

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

May 19, 2021

Ambler Borough Council held their scheduled monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 19, 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, Mrs. Deininger, 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 Water Superintendent Steve Smallberger were in attendance.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. DeRuosi made a motion to approve the Minutes of the April 20, 2021 Zoom Council Meeting and the May 4, 2021 Zoom Committee Meeting. Motion Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Mr. DeRuosi reviewed public comment protocols for the public.

Ms. DiPietro, Finance Committee Chairperson, introduced auditors Debra Bacon and Matt Beinhauer of Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC who made a presentation to Council on the results of the 2020 audit. Ms. Bacon stated the 2020 audit was a smooth "clean" audit and that there were no findings. She added that a note to the audit would be added on the effects of COVID-19 on the Borough's operations and financial results.

Mr. Beinhauer used a PowerPoint presentation to highlight: (1) the total net position is \$9.4 million with \$8.5 million representing the Borough's Net Investment in Capital Assets and the unrestricted deficit is \$1.6 million. The remaining amount of Restricted Net Position for various purposes is \$2.4 million; \$1.4 million of which is for the Net Pension Asset. (2) Governmental Activities Change in Net Position shows a \$706,300 Increase in Net Position and the Primary drivers are Total Revenues down \$162,000 and Total Expenses down \$832,875 from 2019. (3) Financial Results for a 3-year history show Governmental Activities Revenues at a 3.4% increase and Governmental Activities Expenses at a 15.5% decrease. (4) General Fund Total Revenues at \$4.4 million (down \$241,000), Total expenditures \$4.7 million, Excess of Expenditures Over Revenues at \$1129,000 and End of Year Fund Balance \$3.5 million. (5) Financial Results in the General Fund, budget and actual, show a \$122,000 Deficit in Excess of Budgeted Decrease in Fund Balance. (6) General Fund 3-Year Historic Results show a 6.3% decrease and no change in Expenditures. (7) General Fund 5-Year Historic Fund Balances at \$2.4 million in 2016, \$2.9 million in 2017, \$3.4 million in 2018, \$3.6 million in 2019 and \$3.5 million in 2020.

(7) Water Fund total net position is \$7.6 million, and Sewer Fund total net position is \$439,600.

Ms. Bacon noted that changes will be made in the future due to new accounting standards. These accounting changes will affect reporting of all operating leases such as facilities and equipment rentals, accounting for interest cost incurred before the end of a construction period, and conduit debt obligations. Ms. Bacon thanked Finance Manager Gordon for her thoroughness making preparation of the audit go smoothly. She stated in response to an inquiry by Manager Aversa it would be best to compile this data in 2021 so that the auditors could move forward in 2022 in preparation of the 2021 audit.

Public Comment – Lisa Auerbach of 86 Orange Avenue inquired as to how much data compilation would be required of Borough staff with these new accounting standards. Ms. Bacon stated the Borough should compile as much documentation as they can so that the auditors could prepare these statements.

Council then proceeded with Committee reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met via Internet vehicle ZOOM on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Present: Mr. DeRuosi, 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. Water Superintendent Steve Smallberger, Public Works Supervisor Marco Resente, Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Kucher, and Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Russell also were in attendance. Water Engineer Terry Funk and Borough Engineer Jim Dougherty were in attendance. Ms. Hertz was absent.

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.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Consider adoption of the Emergency Declaration for COVID-19 for the month of May 2021. Seconded. (8-Aye). Carried.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Police, Fire Department and Community Ambulance reports were received.
2. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were received.
3. Staff is soliciting quotes for the Library Crosswalk Upgrade at Race & Lindenwold.
4. The Committee discussed the feasibility of preparing a grant application for a complete street policy through the Pennsylvania Department of Health/Pennsylvania Downtown Center: PA Walk Works. The Committee decided not to proceed with the application.
5. The next Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled for Thursday, June 3 from 2-7 p.m. in the Borough Hall Gym. To make an appointment to give, go online to www.redcrossblood.org (keyword: ambler) or call 1-800-RED CROSS.

