

1 **Borough of Akron Council Meeting-October 14, 2024**

2

3 **Council Members Present:** Nathan Imhoff, President; Justin Gehman, Vice President; Paul
4 Swangren, Jr.; Ryan Cochran; Bonnie Young; Tonya Haynes; Max Herman, Junior Council
5 Member; Alyssa Vasyanovich, Junior Council Member (Kleon Zimmerman not present; Martin
6 Sweigart, Junior Council Member not present)

7

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

10

11 **Visitors:**

12 John Taylor, 216 S 8th St Akron
13 Amanda and Josiah Latshaw, 15 S 11th St Akron
14 Laura Brandt, Ephrata Public Library
15 Abigail Balmer, Ephrata Public Library
16 Chief Eric Higgins, West Earl Police Dept
17 Sue Glick, 119 S 10th St Akron
18 Anthony Sheaffer, 110 Main St Akron

19

20 **Roll Call**

21 Kleon Zimmerman – absent
22 Paul Swangren, Jr. – present
23 Ryan Cochran – present
24 Bonnie Young – present
25 Tonya Haynes – present
26 Justin Gehman, Vice President – present
27 Nathan Imhoff, President – present
28 Mayor John McBeth – present
29 Max Herman, Junior Council Member – present
30 Alyssa Vasyanovich, Junior Council Member – present
31 Martin Sweigart, Junior Council Member – absent

32

33 Meeting opened at 6:30pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

34

35 **Approval of Minutes**

36 Paul Swangren, Jr. made a motion to approve the Akron Borough Council meeting minutes from
37 September 9, 2024; second by Tonya Haynes.

38 No discussion, motion carried.

39

40 Paul Swangren, Jr. made a motion to approve the Akron Borough Council meeting minutes from
41 October 7, 2024; second by Tonya Haynes.

42 No discussion, motion carried.

43

44

1 **Visitors/Comments from the Public**

2 *Ephrata Public Library*

3 Council President Nathan Imhoff invited Abigail Balmer, Executive Director for Ephrata Public
4 Library, to begin her presentation. Ms. Balmer began by sharing 2023 Annual Statistics for the
5 Library regarding number of library visits, new library cards issued, number of items in the
6 collection, circulation of physical and electronic items, total collection usage, number of
7 computer uses and Wi-Fi connections. She stated that the next page of the report provided
8 2024 Annual Statistics through September and that year-to-date, library visits are up by 10,000
9 from this time last year, and circulation of physical and electronic items are up 15,000 from this
10 time last year.

11
12 Next, she spoke on 2023 statistics specific to Akron Borough residents. There were 1,731 library
13 cardholders that resided in Akron Borough last year. Akron Borough residents borrowed 30,562
14 physical items (books, DVDs, Audiobooks/CDs, kits and games, technology devices). Akron
15 Borough residents checked out 7.3 items per capita in 2023. Based on the number of checkouts
16 and the average cost of each item by type of item, the total saved by Akron Borough residents in
17 2023 through use of the Ephrata Public Library vs. purchasing those same items was
18 \$741,785.01. Ms. Balmer emphasized that these figures did not include any digital checkouts
19 such as e-book or audiobook files borrowed online, as these types of checkouts cannot be
20 traced back to a specific municipality.

21
22 She spoke on the impact that the Summer Reading Program has had: 3,499 children, tweens
23 and teens participated in the 2024 Summer Reading; that number rises above 4,000
24 participants when adults are counted. Balmer shared a personal impact story how her first-
25 grade son struggled with reading. His teacher advised that he continue reading throughout the
26 summer to avoid “the summer slide” of reading regression. Her son was extremely motivated to
27 earn the incentives for completing the Summer Reading Program which included a ticket to
28 Dutch Wonderland. When he began second grade, he was at or just above reading level for his
29 age.

30
31 The Ephrata Public Library won the Pennsylvania Library Association’s “Best Practices Award” in
32 the school-age category for their *How Do WE Work?* program. Ephrata Public Library employee
33 Mallory Noll, Youth Service Associate – Elementary, created the program which explores
34 different body systems or body parts through a combination of storytelling, hands-on activities
35 and interactive demonstrations. The program has become so popular that Ephrata Public Library
36 is looking to offer a homeschool version.

