

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

May 21, 2024

The regular meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday May 21, 2024, at 7:00PM at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002.

Council President Siskind called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Ms. Siskind, Ms. Welch, Ms. Sheedy, Ms. Hughes Kelly, Ms. Roecker Coates, Ms. Henderson, Ms. Auerbach, Ms. Iovine, Mr. Orehek, Police Chief Jeff Borkowski and Borough Manager Mary Aversa, Solicitor Joe Bresnan were also present. Mayor Sorg was absent.

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Siskind made a motion to approve the Minutes of April 16, 2024, Council meeting. Seconded. **Carried 9 -Aye.**

Finance and Planning Committee – Ms. Hayley Welch Chairperson, Committee Members: Ms. Karen Sheedy, Ms. Lisa Auerbach, Ms. Elizabeth Iovine.

The Committee will consider the following recommendations:

1. That the March bills be paid in the amount of \$2,019,014.88 as follows: General (\$346,165.55); Street lights (\$7,028.86), Fire (\$0.0), Refuse (\$63,510.96); Parks & Rec (\$2,694.86); Water (\$1,019,665.18); Sewer (\$30,048.72); WWTP (\$549,900.75), liquid Fuels (\$0.0); Water Capital (\$0.0); Voided checks (\$0.0).
2. A Public Hearing was held at 7:00 for adoption of Ordinance-1139 amending the Zoning Ordinance lighting criteria to the current IENA (Illuminating Engineering Society of North America) Standards. The Montgomery County Planning Commission and Borough Planning Commission reviews were received.
3. Authorization was requested to approve the sewer planning module for the 525 Virginia Drive apartment building.
4. Authorization was requested to approve the sewer planning module for 1027 E Butler Avenue.

The Following Business was discussed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. The Zoning Hearing Board is rescheduling the hearing for 27 W. Butler Avenue.
3. PennDOT is accepting bids for the Pickering field sidewalks for the portion of sidewalk along North St. and Highland Ave. with a let date of May 23,2024 and anticipated notice to proceed date of August 19, 2024. This process is managed by PennDOT.

4. The Wissahickon Valley Historical Society discussed SEPTA's plans to demolish the 1855 Freight House. Council has asked for an update.
5. An update was provided on House Bill 1903 to use public funds and workers to maintain and repair private sewer and water lateral lines. This legislation will mirror the existing authority language in statute, ensuring clarity consistency and implementation.
6. Staff is working with the Borough Engineer to prepare the paving bid for this year for the outstanding roads left out of the 2022 paving project with additional eligible Borough owned alleys.

Committee questions:

Ms. Huges Kelly asked how many alleys were left to be paved.

Ms. Aversa clarified 3 or 4.

Mr. Orehek asked for clarification on the high water bill number.

Ms. Aversa clarified that it was MIRIA and grant money.

Public Comment:

Bernadette Dougherty 138 Tennis Ave asked how many apartment units were in the Virginia Drive complex.

Ms. Aversa replied 250 units total it's located in Upper Dublin and a Bucks County water and sewer authority customer.

Ms. Dougherty asked where 1207 E. Butler was.

Ms. Aversa answered in Upper Dublin.

Ms. Dougherty gave an update on the Freight House and the search for its new location. The Historical society reached out to SEPTA and they are waiting to hear back.

Mr. Breslin asked who the owner of the Freight House was.

Ms. Dougherty answered the Historical Society.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend that the February bills in the amount of \$2,019,014.88 be paid. **Carried 9-Aye.**
2. Authorization is requested to adopt the ordinance amending the Zoning ordinance lighting criteria to the current IENA (Illuminating Engineering Society of America) standards. **Carried 9-Aye.**
3. Authorization was requested to approve the sewer planning module for the 525 Virginia Drive apartment building. **Carried 9-Aye.**
4. Authorization was requested to approve the sewer planning module for 1207 e Butler Avenue. **Carried 9-Aye.**

Ms. Siskind made a motion to adopt the report. **Carried 9-Aye.**

Public Safety Committee: Ms. Amy Hughes Kelly – Chair, Committee Members: Jennifer Henderson, Nancy Roecker Coates, and Lou Orehek

The Committee will consider the following recommendations.

1. Resolution 2024-7 to support the Ambler Fire House volunteers.
2. The purchase of trash totes and recycling bins not to exceed \$14,500.00.
3. To award the repair job on the retaining wall on Heckler Street to NYCE Construction for \$19,300.00.
4. To approve the requested traffic calming study by Bowman for Butler Avenue between Bethlehem Pike and Park Avenue.

Committee Questions:

Ms. Sheedy asked if the trash totes and recycling was in the budget.

Ms. Aversa answered yes, it is.

Ms. Sheedy asked if the Heckler St. repair was in the budget, and if we approached the project as Task 1 and then Task 2 or all at once.

Ms. Aversa explained that it was not but that we can cover it with other funding sources. We will treat Task 1 and Task 2 as one contract, and council can approach it as 1 contract not 2.

The following business was discussed:

1. The Police Department report was reviewed.
2. The Community Ambulance report was reviewed.
3. The Fire Department report was reviewed.
4. Public works and code enforcement reports were received.
5. The request from From the Boot to close York Street on weekends was not approved.
6. National police week was May 12th-May 18th.
7. An update was provided on the status of the aggressive driving campaign.

