

1 **Borough of Akron Council Meeting – January 27, 2025**

2

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

7

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

10

11 **Visitors:**

- 12 Abby Balmer, Ephrata Public Library
- 13 Laura Brandt, Ephrata Public Library
- 14 Larry Alexander, Ephrata Review
- 15 John Taylor, 216 S 8th St Akron
- 16 Anthony Sheaffer, 110 Main St Akron
- 17 Officer Jeremy Sorensen, West Earl Police

18

19 **Roll Call**

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

31

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

33

34 **Approval of Minutes**

35 Ryan Cochran made a motion to approve the Akron Borough Council meeting minutes of the
36 January 13, 2025 meeting; second by Paul Swangren, Jr. No discussion, motion carried.

37

38 **Visitors/Comments from the Public**

39 **Ephrata Public Library 4th Quarter Report**

40 Ephrata Public Library (EPL) Executive Director Abigail Balmer shared statistics for 2024. There
41 were 436,324 physical and digital items circulated in 2024, showing a slight increase over the
42 422,103 physical and digital items circulated in 2023. There was a 25% increase in circulations of
43 overdrive e-book and audio books in 2024, totaling 37,708 e-book and audio books. Library

1 visits increased from 206,884 visits in 2023 to 221,256 visits in 2024, showing a 7% increase.
2 New library cards issued increased from 1,591 new cards in 2023 to 1,848 in 2024, which is a
3 16% increase that Balmer is very happy about. Nathan Imhoff clarified that these numbers are
4 specific to EPL and not the Library System of Lancaster County (LSLC).

5
6 The Library held over 800 programs for all ages in 2024 with 8,600+ attendees. The newest
7 round of Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant began August 1, 2024. Between
8 August and December 2024 EPL hosted 37 technology classes with 73 attendees. 347 individuals
9 were assisted through public computer lab hours, and 50 hours of one-on-one computer
10 tutoring were offered to 12 unique individuals. 2025 expanded classes will include resume
11 writing, interview skills, LinkedIn and job searching. In December, a new staff member was hired
12 to teach these classes and will begin to take over some of the classes that Laura has been
13 facilitating so that she can expand her class offerings. Balmer shared that they will be
14 purchasing new public PCs, new tables/chairs around the computer area where CareerLink and
15 computer tutoring takes place – these will be paid for through the grant.

16
17 The Library System of Lancaster received a 17% budget cut in the funding received from
18 Lancaster County. Some of the budget cuts are public facing include and are not limited to:
19 Hands on House Museum pass will be discontinued effective February 1, 2025, eResources
20 including Brainfuse JobNow & HelpNow were discontinued as of January 1, 2025, Comics Plus to
21 be discontinued as of October 1, 2025 and e-magazines will be reduced by \$1,500 as of October
22 1, 2025.

23
24 Abby Balmer invited Council to the municipal breakfast that EPL will host on Wednesday, April
25 16th from 7:00-8:00AM which will include a short presentation, opportunity to meet other
26 library employees, take a tour, and see a demonstration of the mobile cooking station. A formal
27 invitation to follow.

28
29 Nathan Imhoff commended Laura for how much she does for the Library and thanked all staff
30 for their dedicated work. Resident John Taylor inquired about CareerLink and if it is the same
31 program that is connected with PA Unemployment. Balmer confirmed that it is the same, and
32 that once a week a CareerLink representative visits the Library. Mr. Taylor continued to share
33 that someone he knows has had a difficult time connecting with CareerLink and would be
34 interested in stopping by the Library for assistance. Ms. Balmer spoke about the public
35 computer lab hours and how a dedicated staff will be there to assist.

36
37 Bonnie Young commented that her observations were that previous EPL Directors did not put
38 much of an emphasis on encouraging and asking for volunteers – she is thrilled that on EPL’s
39 website there is a page dedicated to requesting volunteer help at the Library. Paul Swangren, Jr.
40 thanked Balmer and Brandt for attending the meeting. He asked what were the reasons behind
41 the 17% LSLC budget cut, was it because of a lost grant opportunity or a decline in donations?
42 Abigail Balmer explained that the System submits a request to Lancaster County for funding,
43 and then also make separate request to the County to fund the individual libraries. This is why
44 the 17% decrease in funding affects EPL.

1 Nathan Imhoff asked if school aged individuals are getting the same digital literacy information in
2 school or if they also benefit from the classes that the Library offers. Laura Brandt answered that
3 Microsoft Office classes are offered at the high school. Brandt feels that the high school and young adult
4 age group will be attending the newer set of classes that EPL offers: job searching, resume building,
5 interview skills, etc. The digital literacy classes at EPL are really more geared towards the adults already
6 in the workforce, senior citizens, etc.

7
8 Ryan Cochran commented 2024 numbers are really good compared to budget since the
9 previous year and asked what the line item for unrealized gain/loss was from – Abigail Balmer
10 replied that she is not sure and she can get a more solid answer from accounting and will follow
11 up. Nathan Imhoff commented how appreciative he is for Balmer’s willingness to always follow
12 up with Council.

