

1 **Borough of Akron Council Meeting-January 22, 2024**

2

3 **Council Members Present:** Nathan Imhoff-President, Kleon Zimmerman, Paul Swangren, Jr.  
4 Ryan Cochran, Bonnie Young, Tonya Haynes, Max Herman-Junior Council Member, Earianne  
5 Evangelista-Junior Council Member, Rebecca Abraham-Junior Council Member. (Justin  
6 Gehman-Vice President not present)

7

8 **Others Present:** Mayor John McBeth; Susan Davidson, Borough Manager; Sean Molchany, Asst  
9 Borough Manager; Valerie Wagner, Director of Finance; Suzanne Lausch, Minute Taker

10

11 **Visitors:**

12 John Taylor, 216 S 8<sup>th</sup> St Akron  
13 Tom Murray Jr. 219 S. 11<sup>th</sup> St Akron  
14 Michael Morris, Akron  
15 Larry Alexander, Ephrata Review  
16 Officer Cruz, West Earl Police Department  
17 Zoom- Travis Hoffner 109 S 7<sup>th</sup> St Akron

18

19 **Roll Call**

20 Kleon Zimmerman-present  
21 Paul Swangren, Jr-present  
22 Ryan Cochran-present  
23 Bonnie Young-present  
24 Nathan Imhoff President-present  
25 Justin Gehman Vice President-absent  
26 Tonya Haynes-present  
27 Mayor John McBeth-present  
28 Earianne Evangelista-Junior Council Member-present  
29 Rebecca Abraham-Junior Council Member-present  
30 Max Herman-Junior Council Member-present

31

32 Meeting opened at 6:35 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

33

34 **Approval of Minutes**

35 Motion to approve January 8, 2024 minutes by Ryan Cochran; second by Kleon Zimmerman  
36 Discussion: page for updated committees was not included in minutes; this was sent to council  
37 members by staff  
38 Motion approved

39 **Visitors/Comments from Public**

40

41 **Zoom:** Travis Hoffner-submitted application for a transient license for barbeque truck in Akron.  
42 He was wondering if was discussed with Council and asked if council is aware of the application.  
43 Mayor McBeth stated he has the application and said he would sign off on the application. Sean  
44 Molchany stated that per Borough Code, the zoning needs to be reviewed and to be approved

1 prior to Mayor approval. Sean Molchany indicated that Council does not need to approve the  
2 application, the Mayor does only when all the requirements and zoning is approved.  
3 Michael Morris-apologized to Nathan Imhoff for not replying to e-mail. He also said he would  
4 be interested in the vacancy board position. Nathan replied that he would add him to the list of  
5 candidates.  
6 John Taylor- said he sat through the budget meetings but he has a question; what mil is the  
7 Council raising the taxes? The reply is .3 mils is the increase for 2024. Mr. Taylor stated that  
8 the Mayor told his neighbor Dave Landis it was a 3.5 mil increase, and that the Mayor should  
9 contact Mr. Landis and tell him the correct millage. John Taylor was verifying for a neighbor  
10 who had a concern and incorrect information regarding the increase. Mayor McBeth does not  
11 recall having a conversation with Dave Landis.  
12 Nathan Imhoff did clarify that the millage went from 3 mil to 3.3 mils in 2024 because recently  
13 there was an article in a local newspaper that was confusing on what the actual increase and  
14 millage is.

15  
16 **Bills**  
17 **Reports/Announcements**  
18 **Police**-Newly hired Officer Alexander Reed being sworn in tonight.

19 **Mayor Report-**  
20 Handed out Historical Society brochure. The Society members would like to give Council  
21 a tour of their facility. Susan Davidson mentioned Council had a meeting at the Historical  
22 Society a few years ago.

23 **Manager’s Report**-none

24 **Finance**-none

25 **Community Relations**-none

26 **Parks & Property**

27 Tonya Haynes discussed the new pavilion at Colonial Park and would like to contact  
28 Rosenberger to set up time to do a ribbon cutting. Susan Davidson said that she would set up a  
29 meeting to plan for a date and will copy Tonya on the e-mail.

30 Nathan Imhoff stated that the pond at Roland Park looks like it was cleared off for ice skating,  
31 and wanted to verify if ice skating was still a prohibited activity. Susan Davidson stated that the  
32 Roland Park Pond is clearly posted “No Ice Skating” due to liability per our insurance company.  
33 Mayor McBeth asked to see an insurance statement regarding the pond liability related to ice  
34 skating. He stated that many years ago the pond was used for ice skating in the winter. Nathan  
35 Imhoff countered the Mayor by stating that many years ago the Borough used to close off  
36 portions of 10<sup>th</sup> Street for sledding, and that things have changed over the years and what was  
37 acceptable then is no longer acceptable now. Susan Davidson mentioned this was brought up at  
38 Council a few years ago. Our current insurance company wanted the pond posted “No Ice  
39 Skating” because it is a huge safety/liability issue. This has been in effect since the Borough was  
40 still with Akron Insurance.

