.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consider appointment to Planning Commission vacancy. Seconded. Vote: Anthony Giannetti 7-Aye; Francine Tomlinson 2-Aye. Carried. Mr. Giannetti appointed.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. Ambler Borough's Public Works Department seeks candidates (minimum age 18) interested in summer employment. The Borough offers flexible start and end dates. Interested candidates can stop by Borough Hall to complete an Employment Application or download an Application from the Borough website.
2. The regular July 20, 2021 Council Meeting will be held at Ambler Borough Hall Public Meeting Room at 131 Rosemary Avenue at 7:00 p.m. Council will continue to have staff research public meeting hybrid meetings or live video viewing.

Mrs. Deininger 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 recommends and Mrs. Siskind moves:

Consider award of the contract for the Library Crosswalk upgrade at Race and Lindenwold to lowest quote GoreCon for the amount of \$115,100. Seconded. (9-Aye). Carried.

Public Utilities Committee – The Committee recommends and Mrs. Siskind moves:

Consider authorizing a grant allocation request from American Rescue Plan funds. Water infrastructure projects are allowable, and several items were including water main replacement and well upgrades. Seconded. (9-Aye). Carried.

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

Consider that **May 2021** invoices in the amount of **\$978,502.06** be paid. Seconded. (9-Aye). Carried.

Consider granting approval of the Preliminary / Final Major Subdivision Plan to create two separate parcels each containing an existing building at 34 & 38 E. Butler Avenue – Simono Properties, LLC. Seconded. (9-Aye). Carried.

Consider authorizing PFM Financial Advisors to proceed to move forward with calculation of refinancing Borough debt, including preparing a draft Ordinance, with the intention of Council to vote to approve of this plan at their July 20 regular Council Meeting. Seconded. (9-Aye). Carried.

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Sorg thanked Borough Crew and all who participated in the Pride Flag Raising Ceremony which took place earlier this month. She invited the public to meet at Borough Hall on Saturday, June 19 for a scheduled Juneteenth Event to celebrate freedom and the struggle to attain freedom.

Sal Boccuti of 300 Rosemary Avenue asked the Borough to consider installing Veterans' Banners on Butler Avenue. He noted that several municipalities in the area have these banners on display. Both the Mayor and Manager Aversa stated that there is a cost, and these are paid for and maintained by Veterans' families. Manager Aversa stated that with the Ambler Main Street events and sponsorships, there was no room on Butler Avenue for the banners. She stated the Borough could consider installing Veteran's plaques at the Borough building. Mr. DeRuosi suggested the Borough consider purchasing one generalized Veteran's flag for the Borough.

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