37
38 Ephrata Public Library has been awarded a third round of the PA Department of Labor and
39 Industry’s Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant with a performance end date of
40 April 2026. This grant opportunity will be focused on supporting effective programs that
41 enhance foundational digital literacy skills for job seekers in their local community. The Ephrata
42 Public Library has held 48 technology classes with 170 unique attendees, 521 individuals
43 assisted through computer lab hours, 74 hours of one-on-one computer tutoring provided to 36

1 unique individuals, and a total of 727 individuals have been served during this grant. The third
2 round of funding will continue to make these classes and services available to the community.
3 Nathan Imhoff asked if the Library was removing anything from the list of classes and resources
4 offered as they grow participation and engagement in current programs. Abigail Balmer stated
5 that yes, Ephrata Public Library does evaluate the use and participation in the classes, services
6 and resources and occasionally they do scale back. Recently a decision was made to discontinue
7 offering one of two language learning services – cancelled the subscription purchased by the
8 library with low usage in favor of keeping the other which is state funded.

9

10 Bonnie Young asked what noticeable differences are there since the leadership changed. Ms.
11 Balmer replied that her focus as Executive Director is on direct library services and the
12 maintenance of the building, whereas previous leadership had focused more on social services.

13

14 Ryan Cochran asked about the status of the building next door known as “The Hub”. Balmer
15 stated that the building is for sale, currently there are no direct library services being offered at
16 that site, her focus is on the Ephrata Public Library building and its direct services, not social
17 services. Mr. Cochran then asked what the plan for the proceeds of the sale is if it would sell.
18 Balmer replied that state grant money was awarded for the use of that building and a portion of
19 the grant money would need to be repaid if the building is sold. The rest of the proceeds would
20 be put back into direct library services.

21

22 Tonya Haynes asked for the definition of direct library services and if the Library has a mission
23 statement. Abigail Balmer replied that direct library services include physical and digital library
24 checkouts, internet and Wi-Fi access, library programs. The mission statement of Ephrata Public
25 Library is “...to provide resources and to promote opportunities for everyone seeking to
26 improve, change, enrich, and enjoy their lives. The Library offers free access to information
27 reflecting differing viewpoints in order to support an open and democratic society.”

28

29 Paul Swangren, Jr. shared an appreciative “thank you” to Ms. Balmer for her presentation. He
30 stated that he learned a lot and was especially surprised by the savings passed on to Akron
31 Borough residents through borrowing library materials instead of purchasing. He asked if the
32 digital literacy program is one that is available at other libraries besides Ephrata. Abigail Balmer
33 stated that the curriculum was not given to Ephrata Public Library – staff created the curriculum
34 that is being used. Nathan Imhoff and Tonya Haynes reiterated thanks to Ms. Balmer for the
35 work she has done and for her presentation to Council.

36

37 Anthony Sheaffer addressed Council with concerns that he is being unfairly targeted. He was
38 informed he was in violation of Borough Code for the sale of pumpkins, and he does not think
39 this is fair. He stated that several years ago during the pandemic he had seen other residences
40 selling face masks. Ryan Cochran stated he is unable to speak to the validity of whether or not
41 face masks were being sold. He continued by stating that zoning laws are in place for a reason.
42 Anthony Sheaffer then stated that he had received a fine for weeds violations and wanted to
43 know why other properties in the Borough had not been addressed. Borough Manager Sean
44 Molchany replied that Mr. Sheaffer did not receive a fine, he received a notice of violation.

1 Molchany affirmed that he has sent multiple properties across the Borough notices of violation
2 and that no one was singling Sheaffer out. Discussion ensued regarding timelines of notices of
3 violation and the requirements to comply. Anthony Sheaffer restated that other properties in
4 the Borough have not been brought into compliance and that he has video evidence. Sean
5 Molchany asked Anthony to send him the videos for further review.
6

7 Sue Glick shared that she is here in support of Ephrata Public Library and that she hopes to see
8 Council agree on the motion to approve the donation to the Library.
9

10 Josiah Latshaw and his mother Amanda are in attendance to fulfil Josiah’s merit badge for
11 Scouts.
12

13 ***Bills***

14 Ryan Cochran moved to approve the October 2024 Borough of Akron disbursements and fund
15 the appropriate account for the disbursements as reviewed by the Finance committee.

