

**BOROUGH OF BROWNSVILLE
FAYETTE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA
DECEMBER 20, 2023**

The Regular meeting of the Council of the Borough of Brownsville was held this evening at the Borough Building located at 200 Second Street in Brownsville. The meeting was called to order by President, Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich at 6:00 p.m. by reciting the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following members were present: Council President, Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, Council Vice President Paul Synuria, Councilmen Shane Ronzio, Mike Walters, and Kasandra Ward. Also present were Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr., Solicitor Mitch Mitchell, Solicitor Vincent Tiberi, and Borough Secretary/Treasurer Melissa S. O'Brien. Councilmen Beth Bock and Jackie Jackson were not in attendance.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Connie Gore, 131 Front Street. Ms. Gore was in attendance to discuss 128 Market Street, and thanked Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr. for posting the property as condemned. Mayor Swords noted that he has attempted to contact the owner to let them know the property has been condemned. Ms. Gore had a picture of the back of the property that she showed to Mayor Swords. It is unknown what the picture was. Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr. noted the Borough can reach out to the RACF to see if they can assist with any condemnation or demolition that may need to happen, and hopes to have more information by next month's meeting. Ms. Gore thanked Mayor Swords for acknowledging her issues.

OFFERS TO PURCHASE APPRAISED PROPERTIES

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich spoke on the Borough's advertisement for properties for sale. The Borough received two bids for two separate properties.

The first bid opened is for 502 High Street, which the Borough received a sealed bid on December 13, 2023, from Gary Crable. Mr. Crable placed a bid of \$500 on said property (plus filing fees to be paid by buyer). Michael Walters asked what the appraised value was for the property, which Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted was \$1,000. Motion by Paul Synuria, second by Mike Walters to accept Mr. Crable's bid. Shane Ronzio questioned the appraisal amount of \$1,000 and how much we paid to have it appraised, which Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted was \$200. Mike Walters asked if the Public Works Department was responsible for cutting that grass, which Kasandra Ward noted in the affirmative, confirming that this is an ongoing expense for the Borough. **Roll Call:** Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes; Paul Synuria, yes; Shane Ronzio, yes; Mike Walters, yes; Kasandra Ward, no. Votes are 4-1. Motion carries.

The second bid opened is for 5th and High Street (02-06-0360) from MBDL Holdings placing a bid of \$5,600 (plus filing fees to be paid by buyer) on said property. This property was appraised at \$4,500 plus the \$1,100 appraisal fee. MBDL Holdings owns adjacent real estate at 413 Market and the rear corner on Spring and Fifth and has the intention to consolidate those lots for the purpose of development.

Motion by Shane Ronzio to table the motion until the next meeting. No second. Motion is lost.

Motion by Mike Walters, second by Kasandra Ward to approve the sale. No discussion, no questions. **Roll Call:** Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes; Paul Synuria, yes; Shane Ronzio, no; Mike Walters, yes; Kasandra Ward, yes. Votes are 4-1. Motion carries.

MINUTES

Motion by Kasandra Ward, second by Mike Walters to approve November's minutes. All in favor; Vice President Paul Synuria abstained from voting as he was not in attendance at the prior meeting. Motion carries.

MAYOR'S REPORT – Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr.

Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr. noted that there were 73 calls for service (7 Township, 61 Borough, 5 out of town), 17 citations (0 Township, 17 Borough, 0 out of town), 8 incidents (0 Township, 8 Borough, 0 out of town), 2 arrests, and 1 prisoner transport. A total of 1,112 miles were put on the police vehicles last month.

Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr. also noted that the patrolman hiring status is still under review, and that he and Chief Brant are reviewing applicants.

Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr. noted the fines from the Magistrate for the month of November were \$865.68 and \$57.71 from the County for a total of \$923.39.

Golf Cart permits will be due in January for 2024.

The Toy Drive was a huge success for the children of the Brownsville Elementary School.

Chief Brant stated that the month of November was not extremely busy, but that was one particular incident on the Northside where juveniles were causing some problems. There was a credible lead that resulted in all of the perpetrators being caught and cited for curfew violations. Additionally, the police department has been issuing SWEEP citations for a Brashear Street property.

Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr. read a letter of resignation from prior Chief Stanley Jablonsky, effective December 31, 2023. Motion by Kasandra Ward, second by Mike Walters to accept former Chief Jablonsky's resignation. Paul Synuria would like to thank former Chief Jablonsky for his years of service. All in favor. Motion carries.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION – Mike Walters

Michael Walters noted that the total general funds at this time are \$314,398.37 and the restricted funds total \$199,533.15. Deposits for the month total \$123,732.64. Monthly bills paid were \$175,471.65.

