

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

September 20, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday, September 20, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania, 19002.

Council President Siskind called the Council Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and she led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Mrs. Siskind, Ms. Welch, Ms. Forst, Ms. Endicott, Ms. Sheedy, Ms. Henderson (arrived 7:05 p.m.), and Ms. Hughes. Police Chief Borkowski and Solicitor Joe Bresnan also were in attendance. Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Auerbach, Mayor Sorg, and Borough Manager Aversa were absent.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committees of Ambler Borough Council met Tuesday, September 6, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue, Ambler, Pennsylvania, 19002. Present: Mrs. Siskind, Mr. De Ruosi, Ms. Endicott, Ms. Forst, Ms. Auerbach, and Ms. Hughes. Police Chief Borkowski, Solicitor Joe Bresnan and Borough Manager Aversa also were in attendance. Ms. Welch, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Sheedy, and Mayor Sorg were absent.

This evening, the following was presented:

Finance and Planning Committee – Ms. Nellie Forst, Chairperson

Committee Members: Mr. DeRuosi, Ms. Sheedy, Ms. Auerbach

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

The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:

1. Authorization is requested to approve payment of the **August 2022** bills in the amount of **\$688,086.20** as follows: General (**\$159,267.49**); Street Lights (**\$6,326.34**); Fire (**\$0.00**); Refuse (**\$53,351.36**); Parks & Rec. (**\$17,000.54**); Water (**\$207,850.93**); Sewer (**\$29,057.29**); WWTP (**\$154,263.77**); Debt Fund (**\$0.00**); Liquid Fuels (**\$19,865.48**); Water Capital (**\$41,103.00**).
2. Consider contracting with Berkheimer to directly process and collect Business Privilege Taxes commencing with the 2023 tax year.

Discussion ensued. Council discussed the potential cost of contracting out for this tax service. Mr. Sal Boccuti of 300 Rosemary Avenue, during Public Comment, inquired as to whether the BPT tax would be increased to cover the cost. Solicitor Bresnan stated a change in the amount of flat tax would require an ordinance change. Further, he stated it was necessary to clarify who would be responsible for involving in litigation for unpaid taxes. The Committee determined not to act on this agenda item this evening to allow time for further fact-finding.

3. Consider awarding the 2022 Road Paving contract to lowest responsive bidder Delaware Valley Paving at the base bid cost of \$352,132.42 contingent upon document review by the Borough Solicitor.
4. Consider adoption of three Resolutions recognizing the actuarial condition of each Pension Plan and acknowledging the Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for 2023.
 - **Resolution 2022-08** Defined Contribution Pension Plan for the Benefit of Municipal Employees Hired After 1/1/14
 - **Resolution 2022-09** Defined Benefit Pension Plan for the Benefit of Municipal Employees Hired Prior to 1/1/14
 - **Resolution 2022-10** Pension Plan for the Benefit of the Borough's Police Employees

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. An Ordinance is being prepared to modify the street sweeping schedule in Haywood Park.
3. Representatives from Alliance Bernstein will attend the October 4th Committee meeting to discuss the pension plans.
4. A presentation was made regarding 24-26 North Ridge Avenue – John's Court, LLC proposing to convert the existing buildings into three residential condominium units along with off street parking. The Zoning Hearing Board will conduct a public hearing on September 28, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.
5. A request was made by Public Works for the purchase of new Butler Avenue trash cans. The Committee requested that staff consider other waste receptacle options to include side-by-side for both trash and recycling.
6. Minimum Municipal Obligations (MMO) for 2023 for Borough Municipal Employees' (Defined Benefit & Defined Contribution) and Police Pension Plans were prepared by

Joseph W. Duda and submitted by the Finance Manager to Council at the September Committee Meeting (9/6/22).

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Authorization for Council to prepare a letter to the Zoning Hearing Board recommending granting zoning relief regarding the project at 24-26 North Ridge Avenue – John’s Court, LLC. (6-Aye; 0-Nay). Carried.

Ms. Forst asked if there were further comments or questions from the Committee, Council, or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee’s report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

Public Safety Committee – Ms. Jennifer Henderson, Chairperson

Committee members: Ms. Endicott, Ms. Forst, Ms. Hughes

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

The Committee will consider the following actions this evening:

1. Consider approval for the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to amend its operating rules to now require a person seeking a promotion to have three years of experience within the Ambler Borough Police Department, as opposed to within any police department, not to apply to the office of Police Chief whose hiring is made outside of the civil service process.
2. Consider approval for the Police Department to purchase the following tactical gear: two Ballistic Shields and two Helmets at a total cost of \$10,436.00.

Discussion ensued. Chief Borkowski announced that donations of \$5,000 from Ambler Savings Bank and \$10,000 from Ambler Rotary would be made toward purchases of tactical gear.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The Police and Community Ambulance reports were received.
2. The Public Works and Code Enforcement reports were received.
3. A Red Cross Blood Drive was held Friday, September 16 from 2-7 p.m. in the Ambler Borough Hall Gymnasium.

Ms. Henderson asked if there were further comments or questions from the Committee, Council or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee’s report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

Public Utilities Committee – Ms. Haley Welch, Chairperson

Committee members: Ms. Endicott, Ms. Sheedy, Ms. Hughes

The Public Utilities Committee report was given this evening by Ms. Welch.

The Committee will make no recommendations this evening.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. The WWTP Engineer's report was provided.
2. The Water Engineer's tabulation of PFAS sampling results from July 2022, along with the average of all past sampling results has been prepared. All levels continue to be consistent with the average of past sample results. There are no significant increases or decreases at any wells, tanks, or at Whitemarsh. Several wells continue to be close to PA DEP's proposed MCL for PFOA (14 ppt). The spreadsheet has been posted on the website.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Authorization to award the WWTP's Clarifier 2 & 3 repairs to Blooming Glen at a cost of \$19,300.00. (6-Aye; 0-Nay). Carried.