16 Second by Paul Swangren, Jr.

17 Motion carried.
18

19 ***Reports/Announcements***

20 ***Police Report***

21 Chief Higgins stated he will have the monthly police report to Council via email tomorrow. He
22 thanked Council for attending the recent West Earl Police Department awards ceremony and
23 stated it meant a lot to the officers to have elected public officials there in support. Chief
24 Higgins shared upcoming events such as the 3rd Annual Touch-a-Truck being held at Oregon
25 Dairy on Saturday, October 19, where dry and canned food goods are being collected to support
26 several local food banks. West Earl Police will have a presence at the Akron Volunteer Fire
27 Company’s Annual Halloween Parade held on Wednesday, October 23, and at W Donuts’ Grand
28 Opening on Saturday, October 26. West Earl Police will also be participating in “Beards for
29 Brothers” again this November, which allows officers to have neatly groomed beards for the
30 month of November with a minimum of a \$25.00 donation. This is an annual fundraiser for first
31 responders in Lancaster County who are fighting cancer. The department is planning to
32 participate in the annual “Bleed Blue Challenge” blood drive as well. Last year West Earl Police
33 tied for second place in donation numbers. Plans are in the works to have two donation
34 locations set up in January/February of 2025 – one in West Earl Township and a second in Akron
35 Borough. Tonya Haynes thanked Chief Higgins and the rest of the department for doing a great
36 job and being so easy to work with. She commented on how wonderful it has been to interact
37 with the officers at events such as National Night Out and the recent West Earl Police Awards
38 Ceremony.
39

40 ***Mayor’s Report***

41 Wedding report for 3rd quarter is in the books.
42

43 ***Managers’ Report***

44 *Administration & Finance*

1 September 2024 month-end financials have been reconciled.
2 October 2024 payables were reviewed by Finance Committee.
3 There was a Council Budget Meeting on Monday, October 7 to discuss the 2025 proposed
4 budget. Staff were waiting on numbers for some projects for the Capital Budget. There is a
5 proposed increase for water metered sales from \$8.00 per 1,000 gallons to \$8.25 per 1,000
6 gallons and a proposed increase in real estate taxes from 3.3 mils to 3.6 mils.
7 Pilot letters were sent in September 2024 requesting donations from those properties that are
8 tax-exempt.
9 The final donation for 2024 to the Ephrata Public Library is on the October 14, 2024 agenda.

10 *Parks & Property*
11 Stream Embankment/Rain Garden update: construction is on schedule and the community
12 planting day is Saturday, October 26, 2024 at 10:00am. The end of construction based on a 90-
13 day contract is November 4, 2024.
14 The parking lot on the New Street side of the borough building has been completed.

15 *Streets*
16 The permit has been submitted to PennDOT for the pedestrian crossing signals at Main Street
17 and Fulton Street.
18 Staff sent letters/surveys to residents on the 600 block of Broad Street asking for their input on
19 another street light. There have been six surveys received: five in favor and one opposed.
20 Discussion will be on the agenda for the next meeting.
21 Line and crosswalk painting has been completed by Public Works.

22 *Public Utilities*
23 Sewer flow numbers are good. More I&I televising is planned this year at Tobacco Road and Oak
24 Street.

25 *Community Relations*
26 The Akron New Year's Eve Shoe-In Committee met on Wednesday, October 2, 2024. Cindy
27 Hoffert is again serving as the committee chairperson. Discussed donations and assigned
28 volunteer jobs.

29 *Planning & Zoning*
30 There are no Planning Commission or Zoning Board hearings scheduled at this time.

31 *Personnel*
32 The proposed Emergency Management Coordinator Policy was forwarded to Council and the
33 Mayor. There is a resolution on the agenda for approval at the October 14, 2024 meeting.

34 *Other Business*
35 Akron Borough and West Earl Township met on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at the West
36 Earl Township building for the semi-annual police liaison meeting. The next liaison meeting is
37 scheduled for April 2025 at the Akron Borough building.
38 The ambulance report was sent via email per Council's request.

39 *Board Vacancies*
40 Building Code Appeals Board
41 Vacancy Board
42

43 Nathan Imhoff asked about tree stumps he has seen at Roland Park in the areas where work is
44 being done for the Stream Restoration project. Sean Molchany answered that woody material

1 such as stumps are intentionally buried in strategic locations to slow runoff and preserve the
2 work that will be done. Tonya Haynes thanked the managers for their work.