Ms. Endicott asked if there were further comments or questions from Council or the public. Ms. Sheedy asked Chief Borkowski about several items on his monthly report. Regarding her inquiry on the increased number of disturbances, Chief stated that with the warmer weather there was more outdoor activity and therefore more disturbances. Regarding fireworks, he stated there is no legal location in the Borough to set off fireworks. Regarding tickets for parking violations, he stated that street sweeping has resumed and therefore there are more violations. 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 actions this evening:

1. Consider authorizing the purchase of a 2008 International Vac-Con Hydro Excavator with 8,000 miles for \$75,000 from Whitpain Township.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Welch asked if this purchase was budgeted. Manager Aversa stated this was unexpected but would be split between water/sewer/wastewater. Public Works Supervisor Resente stated the machine would provide safety around gas and utility lines as opposed to working with a backhoe bucket. Further, it eliminates water in the inlets and fewer bags would be needed to contain. Finally, he stated that with a sewer backup minutes matter, and the Borough would be able to react immediately as opposed to arranging for Lower Gwynedd Township to provide services. Mrs. Siskind added that a new machine would cost \$400,000.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. **Resolution 2021-04** authorizing application to MIRIA (Military Installation Remediation and Infrastructure Authority) specifically for the Wells 12 or 14 PFAS Treatment Project. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.
2. **Resolution 2021-05** authorizing execution of a Cooperative Agreement with Lower Gwynedd Township for a cooperative effort between the Borough and Lower Gwynedd Township to submit a MIRIA grant application, with Lower Gwynedd paying approximately \$250,000 in support the application. Seconded. 8-Aye. Carried.

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 there are no new developments.
3. Water Department has completed routine system hydrant flushing.

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 **April 2021** invoices in the amount of **\$1,025,805.94** be paid as follows: General (**\$177,261.84**); Street Lights (**\$7,667.52**); Fire (**\$5,283.00**); Refuse (**\$77,577.92**); Parks & Rec. (**\$7,734.28**); Water (**\$307,115.31**); Sewer (**\$158,573.06**); WWTP (**\$284,106.36**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Water Capital (**\$0.00**); Liquid Fuels (**\$486.65**).

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. Staff would like Council to consider initiating a residential resale properties inspection program.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Sheedy referred to a memo prepared by Code Officer Kucher and asked regarding interior inspections. Solicitor Bresnan stated a certified electrician would conduct inspection of electric. Mr. Kucher added that there are three underwriters available who would certify the electric box and they would enter the residence. Ms. Sheedy asked that a clarification be made that a third party would be inside, not the Borough. Mr. Kucher added that a Master Plumber would conduct a video inspection and sign a hold harmless declaration regarding the presence of a backflow preventer. Solicitor Bresnan stated the memo simply outlined categories of inspection and that an ordinance would provide all the detail.

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. A Zoning Hearing Board Meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2021 regarding 327 Lindenwold Avenue.

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. Team Up to Clean Up Ambler Borough Parks volunteers and several Council members met to clean up the parks on May 8 from 10 a.m. until Noon.
2. The Community Garden Committee and interested members of the public will meet at Knight Park on Sunday, June 6.
3. 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.

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 the following actions this evening:

1. Consider approval of the Police Chief's employment agreement.

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 Planning Commission has a vacancy. Letters of interest can be sent to manager@borough.ambler.pa.us . Applications should be received at the Borough by May 26. Applications have been received from residents of Wards 1 and 3, residents from Ward 2 are encouraged to apply.

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 will make no recommendations this evening.

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

Consider authorizing the purchase of a 2008 International Vac-Con Hydro Excavator with 8,000 miles for \$75,000 from Whitpain Township. Seconded. (9-Aye). Carried.

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

Consider that **April 2021** invoices in the amount of **\$1,025,805.94** be paid. Seconded. (9-Aye). Carried.

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

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

Consider approval of the Police Chief’s employment agreement. Seconded. (9-Aye). Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. DeRuosi initiated a conversation regarding the potential of Council to resume meeting in the Borough Hall Meeting Room starting with the Council Meeting scheduled for June 15th. Much discussion ensued on how to best serve the public, with several Council members suggesting holding hybrid meetings (live and Zoom) for a transition. Much discussion ensued on serving ADA residents and the immune-compromised. Much discussion ensued on acoustics, providing live-stream and potentially installing a speaker phone for dial-in questions. Staff will research possible options.

Madge Monser of 372 Forest Avenue – (1) in favor of Zoom and hybrid to better encourage people to attend, (2) asked Solicitor to review ordinance advertising procedures, (3) asked whether residential resale property inspections should be reviewed by the Planning Commission, (4) encouraged Council to initiate recycling initiatives in the business district, (5) noted that not all construction projects displayed permits in windows.

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