41 **Personnel Report**

42 Updating on new employee progress. All year end reviews have been completed. 2024 new  
43 items in public works. Succession plan for 2024 in process.

44 **Streets Report-**

1 Paul thanked public works for the recent snowstorm on the street clearing.

2 **Public Utilities Report-** none

3 ***Junior Council Members Report***

4 Rebecca Abraham received a Keystone Degree for the Future Farmers of America. This was  
5 received at the 2024 Harrisburg Farm Show.

6 No additional questions or comments from Junior Council Members

7 **Public Hearings/Presentations/Appointments**

8 **Old Business**

9 Mayor McBeth letter dated December 18, 2024

10 Discussion: Mayor's decision not to sign the ordinance for the tax increase.

11 Mayor McBeth says he deals in facts.

12 Mayor McBeth questioned the necessity for the recent tax increase. Nathan  
13 Imhoff said that the budget meeting discussed this extensively and used the mathematical  
14 equation to justify any increase. Mayor questions whether or not council understands where  
15 salaries are budgeted in the different funds. Council replied that salaries are budgeted by  
16 percentages by job description. Mayor is concerned that salaries are the second largest bucket  
17 for the budget and was concerned that labor expenses should be itemized to the correct  
18 financial funds. He stated that each employee should account for each specific task they do  
19 each day so that it can be allocated correctly. Kleon Zimmerman said that if the Mayor wants  
20 employees to write down every specific job they do, even if it is just a few minutes, we would  
21 need another full-time employee to keep track and manage the itemized tasks. Valerie  
22 Wagner, Director of Finance, restated that each employee's job description is reviewed for the  
23 percentage of labor that should be allocated to each fund based on the essential functions of  
24 the job: Water, Sewer, Admin, etc. and is billed to each fund accordingly.

25 Mayor was concerned with specifically budgeted projects. Nathan Imhoff replied to the  
26 Mayor that projects are itemized by what is entailed and then Council reviews and edits for  
27 budgetary reasons. One example brought up by the Mayor was the Borough office building  
28 renovation in 2023. He stated his frustration upon visiting the Borough office one day and saw  
29 bricklayers working on the building, which he believed was not part of the budgeted job.  
30 Mayor's opinion is that each item should be line itemized. Council replied that there was a line-  
31 item review of all projects budgeted for 2023, including the municipal office building renovation  
32 which included removing the double doors to the council room, replacing the door with a single  
33 and closing in the remainder to match the existing brick exterior. Mayor McBeth requested a  
34 copy of the plan. Sean Molchany stated that the item the Mayor is referring to was addressed  
35 in the 2023 capital budget meetings and he will forward him a copy first thing tomorrow  
36 morning.

37 Ryan Cochran state that all monies spent are reviewed by the Finance Committee who  
38 then bring it to the Council for approval. Examples provided by Ryan were the unbudgeted rail  
39 trail sign which was brought to Council for approval but was not approved. Also, new chairs for  
40 council were removed from the final project. Susan Davidson added that updating the Borough  
41 sign to a new digital one was also removed from the budget.

42 Missing checks from register: Nathan Imhoff asked Ryan Cochran as Finance Committee  
43 member, to comment regarding the check registers. Ryan stated there are no missing checks.  
44 Valerie Wagner commented that the Finance Committee reviews the accounts payables at the

1 Finance Committee meeting which occurs once a month. However, there are often times in  
2 which bills come in that need to be paid before the next Finance Committee meeting based on  
3 the calendar days of the month. Valerie said when this happens, she sends group text messages  
4 to check signers to stop by the Borough office to sign the checks that fall outside of a regularly  
5 scheduled Finance meeting. Mayor McBeth protested this practice and suggested the bills wait  
6 to be paid until the next Finance Committee meeting. Sean Molchany countered and asked the  
7 Mayor if it was acceptable to him that the Borough be late in paying its bills, and pay penalties  
8 because that is what would happen.

