

**BOROUGH OF BROWNSVILLE
FAYETTE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA
MARCH 8, 2023**

The Regular meeting of the Council of the Borough of Brownsville was held this evening at the Borough Building 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, Beth Bock, Shane Ronzio, Kasandra Ward, and Mike Walters. Also present was Solicitor Mitch Mitchell. Councilman Jackie Jackson, Mayor Ross H. Swords, Jr., and Borough Secretary/Treasurer Melissa S. O'Brien were not in attendance.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich started off by congratulating Councilman Shane Ronzio at his first meeting.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Connie Gore, 131 Front Street. Ms. Gore was in attendance tonight to discuss tree quotes, and asked Mike Walters if he received any quotes on the tree that she has been asking about for nearly two years. She stated that with the high winds she was concerned. Mike Walters noted that he had two quotes that were emailed to him, and that according to Borough policy, all quotes must be accepted as sealed bids. Ms. Gore stated that she did a RTK for that policy and was told it was unable to be found at that time. Michael Walters noted that if he had two sealed bids, he could open them. Ms. Gore asked if this policy was enforced for any other bids, such as the carport, which Michael Walters noted he could not answer that. The policy was agreed upon in January 2020, which was before his time. Michael Walters also noted that in April of 2022 when we voted on this, Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich cautioned Council that the bids at that time were \$1,550 each, which Ms. Gore stated they were only \$1,200. At that time, Michael Walters made a motion to cut and not grind, and it was voted on and declined. Ms. Gore noted that the motion was declined because the bids were in Ms. Gore's name. In April 2022 the motion was denied. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich stated we would be moving on as the question was asked and answered. Ms. Gore again brought up the RTK request.

Motion by Paul Synuria that if Connie Gore would like to cut down the tree, even if on Borough property, which he does not believe it is, would like to allow her to cut it down at her expense. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted there is a motion on the floor that is not open for public discussion. Second by Michael Walters. Kasandra Ward asked why we are making a motion for Ms. Gore to cut a tree down. Paul Synuria noted Ms. Gore has asked and Council has voted several times, and it has been a year and a half. His motion is to allow her to cut the tree whether it is on Borough property or on her own property. Paul Synuria and Michael Walters voted in the affirmative; Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich Beth Bock, Kasandra Ward, Shane Ronzio voted nay. Motion denied, 4-2.

Jamie Bogol, 300 Front Street. Ms. Bogol asked about Ordinances, and also if there was an answer on out-of-town or out-of-state property owners. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich asked if Ms. Bogol received anything in the mail from the Borough, which she did not, therefore she does not believe there is any information yet. Ms. Bogol would like to thank the officers responsible for arresting the person who broke into her vehicle. Ms. Bogol also wanted to thank Beth Bock, Jackie Jackson, and Shane Ronzio for attending the meeting.

Ed Bohna, 549 Bank Street. Mr. Bohna asked about the Park Board and if they could book fireworks at the park, and any other events. Paul Synuria noted that the only issue we had was with the motocross races. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted the liability coverages are being reviewed and determinations will be made. We may need some extra riders to protect everyone. Mr. Bohna noted that if the insurance is \$5k for the races, that is what they earn in profits. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted if there is an accident, Brownsville Borough and Luzerne Township are at the top of the list to be sued. The vendor has coverage against himself, but it may not cover the municipalities based upon the level of risk. For example, Bigfoot has a low risk for injuries and therefore, does not require an insurance rider. The fireworks have adequate coverage. The motocross races do not. The potential for a multimillion lawsuit is the issue. Mr. Bohna noted that Bigfoot was postponed as they were unsure what to do. Paul Synuria stated that after the meeting with the insurance company, the only concerns were the motocross races and fireworks. It is Mr. Synuria's understanding that the combined insurance coverages between the fireworks vendor and our insurance company is sufficient, provided that a qualified vendor is used. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich asked what the role of the fire stations was during fireworks.

Are the fireworks being purchased from a qualified company? Everything may be good, but we need verification. Beth Bock asked if the insurance for the Park was the same as the insurance for the Borough, where an events packet had to be completed and sent to the insurance company, and then the insurance company decides if a rider needs added. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich responded that yes, a special events policy could possibly be required for events, as determined by the insurance company. As soon as we have a green light to go forward, we will let everyone know. Mr. Bohna noted that Luzerne Township intends to make a motion at their next meeting to no longer allow races at the park. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted that the Borough has not yet made that determination, but there has to be proper insurance. There are still discussions that have to take place before we can make this determination.

