

AMBLER BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

November 19, 2024

The regular meeting of Ambler Borough Council was held Tuesday November 19, 2024, at 7:00PM at Borough Council Chambers located at 131 Rosemary Avenue Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002.

Mayor Sorg had a mayor's moment to recognize the WHS class of 1974.

Council President Siskind called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

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

Approval of Minutes: Ms. Siskind made a motion to approve the Minutes of October 15, 2024, Council meeting. Seconded. **Carried 8 -Aye.**

Finance and Planning Committee – Elizabeth Iovine - Chairperson, Committee Members: Karen Sheedy.

The Committee meeting was held on November 5, at 7:00pm. Elizabeth Iovine - Chairperson, Committee Members: Karen Sheedy, Lisa Auerbach.

The Committee will consider the following recommendations:

1. That the September bills be paid in the amount of \$1,248,359.39 as follows: General (\$229,794.61); Street lights (\$0.0), Fire (\$0.0), Refuse (\$60,689.30); Parks & Rec (\$4,371.92); Water (\$574,712.54); Sewer (\$102,779.31); WWTP (\$271,477.56), liquid Fuels (\$4,534.15); Water Capital (\$0.0); Voided checks (\$0.0).
2. A request was received to donate \$1,000.00 for a memorial bench for Salvatore Pasceri.
3. Uninvest is no longer managing pension payments. A recommendation authorizing Charles Schwab to provide pension payment service is requested.

The Following Business was discussed:

1. The Borough Engineer's report was received.
2. Joe Duda and Steve Repke from Bernstein were at the November 6th meeting to discuss the Borough pension plans

3. The draft for the 2025 meeting calendar has been received. It will be advertised in December.
4. Budget Meeting dates are scheduled for December 3rd at 6:30pm, at 10:00 am and December 17th at 6:30pm. The Resolution and Ordinance for the Budget will be provided.
5. The Borough will be hosting an open house regarding the comprehensive plan on Tuesday, January 28th 6pm-8pm. This event will introduce the public to the planning process of the Comprehensive plan and request input on the current state of Ambler as well as its vision for Ambler in the next 5, 10 and 20 years. Survey and marketing materials will be distributed later this month.
6. PA State Senator Maria Collett and PA State Representative Melissa Cerrato announced on October 25th the award of several high-profile state grants for local projects. Ambler Borough was awarded \$1,000,000.00 for renovations to the Wissahickon Fire Company Ambler Main Station.

Approved at the Committee Meeting

1. Authorization was requested to make a loan to the sewer fund for WWTP Capital Contribution in the amount of 400K from the general fund. **Carried 8-Aye.**
2. A recommendation was made to adopt the Small Business Saturday proclamation. **Carried 8-Aye.**

Committee Questions:

Ms. Sheedy asked a question regarding the bench donation; would it be possible to cover the cost of the entire bench? Discussion ensued. Consensus from Council was yes.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend that the October bills in the amount of **\$1,248,359.39** be paid. **Carried 8-Aye.**
2. Recommend authorizing the purchase of a park bench in honor of Salvatore Pasceri. **Carried 8-Aye.**
3. A recommendation to authorize Charles Schwab to provide pension payment services. **Carried 8-Aye.**

Public Comment:

Bernadette Dougherty 338 Tennis Ave. asked a question regarding the loan and payment and whether it could be put on a repayment timeline.

Ms. Aversa explained the timeline and payment schedule.

Ms. Dougherty asked a rate connection question,

Ms. Aversa explained that costs have risen significantly.

Ms. Siskind made a motion to adopt the report. **Carried 8-Aye.**

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

The Committee meeting was held on November 5, at 7:00pm. Ms. Amy Hughes Kelly – Chair, Committee Members: Jennifer Henderson, Nancy Roecker Coates, and Lou Orehek

The Committee will make no recommendations.

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 Butler Avenue Traffic Study is complete, and the proposed changes are being reviewed. The Borough engineer is preparing a quote for upgrades along Butler Ave, race St. and Bethlehem Pk.

Public Comment :

Bernadette Dougherty 338 Tennis Ave. Asked what the upgrades were under #5.

Chief Borkowski explained that they were: changing traffic lanes, perhaps widening lanes and limiting traffic, adjusting parking, changing pedestrian signs, raised paint to slow traffic, with more detail explained the tentative plan.

Ms. Siskind moved to accept the report. **Carried 8- Aye.**

Public Utilities Committee: Karen Sheedy - Chair, Committee Members: Amy Hughes Kelly, Lou Orehek, David Hui

The Committee meeting was held on November 5, at 7:00pm. Karen Sheedy - Chair, Committee Members: Amy Hughes Kelly, Lou Orehek, David Hui

The Committee will consider the following recommendation.

1. Recommend adoption of Resolution 2024-14 to apply for Statewide Local Share Assessment grant of \$1,000,000.00 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for our Lead Service Line Replacement Program

The following business was discussed:

1. The WWTP Engineer's report was received.
2. The Ambler WWTP is requesting quotes for the supply and installation of VFDs (Variable Frequency Drives) for ALL 5 blowers as part of the digester conversions. On hold until 2025.
3. System flushing is underway, locations will be posted on the Borough Website.
4. On 1/1/24 the new sewer rate of \$7.50 per thousand gallons became effective. (Ordinance 1136 passed on 12/19/23, raising the rate from \$6.50 to \$7.50 per thousand gallons) Due to a system programming issue the billing on 4/29/24 and 7/30/24 did not reflect the rate change. The current bill generated 10/30/24 has been adjusted accordingly and can be found under the "adjustment line". Any interest and penalty fees will be waived. If additional time is needed to pay it will be granted. If you need to make payment arrangements, please contact the water department.