Public Comment:

Brendan Lotty 263 Bannockburn Avenue expressed his frustration regarding a 3-year issue with his neighbor. The issue being the smoking of marijuana on the front porch, loud parties that continue into the night, constant noise violations. Mr. Lotty has made numerous calls to the

police and calls to Code enforcement. Mr. Lotty wanted to see the police report and expressed a desire to hold the Landlord accountable.

Chief Borkowski explained that the landlord had been contacted and he had not heard back from him. He advised Mr. Lotty to get a Right to Know regarding the issue.

Mr. Lotty continued to express his frustration and wanted to know what could be done to stop this behavior.

Ms. Hughes Kelly reassured Mr. Lotty that the Council would continue to do what they can to remedy the situation.

The Committee will consider the following recommendation.

1. A recommendation to adopt Resolution 2024-7 in support of the Ambler Fire House Volunteers. **Carried 9 - Aye.**
2. A recommendation to purchase trash totes and recycling bins at a cost not to exceed \$14,500.00. **Carried 9 - Aye.**
3. Recommend approving the quote from NYCE Construction of \$19,300.00 to fix the retaining wall on Heckler Street. **Carried 9 - Aye.**
4. Authorization to approve the contract with Bowman for the traffic calming study on Butler Avenue between Bethlehem Pike and Park Avenue. **Carried 9 - Aye.**

Ms. Siskind moved to accept the report. **Carried 9 - Aye.**

Public Utilities Committee: Karen Sheedy - Chair, Committee Members: Haley Welch, Amy Hughes Kelly, Lou Orehek

The Committee will make no Recommendations.

The following business was discussed:

1. The WWTP Engineers report was received.
2. The 2024 MIRIA grant was submitted.
3. The Water department has begun system flushing. They began in Ambler and then Upper Dublin. Locations will be posted on the Borough Website.

Ms. Siskind made a motion to accept the Public Utilities report. **Carried 9- Aye.**

Parks and Recreation Committee: Jennifer Henderson – Chair, Committee Members: Haley Welch, Nancy Roecker Coates, and Lisa Auerbach

The Committee made no recommendations.

The following business was discussed:

1. The Ambler YMCA Summer camp registration was held. There is currently a waiting list.
2. The Community Garden held an informational session on May 13th at 6:00PM at Knight Park.
3. The Committee has scheduled Yoga in the park, the first session will be June 8th at 10:00 AM in Knight Park.

Committee Questions:

Ms. Henderson asked a question regarding vandalism in Riccardi Park.

Ms. Aversa explained that it was a registered park rental. The trash was tied up and left by the trash can, but she was aware that people parked on the grass and that is not permitted.

Ms. Hughes asked if there was any way to notify neighbors when a park permit was issued.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Welch gave an update on the Yoga in the park program.

Ms. Hughes asked if persons with disabilities would be accommodated.

Ms. Welch said yes.

Public Comment:

Joanne Cavanaugh 136 Reiffs Mill Road felt that people took over the whole park and monopolized the space.

Ms. Siskind determined that more instruction is needed when a park permit is issued.

Ms. Siskind made a motion to accept the report. **Carried 9- Aye.**

Salary & Personnel Committee: Chair – Lisa Auerbach, Jen Henderson, Karen Sheedy, Elizabeth Iovine.

The Committee consider the following recommendations:

1. Executive Sessions were held on April 8 and April 14 for personnel matters. A recommendation may be forthcoming.
2. A recommendation is requested to hire Vito Pagano as the Highway Superintendent.

The following business was discussed:

1. Resumes are being accepted for the Planning Commission vacancy until May 30th
2. The current committee vacancies are as follows:

Zoning hearing Board - Seat (Alternate)
Civil Service – 1 Seat (Alternate)
Appeals Board – 1 Seat

3. Resumes were accepted for the vacant Water I Operater position.
4. Resumes are being accepted for Summer Parks Maintenance positions and WWTP maintenance.

Recommendations:

1. A recommendation was requested to approve the personnel issue discussed in the executive session. **Carried 9 – Aye.**
2. A recommendation was requested to approve the hiring of Vito Pagano for the vacant Highway Superintendent position. **Carried 9 – Aye.**

Ms. Siskind made motions to approve the report. **Carried 9– Aye.**

Public Comment:

Ms. Welch made the announcement that she will be moving out of the Borough in June thus vacating her seat on Council. The next Council meeting will b her last.

Ellen Quinn 221 E. Park Avenue voiced concern with automobiles running stop signs and illegal parking in her neighborhood.

Ms. Siskind addresses the concern and assured Ms. Quinn that the issues are presently being addressed by the PD.

Annalee Lupinski 136 Rosemary noted that the Parks and Rec page was missing from her minutes.

Terri Willimas Fulling Mill Lane commented that while she was hesitant for the allowance of dogs in the parks she feels that it is a plus and people are following the rules.

There being no further public comment or other business, Ms. Siskind moved the meeting to be adjourned. **Carried 9 – Aye.**

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Wahl Kunzier
Assistant Secretary
Borough of Ambler