Motion by Mike Walters, second by Shane Ronzio to pay \$408.37 from the General Fund. **Roll Call:** Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes; Paul Synuria, yes; Shane Ronzio, yes; Mike Walters, yes; Kasandra Ward, yes. Votes are unanimous. Motion carries.

Motion by Mike Walters, second by Kasandra Ward to pay \$74,655.00 from the ARPA Fund. **Roll Call:** Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes; Paul Synuria, yes; Shane Ronzio, yes; Mike Walters, yes; Kasandra Ward, yes. Votes are unanimous. Motion carries.

Michael Walters noted that one of our larger expenses, the MMO pension payment, will be due before the end of the year. Kasandra Ward asked if we could wait until 2024 to pay McMillen, which Michael Walters stated was not budgeted in 2024.

Motion by Mike Walters, second by Paul Synuria to pay \$10,752.50 to McMillen Engineering. **Roll Call:** Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes; Paul Synuria, yes; Shane Ronzio, yes; Mike Walters, yes; Kasandra Ward, yes. Votes are unanimous. Motion carries.

Michael Walters and Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted the Fenwick and Wharf invoices from McMillen are reimbursable under the grants, but if we pay them prior to grant expenditure approval, they will become non-reimbursable. Paul Synuria asked if all of the promised money from the budget has been paid out, which Michael Walters noted in the affirmative.

Mike Walters spoke on the proposed budget for 2024 and asked if there were any questions or concerns. Kasandra Ward stated that in her review of the budget, it is balanced, but her concern is with the allocation of the money within the budget. For instance, the fire department's contribution of \$13,500 was decreased to \$10,000, and she would like to know why we are cutting a public service. She also stated the same question from the library contribution decreasing from \$8,000 to \$4,000 for a small organization that supplies a service to the elderly and to children. Paul Synuria stated he believes the contribution is too low and should be \$11,000. Mike Walters noted that our income will not increase. Each year it becomes more and more difficult as the income stays the same. Payroll raises are mandatory, which affects this. These increases must come from somewhere. Kasandra Ward stated with a set amount of income has to pay for increases in gas and utilities, and we should be cutting back in other areas, as we may not be able to meet our obligations in the long run. Contracted amounts must be done, but there may be other things that we can cut back on rather than cut 50% from certain areas. The fire department is out there providing a real service. Mike Walters noted that he has taken a look at these things, and broken the budget into percentages. When we look at tightening our belt, we are left with about 7% of the budget to do that with, which is a small amount. If we look at insurance (which takes 30% of our budget), we are trying to shop our insurances to save money. We start with the fixed expenses and have very little to work with after that. Kasandra Ward stated we may need to look at the small things and start paying attention when it comes to supplies and other things. We need to do things in a way that we can continue to sustain.

Mike Walters stated that everyone is under budget and watching their spending. At some point, from a finance standpoint, how can we increase our income? We have about 94% in fixed expenses, and we cannot cut these. Kasandra Ward feels there are other areas that we can look at and start planning for the future. We can pave the streets and work on our infrastructure to make the area more attractive. Mike Walters agreed and stated that as we continue to improve these things, more investors will be interested. We have a common goal here to improve the town, which was shown earlier tonight when we sold a vacant lot.

Mike Walters noted we increased taxes, but then the county decreased multiple property values. Our real estate income on the 2023 v the 2024 budget only shows a \$500 increase. We need help from every department to run with a minimal increase to our income. Kasandra Ward feels that we cannot afford to cut our essential contributions.

Shane Ronzio asked about GL 432 winter maintenance, increasing from \$7,500 in 2023 to \$12,000 in 2024. Kasandra Ward stated that is for salt and snow removal and cannot be cut. Mike Walters noted that all .117 GLs are for street wages, which are contractual wages, and cannot be cut. These wages were reallocated in 2024 to where they were actually spent in 2023, so you will see some of the .117 GLs cut and others increased to be better allocated for 2024.

Mike Walters noted the fire and library contributions may be able to be increased using more of a carryover from 2023, if available. Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr. spoke on these contributions, but wanted to remind Council that we are working out of a building that is falling apart with major heating and plumbing issues, and we are not necessarily in a position to hand out money until we take care of our own building. Kasandra Ward stated that she believes these contributions are a requirement, not a handout. Paul Synuria stated that he believes the library requirement is \$5 per capita, rather than the \$1 per head that has been stated previously. Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr. spoke on the addition that the library added, which Paul Synuria and Kasandra Ward clarified the Teen Space donations did that. Redstone, Luzerne and Brownsville Townships, as well as the Borough are to contribute to the library, which all do not. Paul Synuria stated kids who do not have internet at home, residents seeking job help, etc. all use the library.

Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr. stated that we have two fully functioning fire departments within a one-square mile borough. The Borough used to pay for fire trucks too, but times have changed and the Borough can no longer afford to keep paying for everything. Paul Synuria feels the fire stations have a better chance of raising funds than the library does. Kasandra Ward feels it is the Borough's responsibility to contribute and we need to rethink these cuts.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich asked if we are passing the budget tonight, as is, and expecting it to be reopened in January when our new council steps in, or if we are not passing it. Michael Walters confirmed that we are not increasing taxes and this is a balanced budget.

Motion by Kasandra Ward, second by Paul Synuria to approve the 2024 budget as is, with the opportunity to reopen it and move money within the budget in order to put money back into the library and fire company line items. Paul Synuria asked how he can be assured that will happen, which Kasandra Ward noted she would follow-up on it. Shane Ronzio questioned the increase in solicitor fees and noted some of those fees were the direct result of property purchases and would like that noted. **Roll Call:** Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes; Paul Synuria, yes; Shane Ronzio, yes; Mike Walters, yes; Kasandra Ward, yes. Votes are unanimous. Motion carries.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Mike Walters

Motion by Mike Walters, second by Kasandra Ward to approve Lee Plumbing in the amount of \$21,500 to do the repairs at Albany and Market Street. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich asked how we received this quote, which Michael Walters noted all quotes that we received previously were over the amount of the insurance claim. Michael Walters reached out to Lee Plumbing and they agreed to lower their fees to \$21,500, which is the amount paid to us by the insurance company. Solicitor Mitch Mitchell asked if this was presented at a prior meeting, which Michael Walters noted in the affirmative. Prior bids were received at \$29-\$30k, so this is significantly lower than those bids. This will not cost the Borough anything from the General Fund. **Roll Call:** Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes; Paul Synuria, no; Shane Ronzio, yes; Mike Walters, yes; Kasandra Ward, yes. Votes are 4-1. Motion carries.

Paul Synuria excused himself from the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Motion by Mike Walters, second by Kasandra Ward to approve Lee Plumbing in the amount of \$675 to repair the bathroom plumbing. **Roll Call:** Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes; Shane Ronzio, yes; Mike Walters, yes; Kasandra Ward, yes. Votes are unanimous. Motion carries.

Mike Walters spoke on the wharf update, and presented a letter to Council from the DEP approving the permit.

CODE ENFORCEMENT / COMMUNITY / EMA – Paul Synuria

No report.

FIRE – Paul Synuria

Fire reports are included from both fire stations for the month of November.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Shane Ronzio

Shane Ronzio noted that he is looking forward to working with Council and the Borough.

LIBRARY – Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich

Nothing to report.

PUBLIC RELATIONS – Beth Bock

Nothing to report.

PUBLIC WORKS – Kasandra Ward

Street signs have been ordered and the Public Works Department will be installing them soon.

The Charles Street Bridge change order needs to be approved. During the budget process, we identified areas to pay for the change order. The work is being done. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted the change increases the project by \$116,342, putting this just over \$900k. The Borough has to cover \$52,647 in excess work, which is over the amount of the grants we have received. Shane Ronzio asked if they were done after this, which Kasandra Ward noted they were not.

Motion by Kasandra Ward, second by Mike Walters to pay \$52,647 from the General Fund to cover excess costs in the Change Order for the Charles Street Bridge. Kasandra Ward noted the grants cover approximately \$850k and the Borough must fund the remainder. Ms. Ward also noted the work is already done and nearing completion. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted that this uses every dollar of additional funding that we have. Kasandra Ward met with McMillen to explain to them that no more money available to cover any additional change orders or excess costs. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich asked if the work Mar Allen is currently doing is within this \$911,647, which Kasandra Ward noted in the affirmative. Kasandra Ward noted if there are other change orders, she would review the current contract and scope of work, there may be things we can cut, such as painting the railings or holding off on paving. If we stick to just structural things, we may be able to find cost savings. **Roll Call:** Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes; Shane Ronzio, yes; Mike Walters, yes; Kasandra Ward, yes. Votes are unanimous. Motion carries.

Motion by Kasandra Ward, second by Mike Walters to hire Brodey Lynn at a rate of \$13 per hour on November 1 to do combined janitorial and maintenance duties. All in favor. Motion carries.

Motion by Kasandra Ward, second by Mike Walters, to terminate Brodey Lynn. All in favor. Motion carries.

Kasandra Ward noted that we are in the process of interviewing and hiring someone for this janitorial/maintenance position.