Committee Questions:

Ms. Siskind asked if the Grant needed to be matched.

Ms. Aversa explained that it does not.

Approved at the Committee Meeting

1. The proposal from Keystone Alliance to review the water and Sewer EDU – Equivalent Dwelling Unit fee structure for connections fees was approved **8-Aye**.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend adoption of Resolution 2024-14 to apply for a Statewide Local Share Assessment grant of \$1,000,000.00 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for our Lead Service Line Replacement Program **Carried 8- Aye.**

Public Comment

Lindsay Daku 122 Greenwood Ave wanted to know how soon the Borough would know about the grant.

Ms. Sheedy explained.

Ms. Siskind made a motion to accept the Public Utilities report. **Carried 8- Aye.**

Parks and Recreation Committee: Jennifer Henderson – Chair, Committee Members: Nancy Roecker Coates and David Hui

The Committee meeting was held on November 6, at 7:00pm. Committee Members: Jen Henderson - Chair, Nancy Roecker-Coates and David Hui.

The Committee made no recommendations.

The following business will be discussed:

1. The lawn maintenance contract expires at the end of the year. A new Bid Document is being prepared.
2. Staff will collect quotes on repairs to the multipurpose courts at Riccardi park and address the open area of Wahl Park that is becoming an issue. These projects are in the 2025 budget.
3. Staff is ordering new benches for the Knight Park Pavillion and a bike rack for Borough Hall.

Committee Questions:

Ms. Sheedy asked how we can better protect Knight Park from vandalism.

Ms. Henderson suggested that the cameras just recently installed would help.

Ms. Sheedy asked if an officer could be assigned to the park at night?

Chief Borkowski offered that the patrol men are there as often as possible.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Hui commented that the additional police presence is noted and appreciated.

Anna Lee Lipinski 136 Rosemary Ave asked what the issue is with Wahl Park. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Siskind made a motion to accept the Parks and Rec report. **Carried 8- Aye.**

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

The Committee meeting was held on November 6, at 7:00pm. Committee Members: Chair, Jen Henderson, Karen Sheedy and Elizabeth Iovine. Absent – Mayor Sorg

The Committee will make no recommendations.

The following business will be discussed:

1. An Executive session was held on October 29th at 7:00 pm for a personnel issue.
2. The list of expiring Volunteer positions expiring in 2024 were received. Resumes are being accepted.
3. A resume including a letter of interest is requested for the Ward2 vacancy until December 10.
4. A vote will be taken to fill the Vice President of Council vacancy.
5. The Police Department conducted a Physical Agility test and a written examination on Saturday November 2, 202. Nine people applied to participate in the testing process. Seven of the nine showed up for the test. Three applicants passed the physical agility test and were eligible to take the written test. All three failed the written test. Chief Borokowski is currently researching the date for the next MONTCO Police Consortium test that the Department can participate in.

Committee Questions:

Ms. Hughes Kelly asked how often the police testing occurred.
Chief Borokowski explained December 5 is the next test followed by February or March.
Ms. Hughes Kelly had more testing questions. Discussion ensued.

Approved at the Committee Meeting

1. A recommendation to accept the resignation of Lisa Auerbach effective October 29th was approved. **Carried 8 – Aye.**
2. A recommendation to rescind the vote to accept the resignation of Lisa Auerbach and correct the effective date to November 6th was approved. **Carried 8 – Aye.**
3. A recommendation to hire Austin Mikula for the Water Operator 1 vacancy was approved. **Carried 8 – Aye.**

The vote for Vice President was called for. Nancy Roecker Coated nominated Liz Iovine. Karen Sheedy nominated Jennifer Henderson. Each gave a speech regarding the qualifications of their candidate. The roll call went as follows: Ms. Siskind - Ms. Iovine, Mr. Orehek- Ms. Iovine, Ms. Iovine -herself, Ms. Roecker Coates - Ms. Iovine, Ms. Henderson - herself, Ms. Sheedy - Ms. Henderson, Ms. Hughes Kelly - Ms. Iovine, Mr. Hui - Ms. Henderson.

Ms. Iovine was appointed, the votes falling 5-3 in favor of Ms. Iovine.

Ms. Siskind made motions to approve the report. **Carried 8 – Aye.**

Public Comment.

Anna Lee Lapinsky 136 Rosemary Ave asked a question regarding the property the Borough owns on Poplar St.

Ms. Aversa explained that the Borough is currently working on a stormwater project and that property will play into the execution of the project. It will be utilized for storm water basins.

Ms. Lapinsky requested a change to the current signage.

Mary Spross 366 Forest Ave asked when the details of the Miner Center contract and findings would be made public.

Ms. Siskind explained that the information provided would remain private.

There being no further public comment or other business, Ms. Siskind moved the meeting to be adjourned. **Carried 8 – Aye.**

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Wahl Kunzier
Assistant Secretary
Borough of Ambler