3 **Finance** – Reviewed by Ryan Cochran

4 Fund balances September 30, 2024

5 **General Fund** - \$195,307.49 **General Fund Reserves**
6 **Water Fund** - \$ 35,937.14 Restricted (Goal) \$100,000.00
7 **Sewer Fund** - \$213,629.98 Total - \$100,000.00

8 **Highway Aid** - \$182,192.16

9 **General Fund Reserves**

10 Restricted - \$102,363.00
11 Operating - \$120,027.99
12 Capital - \$112,931.79
13 Total - \$335,322.78

14 **Water Fund Reserves**

15 Restricted - \$72,992.00
16 Operating - \$172,793.26
17 Capital - \$0.00
18 Total - \$245,785.26

19 **Sewer Fund Reserves**

20 Restricted - \$121,822.00
21 Operating - \$236,384.76
22 Capital - \$0.00
23 Total - \$358,206.76

24 **Capital Projects** - \$2,118.24

25 **Community Fund** - \$1,773.59

26 **Non-Uniform Pension** - \$3,764.64

27 Total - \$1,574,038.04

28 **Escrow** - \$15,388.51

29

30 **Community Relations**

31 Bonnie Young shared that the article she wrote about the three Junior Council Members and
32 the picture of Council, the Mayor and the Junior Council Members has been published in the
33 news. She also shared that a recent article about Assistant Borough Manager Susan Davidson’s
34 retirement party along with a picture was also published. State Representative Keith Greiner
35 and Senator Ryan Aument were in attendance and presented Davidson with awards in
36 recognition of her 30+ years of public service. She will have served Akron Borough for 30 years
37 and 9 months upon her retirement on December 31, 2024. Young spoke about how wonderful
38 the party was and specifically thanked Junior Council Member Max Herman for attending and
39 volunteering to help with the guest book and name tags. Her next article will be in regard to the
40 newly appointed Emergency Management Coordinator and Akron Borough’s Emergency
41 Management Response plan. Akron Volunteer Fire Company is hosting the annual Halloween
42 Parade on Wednesday, October 23, 2024 at 6:30pm.

43

44 **Parks & Property**

1 Tonya Haynes shared that the Stream Bank Restoration project at Roland Park will be completed
2 by November 4, 2024. Haynes has plans to visit the Borough’s parks and playgrounds during the
3 next year to evaluate the condition and plan for any upgrades or improvements. She would like
4 to see playgrounds as part of the 2026 Capital Budget and will be working with Play By Design,
5 Inc., a company that works with parks, elementary schools, daycares, etc. to design and build
6 playgrounds that are best suited for the space and community. The plans to build a pickleball
7 court at Broad Street Park will need to be visited as part of a Capital Projects discussion, as
8 there is not currently enough space beside the hockey rink to add a court. Mayor McBeth
9 mentioned there is a sign at the pickleball courts at Roland Park that says “tennis only” that
10 should be taken down. Staff will look into it.

11

12 ***Personnel***

13 Paul Swangren, Jr. commented on the recent retirement party for Susan Davidson and that he
14 appreciated the work that was done to make it a memorable event. He stated that he has
15 received an official notice of retirement from Ms. Davidson and will forward to Council. Susan
16 Davidson commented that she has been overwhelmed with the thoughtfulness surrounding her
17 retirement and thanked everyone very much.

18

19 ***Streets***

20 Survey results from the residents of the 600 block of Broad Street will be discussed at the next
21 meeting. PennDOT has provided Akron Borough with an estimate of \$110,909.44 as the 2025
22 Liquid Fuels allocation. PennDOT also provided an estimate of \$9,800.00 in Turnback Program
23 allocation for 2025.

24

25 ***Public Utilities***

26 EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) Fact Sheet on lead and copper rule improvements is in
27 the books. Public Works Supervisor Tom Murray, Jr. has been diligently working to locate the
28 Borough’s existing lead pipes and inventory them under existing requirements.