RECREATION – Jackie Jackson

Nothing to report.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT – Mitch Mitchell & Vincent Tiberi

Vincent Tiberi discussed what we need to do to sell Borough properties, by getting appraisals on things where we believe the value is less than \$6k.

OLD BUSINESS

Nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion by Kasandra Ward, second by Shane Ronzio to advertise to hold the Organization Meeting on January 2, 2024 at 6 p.m. All in favor, motion carries.

Motion by Kasandra Ward, second by Mike Walters to advertise Ordinance O-01-2024 to fix the tax rate for 2024. Kasandra Ward confirmed that the rate is the same as the previous year, which Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted in the affirmative. **Roll Call:** Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes;

Shane Ronzio, yes; Mike Walters, yes; Kasandra Ward, yes. Votes are unanimous. Motion carries.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted that we are discussing Resolutions for selling Borough real property and Borough personal property so that we are in full compliance with Borough code.

Motion by Mike Walters, second by Shane Ronzio to appoint Kasandra Ward to the Sewage Authority Board for a 5-year term. All in favor. Motion carries.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted that the Borough continues to accept offers on any of the appraised properties on the Agenda. If anyone is interested in purchasing property, please contact the Borough.

Motion by Michael Walters, second by Shane Ronzio to appoint Kasandra Ward to the sewage board as of January 1, 2024 for a 5-year term. All in favor, motion carries.

Council continues to accept offers on any of our appraised properties, and will walk interested parties through the process.

FAYETTE COUNTY – Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich

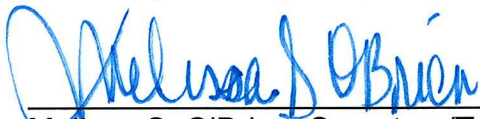
Included is a letter from the zoning board noting that a special exception has been granted for Michael and Douglas Brown. Solicitor Mitch Mitchell stated this is in reference to apartments at Mr. Brown's business location.

CORRESPONDENCE – Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich

The minutes from the Brownsville Municipal Authority are included for everyone in the packets.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mike Walters, second by Kasandra Ward to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m.



Melissa S. O'Brien, Secretary/Treasurer



TREASURER'S REPORT		
December 2023		
CHECKING ACCOUNTS (adjusted through December 12, 2023)		
General Fund		\$ 243,643.34
Payroll		\$ 10,860.13
Petty Cash		\$ 761.14
PLGIT		\$ 59,133.76
	TOTAL General/Liquid Fuel Funds	\$ 314,398.37
Act 13		\$ 29,542.07
ARPA Grant Fund		\$ 94,287.86
Fenwick Park		\$ 27,510.66
Fire Escrow		\$ 1.00
Insurance Claims		\$ 40,774.09
K-9 Fund		\$ 5,495.52
Parking Authority		\$ 1,921.95
	TOTAL Restricted Funds	\$ 199,533.15
DEPOSITS (adjusted through December 12, 2023)		
Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr.	Fines & Fees	\$ 865.68
Clerk of Courts	Fines & Fees	\$ 57.71
Commonwealth of PA	Fines & Fees	\$ 679.99
Brownsville Police	Police Reports	\$ 15.00
MDJ	Code Fines & Fees	\$ 445.58
Clerk of Courts	Code Fines	\$ 56.70
Various	No Lien Letters	\$ 45.00
Various	SWEEP Fines	\$ 185.00
Various	Amusement Permits	\$ 1,200.00
McMillen	Permits	\$ 342.00
Fayette County	Tax Claim Sales	\$ 1,718.53
Tena Congelio	Real Estate Taxes	\$ 159.70
Recorder of Deeds	Real Estate Transfer Tax	\$ 2,206.69
SWRTB	Taxes	\$ 8,709.39
Banks	Interest	\$ 1,223.43
County Hauling	Garbage Franchise Fee	\$ 1,760.86
DCNR	Fenwick Park Draw	\$ 25,000.00
RACF	149 High Street Reimbursement	\$ 78,446.38
Various	Street Opening Permits	\$ 615.00
	TOTAL	\$ 123,732.64