13
14 ***Bills – No Report***

15
16 ***Reports/Announcements***

17 ***Police Report – No Report***

18
19 ***Mayor’s Report***

20 Mayor McBeth shared that the 4th Quarter School Resource Officer Report is in Council books
21 and commented on the variety of training programs that have been attended.

22
23 ***Manager’s Report – No Report***

24
25 ***Finance***

26 Ryan Cochran gave an overview of the Finance Committee meeting that was held at 5:45PM. He
27 shared that the discussion was regarding a new procedure to give the Director of Finance the
28 authority to pay approved bills via ACH, credit card or traditional check. He stated that by
29 authorizing the Borough to pay bills online, it will allow for faster and more secure payments.

30
31 Tonya Haynes asked if paying bills online will incur the Borough any additional costs – it will not.
32 Cochran followed up by stating that paying the invoices online will lead to saving money on
33 postage, envelopes and check paper. Paul Swangren, Jr. asked what the process is for paying the
34 Borough credit card and what kind of detail is available on those purchases. Valerie Wagner
35 explained that using the previous software, the way the payment was recorded in the system
36 included only the expenditure accounts and not the merchants that the items were purchased
37 from. With the new software there is a way to tie the credit card company and merchant both
38 into the payment transaction for better accuracy and transparency in reporting.

39
40 Ryan Cochran provided Council with the current procedure for approving payment of the bills.
41 Every check that is printed has an invoice that accompanies it. Whoever signs the check also
42 initials the invoice stating that they reviewed it. This is the process for checks signed and
43 reviewed at the monthly Finance Committee meetings as well as for any other checks that may
44 need to be sent out in between meeting dates. He stated that the new process will involve the

1 Finance Director sending out notifications via email that there are invoices for review and
2 approval. The check signers will login to review and approve. Once approvals have been
3 received it goes back to Wagner's queue to disburse payment via ACH, credit card or check.
4

5 Valerie Wagner then shared that the software will generate a report to show which authorized
6 signers approved which invoices and when they approved. She continued by stating that the
7 approval process is set up that the system will require two different signers before the invoice
8 will populate back in the queue to disburse payment. Nathan Imhoff clarified that Council will
9 still hold Finance Committee meetings each month, and that a slow rollout had been discussed
10 where a testing phase would be done before all invoices were entered and approved this way.
11

12 Paul Swangren, Jr. suggested that Finance Committee make a recommendation to move forward
13 with the new process and Council would move to approve. Wagner clarified that the new
14 process will not prevent the same level of reports that will be available at Council meetings
15 detailing the disbursements for the month. Ryan Cochran asked what the timeline would be,
16 Wagner replied that it will be depending on coordination with the Borough's IT professional to
17 ensure the proper controls are in place and with Caselle software to get each authorized bank
18 signer with individual logins for the system. Her hope is to be operating with the updated
19 approval process by March. It was decided that a motion will be placed on the February
20 meeting agenda.
21

22 ***Community Relations***

23 Bonnie Young shared that the National Honor Society students at Ephrata High School had asked
24 her for recommendations on volunteer opportunities. They need to accrue 40 volunteer hours
25 during the school year. She stated that Nathan Imhoff asked her to compile a list of
26 opportunities for volunteering and she was able to do that. She and Tonya Haynes met to
27 discuss the upcoming Concerts in the Park and that it had been going well. They have scheduled
28 one concert so far, which will be July 6th's concert featuring Mitch and the Moodswings. Haynes
29 has some good leads for other concert artists and is working on securing more concert dates.
30 Young then held up a copy of The Ephrata Review and highlighted the article that made the
31 front-page featuring Akron Borough's recently appointed Emergency Management Coordinator,
32 Bill Howard.
33

34 Paul Swangren, Jr. asked if it would be appropriate to share the list that Bonnie Young compiled
35 on the Borough website. Nathan Imhoff agreed that would be very helpful, and Sean Molchany
36 agreed that would be fine. Valerie Wagner will add a link to the website after Bonnie Young
37 sends her the information.
38

39 Tonya Haynes spoke about the connections she's been working on to draw a younger crowd to
40 the Concerts in the Park. She mentioned that Prima Theater has tribute acts that cover a variety
41 of artists such as Journey and Genesis and that they have played in Greenfield. She wants to
42 work with the Junior Council Members to make these events in the park more appealing to
43 young adults. Haynes then stated that she would like to look for concert sponsors in the greater
44 Akron and Ephrata areas – with more of a variety of musical performances there will hopefully

1 be a draw from the surrounding areas to attend the concert. John Taylor asked what the
2 approximate cost per concert is. Young replied that it is about \$800.

3
4 ***Parks & Property***

5 Toyna Haynes informed Council that the tenants at the Park House in Roland Park have notified
6 the Borough of their intent to vacate the property at the end of February. She stated that the
7 plan will be to inspect the property in March after the tenants have moved out to evaluate the
8 condition of the property and determine what the next steps are.

9
10 Research has begun on the Akron Pines Playground at Roland Park to determine if updating the
11 existing structure or tearing down and building a new playground will be the best choice. She
12 mentioned that a committee that has been formed regarding this project and that they will be
13 meeting after tonight’s Council meeting.

