

BOROUGH OF AKRON COUNCIL MEETING- June 22, 2020

Council Members present- Thomas J. Murray, Sr. President; Darryl Witmer, Kleon Zimmerman and Paul Swangren, Jr. (Justin Gehman, Vice-President; Nathan Imhoff and Randall Justice not present)

Others present- Mayor John McBeth, Susan Davidson, Borough Manager/Secretary; Police Chief Thomas Zell, Kenelm L. Shirk III, Solicitor.

Others present (Via Zoom) – Autumn & Jason Whitcraft, Kim Bell, Jolene Kapczynski, Tonya Carter, Kylee Good, Richard Rupp, Linda Kane, Jaqueline Hurst, Michael Hodgson & Robyn Meadows, Monica Hersh, Joe Latrell.

Meeting opened at 6:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Paul Swangren, Jr made a motion to approve the May 13, 2020 and May 25, 2020 Borough of Akron Council Meeting minutes. Kleon Zimmerman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Visitors

Richard Rupp stated he was concerned about the high increase with the sewer rates.

Robyn Meadows mentioned her concern with the high loss of employment and people on fixed incomes and the 50% sewer increase hit them hard and given the state of the economy is there another way of taking care of our aging sewer system.

Monica Hersh mentioned why can't we come to the Akron Fire Hall to meet. Tom Murray, Sr. mentioned next meeting we will be in the green phase and will still meet at the Akron Fire Hall.

Robyn Meadows mentioned she called the Borough Office and was told that the meeting was a Zoom meeting only.

The draft minutes from this meeting should be on the Akron Borough webpage by Saturday, June 27, 2020.

Kim Bell mentioned that concern for the high sewer rate increase.

Jolene Kapczynski asked when will the street lights and paving for Westview Drive be completed. The Borough Manager mentioned that all improvements must be completed before paving by Haller Builders before the street can be dedicated and street lights installed.

Reports

Mayor

Nothing to report

Police

Distributed May 2020 Police Report

Borough Manager Report

May 2020 financials have been reconciled and June 2020 payables have been reviewed.

Copies of the 2019 Borough Audit was distributed to Council and Mayor.

Schuylkill Paving will begin paving Walnut Street on July 6, 2020 and residents have been notified.

The paving bid for Front Street was advertised for opening on July 8, 2020. A pre-bid conference is scheduled for June 25, 2020 at the Borough Office. The anticipated award for Front Street paving will be on Monday, July 13, 2020.

The Akron Borough 2019 Real Estate Taxes were audited by the Lancaster County Controller's Office and there were no findings.

The property located at 1418 Diamond Street received a Notice of Violation for an inoperable grinder pump. The pump has been replaced and is working and the residents are allowed to move back in the house.

The temporary flush line was installed on 700 block of New Street to be able to flush the line at the dead end and take care dirty water issue at 708 New Street.

The Borough Manager met with residents on S. Tenth Street to discuss the repair of their sewer laterals.

Nothing is scheduled for the Akron Planning Commission at this time

A Zoning Hearing is scheduled for July 16, 2020 at 7:00p.m. for an application requesting an increase of impervious surface at 411 Edgehill Drive.

Tax Collector

May 2020 Real Estate Tax collected for County of Lancaster
\$72,230.44

May 2020 Real Estate Taxes collected for the Borough of Akron
\$74,438.83

Fire Chief

Distributed May 2020 Akron Volunteer Fire Report

Zoning Officer

Distributed May 2020 Zoning Officer Report
Administrative/Finance Committee

Paul Swangren, Jr. made a motion to approve the bills as reviewed by the Council President and Borough Treasurer and to ratify the sending of the monies. Kleon Zimmerman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

May 2020 Month-end Cash Balance	
General Fund	\$493,403.47
Water Fund	\$ 21,303.58
Sewer Fund	\$ 61,701.25
Hwy Aid Fund	\$255,901.13
General Reserves	\$368,904.89
Water Reserves	\$220,479.05
Sewer Reserves	\$124,676.86
Capital Projects	\$ 373.57

Community Fund	\$ 3,375.08
Total	\$1,550,118.88

Herbein & Co. will be at the July 13,2020 Council meeting to make a presentation on the 2019 Borough Audit.

Community Relations

Nothing to report

Parks/Property Committee

Mayor McBeth mentioned that he has not heard from Rosenberger about the donation of the soccer goals.

Personnel Committee

The Borough Manager along with Paul Swangren, Jr. met with representatives from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers on June 2, 2020 (via Zoom) and again on June 17, 2020 to discuss Non-Uniform contract negotiations. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 29, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Paul Swangren, Jr. mentioned that he is working on an Administrative job description and will maybe hire in 2021.