Jason Novak, 420 Front Street. Mr. Novak would like to discuss blight and nuisance properties. He is concerned with our current code enforcement situation and what the Sweep Board's role is. Mr. Novak has properties near him that may possibly have 20 people living in them, there are no occupancy permits, windows are blown out due to the storms. He would like to know what the plan is. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted that we have an agenda item to discuss tonight that should answer these questions.

MINUTES

Motion by Kasandra Ward to approve the February minutes. Second by Mike Walters. All in favor. Motion carries.

MAYOR'S REPORT – Paul Synuria

Mayor Ross H. Swords Jr. was not present. Councilman Paul Synuria gave tonight's report. There were 95 calls for service, 29 citations, 7 incidents, and 2 arrests. 0 prisoner transports were reported. A total of 1,075 miles were put on the police vehicles last month.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION – Mike Walters

The total funds at this time are \$446,826.23, including General Fund \$59,482.18, Payroll \$2,464.00, Petty Cash \$746.72, Act 13 \$23,234.41, ARPA Grant Fund \$217,800.22, Comprehensive Plan Fund \$1,244.10, Fenwick Park \$3,001.00, Fire Escrow \$1.00, Insurance Claims \$7,464.42, K-9 Fund \$5,468.99, Parking Authority \$1,920.59, and PLGIT \$124,105.04.

Monthly bills paid were \$42,717.21. Bills that still need paid total \$0.00 from the General Fund, \$0.00 from the Payroll Fund, \$0.00 from the ARPA Grant Fund, \$0.00 from PLGIT, and \$26,741.25 for engineering. Deposits this month totaled \$49,826.23.

Budget reports were included in Council's folders. Total income so far is 17% of our annual budget. Total expenses are 19.2%, which is slightly elevated as the amount paid to Hunters Excavating in the amount of \$50,940 came out of the General Fund, but will be reimbursed by the RACF, so this will go down once received. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich asked what project that was for, which Michael Walters noted was for 149 High Street. Beth Bock asked if we knew when to expect reimbursement, which Michael Walters stated he was unsure. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich stated the RACF was waiting on documentation from the contractor before reimbursement could be made.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich asked Michael Walters if the budget that was passed for 2023 was a balanced budget, which Michael Walters responded in the affirmative. The revenues and expenses that Michael Walters reports at meetings, and will continue to report on moving forward, show a pattern that we are on pace with the budget as it is written, which Michael Walters again responded in the affirmative.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich wanted it to be very clear to the public that the budget we are working off of is already balanced. We are not looking for money to balance a budget or fill holes.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted that the Borough audit done by our elected auditors is complete, and was finished early this year. The audit was done very swiftly, and with no findings.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Mike Walters

Nothing to report.

CODE ENFORCEMENT / COMMUNITY / EMA – Paul Synuria

Motion by Paul Synuria to hire Jordan C. Sealy as the new Code Enforcement Officer at a rate of \$20 per hour and 12 hours per week, effective as of May 13, 2023. Second by Shane Ronzio. Paul Synuria noted that Mr. Sealy has multiple certifications through his positions with Fire/EMA/911 and is willing to take any extra trainings, as needed for code.

Beth Bock asked how long he would need to get his code certifications, or if there was a timeline required by the state, which Paul Synuria noted the training would be ongoing, and several of his existing certifications are related to code and anything needed, he is willing to get. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich asked Beth Bock what minimum standards she felt he did not have, which Beth Bock responded code certifications.

Kasandra Ward asked if the hourly rate was higher than previously paid, which Paul Synuria noted it was the same rate paid previously.

Roll Call: Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, yes; Paul Synuria, yes; Beth Bock, no; Shane Ronzio, yes; Kasandra Ward, yes; Mike Walters, yes. 5-1. Motion carries.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich stated she had a conversation with Mr. Sealy and they discussed commercial code, which this position could be expanded to in the future.

Paul Synuria noted that he is hoping with a new code officer, we can get back on track and have people take care of their properties.