14
15 Paul Swangren, Jr. mentioned that some improvements had been made to the Park House a
16 couple years ago including updated electric and new windows and asked if there was a second
17 phase of planned improvements. Sean Molchany replied that some improvements to the
18 outside of the house were also done at that time, but no second phase was ever planned.

19
20 ***Personnel***

21 Paul Swangren, Jr. also mentioned the article in The Ephrata Review about the new Emergency
22 Management Coordinator. He thanked Bonnie Young for writing it and Larry Alexander for
23 getting it published. Nathan Imhoff thanked Swangren, Jr. for the work he did to get a new
24 Emergency Management Coordinator in place.

25
26 ***Streets***

27 Paul Swangren, Jr. inquired about road salt supplies. Sean Molchany replied that the Borough
28 just replenished the road salt and that the inventory was looking good. Paul Swangren, Jr.
29 mentioned how quickly salt supplies can diminish in winter conditions like the past few weeks
30 when the temperatures fluctuate between freezing and thawing.

31
32 Sean Molchany shared that street sweeping is scheduled for April 7 and April 8, 2025. Nathan
33 Imhoff asked which side of the Borough would be on which date. Molchany did not have that
34 information but will have it at the next meeting.

35
36 Tonya Haynes stated that in her opinion the Borough roads were not salted well enough during
37 the storm right before the most recent one, and was wondering if it were a staffing issue or the
38 type of storm that affected the salting. Sean Molchany assured that it was not lack of staff, but it
39 was due to how cold it was. Salt is not effective when it is that cold. Light discussion followed
40 regarding best practices for different types of winter weather. Molchany followed up by sharing
41 that the Borough had received several compliments recently regarding the good condition of
42 Borough roads during winter storms. Nathan Imhoff commented on how Borough Public Works
43 have been more conscientious in their plowing efforts and how grateful he is that he noticed
44 less snow piled up, etc.

1 **Public Utilities**

2 Kleon Zimmerman recapped the recent meeting he had with Public Works Supervisor Tom
3 Murray, Jr. and Sean Molchany regarding the nitrate plant resin replacement. Tom Murray Jr’s
4 recommendation is to complete this year before June due to not needing to purchase water
5 from Ephrata Area Joint Authority at that time of year. Zimmerman said the suggestion was to
6 borrow from water reserves, then taking a loan and repaying reserves back.

7
8 Paul Swangren, Jr. asked if is Miller & Sons is a COSTARS vendor. Sean Molchany replied that
9 since this project is maintenance it is not required to bid but can find out. Nathan Imhoff asked
10 if the Borough plans to do both at same time or stagger. Kleon Zimmerman replied that it would
11 be both at same time. Paul Swangren, Jr. inquired if staff is looking for approval tonight. Sean
12 Molchany said it is on agenda in case Council wants to move forward tonight. He stated that in
13 his opinion, doing it sooner is better than later, he will find out timeframe on project completion
14 once there is a commitment from Council. Nathan Imhoff asked if this is the best price. Sean
15 Molchany replied that he is trying to find better vendor, but last time the Borough purchased
16 resin it was used resin from East Petersburg Borough and has lasted 11 years.

17
18 Kleon Zimmerman would like to see a motion made tonight; Imhoff suggests the motion be
19 made stating “not to exceed \$56,000.00” to allow for better pricing if found. Paul Swangren, Jr.
20 asked if bid limit thresholds increased. Sean Molchany – yes, was sent out about 2 weeks ago to
21 Council via email. He reiterated that because this is a maintenance item it is exempt from a
22 formal bidding process.

23
24 **Junior Council Members Report – No Report**

25
26 **Public Hearings/Presentations/Appointments**

27
28 **Old Business**

29 **New Business**

30 **A. Resolutions**

31 **B. Ordinances**

32 **C. Motions and Decisions**

33 **1. Nitrate Removal Units Resin Replacement**

34 Kleon Zimmerman moved to authorize Borough staff to move forward with
35 replacing the resin in the nitrate removal units in an amount not to exceed \$56,
36 000.00 as an unbudgeted expenditure out of water reserves. Ryan Cochran
37 second, no discussion. Motion carried.

38 **D. Acknowledgements**

39 **E. Other Business/Deliberations**

40 Tonya Haynes asked the Playground Committee to meet in the conference room
41 immediately following Council meeting tonight.

42

1 Paul Swangren, Jr. asked for a reminder on when the Akron Volunteer Fire Company
2 lease renewal due date is. Sean Molchany replied there is not a specific due date, but
3 that the lease expires in October of 2025 and his preferred time frame would be to
4 have a decision by April or May of 2025.

5 **F. Correspondence & Petitions**

6 **G. Executive Session**

7

8 **Adjournment**

9 Paul Swangren, Jr. moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:26pm; second by Kleon Zimmerman.

10 Motion carried.

11

12 Respectfully submitted,

13

14 Sean Molchany

15 Borough Manager/Secretary

16

17 SM/vw