9 Valerie Wagner addressed the Mayor's claims of missing checks to state that he had attended  
10 the November Finance Committee meeting in which all of the items to be paid at that time  
11 were presented to Finance Committee for review and signatures. Mayor McBeth kept a copy of  
12 the check register from November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and brought it to the December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
13 Finance Committee meeting in which he noticed there were alleged missing checks since the  
14 last register. At that December 11<sup>th</sup> Finance Committee meeting he expressed his concern  
15 about the check numbers and was told that same night that there had been additional checks  
16 issued and signed by Council since the November 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Committee meeting and that  
17 they were not missing.

18 The Mayor stated he had not seen proof yet that there are no checks missing. Susan Davidson  
19 replied that she will send the complete check register for the month in question to the Mayor.

20 Mayor was concerned about the length of new employee training time for the  
21 succession plan, calling it "excessive". Paul Swangren, Jr explained that these are sensitive jobs  
22 especially regarding seasons and the issues for each. This plan has been in process since 2019.  
23 Training a person for the entire year is to cover all issues that can be addressed in a year and  
24 even then, not every audit or issue will come up in one year. The Council has already moved the  
25 training time back from two years to one year. Bonnie Young mentioned that there are audits  
26 that take place once per year and some audits are only every two years.

27 Mayor questioned if there was a plan for a backup person for sensitive jobs. Ryan Cochran  
28 asked if the Mayor wanted to hire another full time employee and this was a contradiction to  
29 the Mayor's concern of budgeted amount for salaries. The Mayor wants to cross-train, not hire.

30 Mayor had concerns related to the reasons for real estate tax increase-Nathan Imhoff  
31 requested clarification on the Earned Income Tax portion of the Mayor's letter. Susan Davidson  
32 shared EIT reports for the actual increase. 2019 was the last time real estate taxes were raised.  
33 Budgetary needs must be assessed each year. Bonnie Young stated that 70% of the General  
34 Fund budget is for policing, which leaves 30% for everything else.

35 Mayor was concerned about the amount a Bond should be for the treasurer. Currently it  
36 is \$1,000,000.00. Compared with other local municipalities, Akron Borough's bond amount is in  
37 line with other municipalities. The Borough's solicitor addressed the amount of the bond and  
38 called it sufficient. Nathan Imhoff asked for Ryan Cochran's opinion. Ryan asked what the bond  
39 actually covers and stated that the cost savings for the premium of a lower bond amount isn't  
40 enough to justify changing it. Currently the treasurer does not sign checks or handle monies.  
41 The bond protects against fraud. Susan Davidson will send the policy to council members.  
42 Mayor wondered if the bond is appropriate. Nathan Imhoff asked him what amount of a bond  
43 the Mayor felt was appropriate.

1 Mayor was concerned that he only received one budget comparison report. Budget  
2 comparison was sent once last year and Mayor was questioning why it was not sent since.  
3 Council responded that they had decided early last year that this was a “by request” report  
4 rather than a printed report due to excess printing. Staff have offered to send as a PDF to  
5 Council to prevent printing upon request.

6 Mayor was wondering if adjusting the capital budget for 2024 was possible until the  
7 three administrative salaries are back to two and then re-adjust in 2025. This was addressed  
8 already that the budgeted amounts for capital projects have been slimmed down already.

9 The Borough Manager asked who is supposed to be in charge of the crossing guards?  
10 Sean Molchany responded that technically the Mayor is in charge of the crossing guards. Paul  
11 Swangren, Jr said that the Borough Manager does “other duties as assigned” and that staff have  
12 been handling the crossing guards. There was never any written communication that the Mayor  
13 would not manage the crossing guards and that the Borough Manager would. Nathan Imhoff  
14 asked that the Borough Manager include the Mayor regarding crossing guards.

15 **New Business**

16 State Senator Ryan Aument breakfast meeting on February 29, 2024

17 Contact Susan Davidson if you are interested in attending.

18 **A. Resolutions**

19 **B. Ordinances**

20 **C. Motions and Decisions**

21 **D. Acknowledgments**

22 **E. Other Business/Deliberations**

23 **F. Correspondence and Petitions**

24 **G. Executive Session**

25 **Additional Comment:**

26 Bonnie Young commented to the Junior Council Members that Representative Greiner  
27 has PA House of Representatives Scholarship that they might be interested in applying for.

28 Tonya Haynes commends Susan Davidson and Sean Molchany for their diligent work  
29 over the years, and that she is looking forward to working with Valerie Wagner as well.

30 **Adjournment** -Motion to adjourn at pm by 7:40 Paul Swangren, Jr. seconded by Kleon  
31 Zimmerman; motion carried.

32  
33 Meeting Adjourned.

34  
35 Respectfully submitted,

36  
37 Susan Davidson

38 Borough Manager/Secretary