Motion by Paul Synuria to establish a Blight Task Force, consisting of three Council members and five Borough residents. Anyone interested in being on the Blight Task Force can please contact Mr. Synuria via email or phone. Second by Kasandra Ward. Paul Synuria stated this is an important Task Force that is needed in the Borough, and anyone willing to help out is urged to reach out to him. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich noted that the establishment of a Blight Task Force is an outcome of the Comprehensive Plan and we are happy to say that we are moving forward and establishing those things. The Blight Task Force is also noted in the Neighborhood Program Assistance grant request that we are looking into. All in favor. Motion carries.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich spoke about the Mon Valley Alliance and the opportunity to invest in the community while receiving an 80% tax credit. This also shows people that we are out there seeking funding, as the Borough is committed and wants to move forward.

Demolition property assessments is a work in progress.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Shane Ronzio

Shane Ronzio started by thanking everyone for giving him the opportunity to help out. He asked for community support to local businesses, and that he will do what he can to help with tourism and bring businesses to town.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich spoke on the Planning Commission, which the Borough had in the past. Motion by Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich to re-establish the Planning Commission, an eight-member advisory board comprised of three Council members and five community members. Second by Kasandra Ward. All in favor. Motion carries.

LIBRARY – Paul Synuria

Paul Synuria reported that on Saturday, March 25, 2023, Linda Renstadt (sp?) will be at the library from 12-2 signing her new book, Late Bloomers.

The library is hosting an event “So you want to be a Writer?” on Saturday, April 2, 2023, from 11-1. Paul Synuria read from the library’s handout on this topic. He also noted that he attended the last event and it was very informative.

PUBLIC RELATIONS – Beth Bock

Nothing to report.

PUBLIC WORKS – Kasandra Ward

Kasandra Ward wanted to recognize the employees who helped her this year. In conjunction with President Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich, who supported this recognition, Kasandra Ward stated that she wanted to recognize and thank these employees for what they do and let them know they are appreciated. Kasandra Ward read from Certificates of Achievement for both Lew Hosler and Alex McCann. Kasandra Ward noted that she has another Certificate for Melissa S. O'Brien, who was not present at tonight’s meeting, but wanted to recognize her as well, as Public Works would not be able to accomplish all that they do without Ms. O'Brien, as she is the one who handles the money, is there for them, and has helped in every way possible. Kasandra Ward thanked Council for their support.

Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich wanted to take a moment and recognize all that is getting done. As we talk to people in town, there is a difference in the environment. Our Public Works department is out there at all hours working to keep everyone safe, and we appreciate that.

RECREATION – Jackie Jackson

Jackie Jackson was not present.

SOLICITOR’S REPORT – Mitch Mitchell

Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS

The Charles Street Bridge project is still on pace to start construction in the spring.

Andrew French through the RACF is working on three different grants related to the Union Station building for the removal of asbestos, getting it cleaned out, new roof, and new windows. The last price tag was \$6M to do these things.

Michael Walters discussed the wharf. He is currently working with Boardsafe and the DEP regarding permitting, and hopes to have more information by next month’s meeting.

FAYETTE COUNTY – Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich

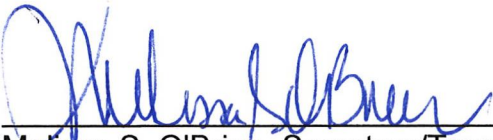
There are four tax assessments in tonight’s packets. These are just proposed changes to assessed values. Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich asked Solicitor Mitch Mitchell to follow up on these. The Borough lost almost \$40k after reassessments last calendar year, and going forward we want to be sure we review these. The end result in losing revenue here is our taxes. Solicitor Mitch Mitchell noted that these are all corrections/notices informing the Borough of the value changes.

CORRESPONDENCE – Tracy Sheehan Zivkovich

The TCBA meeting notice for March 16, 2023 is included. Please let Melissa S. O'Brien know if you plan to attend.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Kasandra Ward. Second by Shane Ronzio. All in favor. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.