Ms. Welch asked if there were further comments or questions from the Committee, Council or the public. It was announced that a presentation of a MIRIA grant award would be made at the October meeting. Solicitor Bresnan stated the Upper Dublin Township Zoning Board has granted the Borough Water Department's application for the project to be undertaken at Loch Alsh Reservoir. He noted the requirement that the constructed facility be constructed with a residential-looking façade. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee's report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

Parks and Recreation Committee – Ms. Erin Endicott, Chairperson

Committee members: Ms. Henderson, Ms. Welch, Ms. Auerbach

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

This evening's presentation:

A presentation was made this evening by the Montgomery County Senior Planner Chloe Mohr outlining the key recommendations for the Borough Park System put together by the Borough Planning Commission from public input as part of the Parks System Plan. She stated that over 200 households had responded to the survey. She outlined the top priority recommendations and provided preliminary cost estimates as relevant and available.

- Reevaluate rules surrounding dogs in parks due to support for leashed dog walking in most parks and a strong interest in the creation of a fenced, off-leash dog park.
- Complete sidewalks on all sides of Pickering Field (\$276,534.75).
- Control erosion and protect existing Pickering Field shade trees.
- Improve stairs and fencing at Hendricks Street entrance to Borough Park.
- Perform streambank restoration and improve riparian buffers at Borough Park.
- Continue to improve trails and paths at Borough Park.
- Add seating at Borough Park (\$500-\$1,000 per bench).
- Improve Tennis Avenue entrance to Borough Park.
- Add picnic tables at Ricciardi Park (\$1,500-\$2,000 per table).
- Work on traffic calming on Hendricks Street near Ricciardi Park.
- Create a landscaping plan for 44 Tennis Avenue (covered by MCPC contract).

Additional survey results show an interest in the Borough putting more parks information on the Borough website; consider staffing and support; parks maintenance; park patrols; funding ideas; and ADA planning. Specific capital investment ideas include a parks pavilion; workout equipment; dog park; splash pad; dog bag station; and playground equipment for older children.

Substantial discussion ensued regarding creation of a dog park, memorial benches, and educational park signage. Council President Siskind suggested Council begin with the big-ticket items, and she noted that a second grant would need to be applied for to complete Pickering Field sidewalks. Code Officer Glenn Kucher stated the project would meet all grant checklist requirements and stated that March 2023 would be the application deadline for the next round of grants.

Ms. Sheedy suggested that Council consider and re-evaluate the ordinance governing dog permittance in parks before moving forward with a dog park. Ms. Endicott suggested Council budget for picnic tables and benches. Ms. Henderson suggested chess tables and checkers tables for Ricciardi Park. Resident Nancy Roecker-Coates of 208 Southern Avenue urged Council to include purchase of inclusive playground equipment. County Planner Mohn suggested Council hire an ADA consultant when making those purchasing decisions. Sue Leary of 300 E. Park Avenue commented on proposed one-side-of-street parking at Pickering Field.

The Committee will consider no actions action this evening.

In other business the following was reviewed:

1. Registered Yoga Teacher Dan Rosenak continues to offer residents free yoga sessions at Knights Park on September 24, and October 2 and 22.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Authorization to donate \$300 to “Do Better 4 Steve,” a non-profit organization. (6-Aye; 0-Nay). Carried.

Ms. Endicott asked if there were further comments or questions from the Committee, 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 – Mr. Frank DeRuosi, Chairperson

Committee members: Ms. Forst, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Welch

The Salary and Personnel Committee report was given this evening by Ms. Henderson.

The Committee will consider no actions this evening.

Approved at Committee Meeting:

1. Authorization to offer employment as Assistant Water Superintendent to the applicant discussed during an Executive Session. (6-Aye; 0-Nay). Carried. [An Executive Session was held before the September Committee Meeting on this employment matter.]
2. Authorization to approve the proposed AFSCME Contract. (6-Aye; 0-Nay). Carried.

Ms. Henderson asked if there were further comments or questions from the Committee, Council or the public. There being nothing further, it was moved the Committee’s report be accepted as filed. Seconded. Carried.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Consider that the August 2022 bills be paid in the amount of \$688,086.20. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.
2. A recommendation is requested to award the 2022 Road Paving contract to Delaware Valley Paving at the base bid cost of \$352,132.42 contingent upon document review by the Borough Solicitor. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.
3. A recommendation to adopt the following three Resolutions recognizing the actuarial condition of each Pension Plan and acknowledging the Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for 2023:

- **Resolution 2022-08** Defined Contribution Pension Plan for the Benefit of Municipal Employees Hired after 1/1/14. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.
- **Resolution 2022-09** Defined Benefit Pension Plan for the Benefit of Municipal Employees Hired Prior to 1/1/14. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.
- **Resolution 2022-10** Pension Plan for the Benefit of the Borough's Police Employees. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

Public Safety Committee – The Committee recommends and Ms. Henderson moves:

1. A recommendation to approve the CSC amending its operating rules to now require three years of experience within Ambler Borough Police Department for a promotion, not to apply to the office of Chief whose hiring is made outside of the civil service process. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.
2. Consider approval for the Police Department to purchase two Ballistic Shields and two Helmets at a total cost of \$10,436.00. Seconded. All Aye. Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Councilperson Endicott made a request of Chief Borkowski to consider the use of ‘speed cushions’ as opposed to speed bumps. **There being no further public comment or other business**, Mrs. Siskind moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Russell
 Assistant Secretary
 Borough of Ambler