29

30 ***Junior Council Members Report***

31 Alyssa Vasyanovich mentioned that she has had discussions with a few people recently
32 regarding the intersection at Ninth and Main Streets where visibility is limited. She inquired if
33 the intersection would be suitable for a roundabout or a four-way stop. Sean Molchany
34 answered that a roundabout would not fit at that location, and a traffic study would need to be
35 done along with reasons provided such as major incidents in order to place stop signs.
36 Molchany mentioned that the intersection in question has been looked at for years, it is offset
37 and in order to possibly fix it there would need to be a design and funding to take on such a
38 project. Discussion ensued regarding traffic studies and the history of Ninth Street.
39 Max Herman shared that he is in support of funding the Ephrata Public Library. He feels it is his
40 responsibility to represent the students living in Akron and share the ways that clubs and events
41 held at the library have had a positive impact on himself and other students.

42

43 ***Public Hearings/Presentations/Appointments***

44 ***Old Business***

1 **New Business**

2 **A. Resolutions**

3 **B. Ordinances**

4 **C. Motions and Decisions**

5 a. Bonnie Young moved to approve the remaining budgeted donation for the
6 Ephrata Public Library in the amount of \$10,000.00; second by Tonya Haynes.

7 Discussion: Tonya Haynes asked EPL Executive Director Abigail Balmer if the Library provides
8 materials related to LGBTQ+ topics. Balmer replied that the Library’s purpose is to provide
9 something for everyone, which may included LGBTQ+ related materials. Tonya asked how she
10 can be sure that money donated goes towards building maintenance and technology and not
11 materials that she does not agree with. Nathan Imhoff pointed out that Abigail Balmer had
12 provided Council with receipts for HVAC and other building work that totaled over \$20,000.00
13 before the first half of the annual donation was approved. Haynes asked if all four municipalities
14 that are served by the Ephrata Public Library donate – Balmer replied yes.

15 Ryan Cochran asked Bonnie Young if she would amend her motion to include the stipulation
16 that funds donated by Akron Borough would go toward the receipts provided by the Library.
17 Motion amended, second by Tonya Haynes.

18 Nathan Imhoff, hearing no further discussion, began a roll call vote.

19 Bonnie Young – yes

20 Tonya Haynes – yes

21 Ryan Cochran – yes

22 Paul Swangren, Jr. – yes

23 Justin Gehman, Vice President – yes

24 Nathan Imhoff, President – yes

25 Motion carried unanimously.

26 b. Paul Swangren, Jr. moved to adopt Resolution 2024-003 for the updated of
27 the Akron Borough Emergency Management Plan (Basic Plan) dated
28 September 2024; second by Bonnie Young.

29 Discussion: Mayor McBeth stated he thought that this plan would be more specific to Akron
30 Borough – he felt that it was too non-specific and should at least be tailored towards a borough.

31 Nathan Imhoff asked why the Mayor felt that way, Mayor McBeth responded that the PA
32 Borough Code speaks to Mayoral duties in terms of declaring an emergency and this plan does
33 not reference that. Sean Molchany asked Mayor McBeth why Council and staff are only just now
34 hearing about this. The Mayor replied that this is the first time he is seeing it – Susan Davidson
35 and Sean Molchany both affirmed that multiple copies of drafts of this plan have been sent to
36 Council and the Mayor. Paul Swangren, Jr. stated that this plan is a living, breathing document
37 that is updated as frequently as needed; this is the basic framework of the plan on the table for
38 approval. Mayor McBeth said it is his job to declare an emergency and Nathan Imhoff reassured
39 the Mayor that it will continue to be his role. Discussion ensued regarding generic titles and the
40 process to draft addendums that use specific individuals’ names, otherwise the entire plan
41 needs to be adopted each time a person changes. Motion carried.

42 c. Justin Gehman moved to approve the 2025 Non-Uniform Pension Minimum
43 Municipal Obligation. Council and Mayor did receive the MMO info before

1 September 30, 2024; second by Ryan Cochran. Motion amended to include
2 \$33,654.00 as the obligation; second by Ryan Cochran. Motion carried.

3 **D. Acknowledgements**

4 **E. Other Business/Deliberations**

5 **F. Correspondence & Petitions**

6 a. Akron Volunteer Fire Company Thank You Letter

7 b. Girard Pension Services – Managing Director Retirement

8 **G. Executive Session**

9
10 **Adjournment**

11 Paul Swangren, Jr. moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:56pm; second by Tonya Haynes.
12 Motion carried.

13
14 Respectfully submitted,

15
16 Susan Davidson

17 Assistant Borough Manager/Secretary

18
19 SD/vw