Melissa S. O'Brien, Secretary/Treasurer



TREASURER'S REPORT		
March 2023		
BANK ACCOUNTS (adjusted through March 3, 2023)		
General Fund		\$ 59,482.18
Payroll		\$ 2,464.00
Petty Cash		\$ 746.72
Act 13		\$ 23,234.41
ARPA Grant Fund		\$ 217,800.22
Comprehensive Plan Fund		\$ 1,244.10
Fenwick Park		\$ 3,001.00
Fire Escrow		\$ 1.00
Insurance Claims		\$ 7,464.42
K-9 Fund		\$ 5,468.99
Parking Authority		\$ 1,920.59
PLGIT		\$ 124,105.04
	TOTAL	\$ 446,932.67
DEPOSITS (adjusted through March 3, 2023)		
Brownsville Police	Police Reports	\$ 60.00
RACF	Refund for demolition	\$ 17,500.00
SWRTB	Taxes	\$ 13,165.61
CAT Financial	Refund	\$ 3,380.14
First National Bank	Interest	\$ 161.49
First National Bank	Refund	\$ 3.99
Misc	Street Digs	\$ 15,555.00
	TOTAL	\$ 49,826.23

BOROUGH OF BROWNSVILLE				
MONTHLY BILLS PAID - March 2023				
DEPARTMENT	VENDOR	FOR	AMT.	TOTAL
Finance	Auditors	Borough Audit	\$ 160.00	
	Breezeline	Cable & Internet	\$ 157.08	
	EMC Insurance	Insurances	\$ 4,328.88	
	Erie Family Life	Insurances	\$ 158.25	
	Ford Office Technologies	Phone & Fax	\$ 206.83	
	Guardian Life	BEO Insurance	\$ 38.98	
	IRS	Federal Income Tax	\$ 4,364.79	
	McMillen Engineering	Wharf Grant	\$ 2,806.25	
	McMillen Engineering	Fenwick Park	\$ 5,045.00	
	Microsoft	Office 365	\$ 50.00	
	Mitch Mitchell	Solicitor Fees	\$ 1,000.00	
	PA Department of Revenue	PA Taxes	\$ 373.24	
	PSAB - MRT	Pension	\$ 1,175.00	
	TCBA	Annual Dues	\$ 25.00	
	Tri County HVAC	Boiler repair	\$ 1,290.00	
	UPMC	Medical Insurance	\$ 6,603.13	
	UPMC	Dental/Vision Insurance	\$ 290.43	
	West Penn Power	Electric	\$ 6,338.49	
				\$ 34,411.35
Buildings	Brownsville Municipal	Sewage	\$ 136.00	
	Columbia Gas	Gas Bill	\$ 1,342.90	
	PA American Water	Building	\$ 118.01	
	Terminix	Pest Control	\$ 66.00	
				\$ 1,662.91
Code Enf.	Hoffman Kennels	animal control	\$ 150.00	
				\$ 150.00
Police	AT&T	Cell Phone	\$ 33.90	
	Crimestar	Subscription	\$ 350.00	
	Local 491	Union Dues	\$ 54.00	
	PSAB	Pension	\$ 992.00	
				\$ 1,429.90
Streets	BNY Mellon	Pension	1455.52	
	<i>Brownsville Ace Hardware</i>	<i>Supplies</i>	<i>\$ 411.97</i>	<i>PLGIT</i>
	Local 373	Union Dues	\$ 82.00	
	PA American Water	Water	\$ 20.57	
	<i>Signal Service</i>	<i>Repairs</i>	<i>\$ 54.00</i>	<i>PLGIT</i>
	<i>Traffic Control</i>	<i>repairs</i>	<i>\$ 702.50</i>	<i>PLGIT</i>
				\$ 2,726.56
Fire	PA American Water	Hydrants	\$ 1,180.49	
	SWIF	Workers' Comp	\$ 1,156.00	
				\$ 2,336.49
	TOTAL BILLS PAID			\$ 42,717.21
BOROUGH OF BROWNSVILLE				
BILLS DUE - March 2023				
Bills paid this month total			\$ 42,717.21	
The following bills are due from Various Grant Funds:				
	McMillen Engineering	Charles St. Bridge/Second Street	\$ 927.00	
	McMillen Engineering	Fenwick Park	\$ 19,261.00	
	McMillen Engineering	Wharf (CFA)	\$ 225.00	
	McMillen Engineering	Wharf (Fish & Boat)	\$ 3,981.25	
	McMillen Engineering	MultiModal	\$ 2,347.00	
	TOTAL BILLS DUE TO McMILLEN			\$ 26,741.25