BOROUGH OF BROWNSVILLE				
MONTHLY BILLS PAID - December 2023				
DEPARTMENT	VENDOR	FOR	AMT.	TOTAL
Finance	AMBP	Mayor Dues	\$ 60.00	
	DeLage	Copier Lease	\$ 174.28	
	EMC Insurance	Insurances	\$ 4,426.74	
	Erie Family Life	Insurances	\$ 157.50	
	Fayette County Tax Claim	Repository Purchases	\$ 50.00	
	FCIB	Debt Interest	\$ 150.85	
	Ford Office Technologies	Phone & Fax	\$ 413.66	
	Larry Franks Real Estate	Appraisals	\$ 800.00	
	Guardian Life	BEO Insurance	\$ 38.98	
	Herald Standard	Advertising	\$ 124.66	
	IRS	Federal Income Tax	\$ 9,452.44	
	Mar-Allen Concrete	Charles Street Bridge	\$ 96,746.40	
	McMillen Engineering	Charles Street Bridge	\$ 462.50	
	McMillen Engineering	Fenwick Park	\$ 5,108.50	
	Misc	Deductibles	\$ 300.00	
	Mitch Mitchell	Solicitor Fees	\$ 1,000.00	
	Mitch Mitchell	Rescind Sale of Property	\$ 2,000.00	
	PA Department of Revenue	PA Taxes	\$ 1,712.41	
	PSAB	Dues	\$ 327.00	
	PSAB	PSAB Plus Subscription	\$ 450.00	
	PSAB	Training	\$ 12.50	
	PSAB MRT	Pension	\$ 1,175.00	
	Quill	Office Supplies	\$ 237.23	
	RHS	Halloween Parade	\$ 100.00	
	Staples	Office Supplies	\$ 92.55	
	UPMC	M/D/V Insurance	\$ 11,157.17	
	Vincent Tiberi	Solicitor Fees	\$ 1,579.50	
				\$ 138,309.87
B&G	Brownsville Municipal	Sewage	\$ 129.00	
	Columbia Gas	Gas Bill	\$ 745.21	
	G&G Landscaping	grass cutting	\$ 120.00	
	Lowe's	paint for office	\$ 13.74	
	PA American Water	Water	\$ 248.13	
	R&D Watters	Port a Jon rental	\$ 82.50	
	Terminix	Pest Control	\$ 140.00	
	West Penn Power	Electric	\$ 11,986.84	
				\$ 13,465.42
Code Enf.	Hoffman Kennels	Animal Control	\$ 150.00	
				\$ 150.00
Police	AT&T	Cell Phone	\$ 62.22	
	Bevard	Gas	\$ 997.18	
	FNB Equipment Finance	Lease Payment	\$ 7,676.05	ARPA
	Local 491	Union Dues	\$ 73.00	
	NAPA	Headlight bulb	\$ 8.95	
	PSAB	Pension	\$ 1,237.24	
	S&D Calibration	Vascar Certification	\$ 32.00	
	Sheetz	Gas	\$ 50.00	
	Trapuzzano's	Uniforms	\$ 1,491.00	Act 13
	Walmart	Nitrile gloves	\$ 50.18	
				\$ 11,677.82
Streets	Bevard	Gas	\$ 575.63	
	BNY Mellon	Pension	\$ 3,221.99	
	FNB Equipment Finance	Truck Lease Document Fee	\$ 650.00	
	JG Service	Gas	\$ 49.26	PLGIT
	Local 373	Union Dues	\$ 82.00	
	A. McCann	Uniform Reimbursement	\$ 296.60	
	Mlaker	Tires	\$ 964.00	PLGIT
	NAPA	Supplies	\$ 31.98	PLGIT
	PA One Call	Street Digs	\$ 23.68	
Fire	Playset Parts	Swing	\$ 109.40	
				\$ 6,004.54
	Center Independent	Gas	\$ 520.90	
	PA American Water	Hydrants	\$ 1,360.10	
	SWIF	Workers' Comp	\$ 3,983.00	
				\$ 5,864.00
	TOTAL BILLS PAID			\$ 175,471.65
BOROUGH OF BROWNSVILLE				
MONTHLY BILLS DUE THIS MONTH - December 2023				
General Fund	Staples	Office Supplies	\$ 46.88	
	West Penn Power	electric	\$ 361.49	
				\$ 408.37
ARPA	Tresco Paving	Paving	\$ 74,655.00	
				\$ 74,655.00
	TOTAL INVOICES DUE THIS MONTH			\$ 75,063.37
MONTHLY BILLS DUE / VARIOUS DUE DATES				
The following McMILLEN invoices are due from various Grant Funds (REIMBURSABLE):				
	McMillen Engineering	Fenwick Park	\$ 10,000.00	
	McMillen Engineering	Wharf	\$ 6,893.00	
				\$ 16,893.00
The following McMILLEN invoices are due from various Grant Funds (NON-REIMBURSABLE):				
	McMillen Engineering	Fenwick Park	\$ 10,752.50	
				\$ 10,752.50
	TOTAL INVOICES DUE - Various Dates			\$ 27,645.50