Paul Swangren, Jr. mentioned that he would like to adopt language to modify the job description and to be able to amend from time to time by resolution. Council can take action on this item at the July 13,2020 Council meeting.

Paul Swangren, Jr. mentioned to have a public meeting to discuss police services and the Borough Manager is waiting to hear back from Akron Civil Service on the advertisement to hire the second police officer.

Paul Swangren, Jr made a motion to advertise the Special Council meeting to discuss police services on Monday, July 20, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Akron Volunteer Fire Hall. Public can send in questions in advance and Tom Murray, Sr. will contact the police entities to make presentations. Kleon Zimmerman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Streets Committee

Walnut Street is scheduled to begin paving on July 6, 2020

Front Street paving bids will be opened on July 8, 2020 and will be on the agenda to be awarded on July 13, 2020.

Darryl Witmer made a motion to approve the Eagle Scout Project for the Akron Scouts to proceed with painting the curb at the fire hydrants in Akron Borough. Paul Swangren, Jr. seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Utilities

Sewer Rate Increase

Tom Murray, Sr. stated that the sewer rates increased from \$10.61 to \$15.25 per thousand on February 1, 2020 and was proposed in the 2020 budget in December 2019. Tom Murray, Sr. also stated that the inflow and infiltration is an issue in Akron Borough and huge expense to fix.

Comments from residents on raising the sewer rates.

Resident mentioned raising the rates now during the COVID-19 is especially difficult.

A lot of retired people in Akron on a fixed income.

A resident asked where the sewer rate increase goes in the budget. Tom Murray, Sr. mentioned that the sewer rate revenues go directly into the sewer fund.

The Borough Solicitor mentioned the Borough is trying to reduce the treatment costs to Ephrata Treatment plant by reducing the amount of sewage water going to Ephrata.

Tom Murray, Sr. asked Council members if they would consider reducing the sewer rates. Darryl Witmer mentioned can we do the work if we lower the sewer rates? Tom Murray, Sr. mentioned that we can borrow money to do the work and take some of the expense from the residents.

Paul Swangren, Jr. mentioned we must find the problem then televise then fix.

A resident asked if the sewer rate increase could be smaller.

Tom Murray, Sr. mentioned that the Borough paid over \$60,000.00 in penalties to Ephrata because Akron was exceeding their daily flow to the Ephrata Treatment Plant.

Tom Murray, Sr. mentioned we have been trying to work on this problem for the past twenty-five years.

Resident mentioned she works as a nurse and wants to take care of paying her bills but a 40% increase is a lot of money and not our burden to bear and there should be smaller increases over time.

Richard Rupp mentioned that in defense of Council it is our responsibility as citizens to be informed and both sides have issues on this matter.

Resident mentioned that in the December 2019 minutes the rate increase was not clear what the increase was. A letter should have been sent and Council should be sharing the agenda on the webpage and Facebook.

A homeowner on Walnut Street mentioned that property taxes have increased, sewer rates doubled and a sidewalk cost \$6,000.00.

Resident stated that there's got to be a better way and hope going forward some consideration is given to residents.

Monica Hersh asked if we can look at videos in the past before we continue with new video.

Paul Swangren, Jr. state the Borough staff and Council need to do work on this issue and not prepared to do something tonight. This issue will go back to the utility committee and see what we can come up with.

Resident mentioned that can not afford it at this time. Tom Murray, Sr. mentioned to contact Susan Davidson at the Borough Office to work out a payment plan.

Resident mentioned if Council would consider putting in a dog park.

Resident mentioned that the Akron Police Department is outstanding along with Officer Cook and Chief Zell and we need community police.

Resident who lives at Westview and 5th Street mentioned they never had a bad encounter with our police department.

Kleon Zimmerman made a motion to credit Keith Sauder at 719 New Street for the water portion of his bill from January 2019 to April 2020 because of dirty water (approx. \$300.00). Darryl Witmer seconded the motion. Motion carried.

New Business/Old Business

Lancaster County moving to Green Phase on June 26, 2020

The Borough Municipal Office will open Monday, June 29, 2020 but must follow certain guidelines.

Tom Murray, Jr. appointed Susan Davidson as the Non Uniform Pandemic Safety Officer and Chief Zell as the Uniform Pandemic Safety Officer.

Resident asked Council how we can help the homeless in our area. There are homeless down at the old K-mart building and at the Ephrata Library. Mayor McBeth mentioned contact Ephrata Area Social Services.

The 2020 Proposed projects should be reviewed by Council members and ready to discuss at the next meeting.

Meetings are open to the public but will continue also with Zoom.

Comcast has not submitted revised plans.

Paul Swangren, Jr. made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Darryl Witmer seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Davidson
Secretary

SD