

Borough Council Work Session

July 18, 2022

The monthly Work Session meeting of Souderton Borough Council, held in the rear Conference Room of the Souderton Municipal Building on the above date, was called to order by President Tracy Burke at 7:00 p.m. The Borough Council Work Session was attended by the following members and staff:

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| President Tracy W. Burke | Mayor Daniel Yocum |
| Vice-President Edward Huber | |
| Councillor Matthew J. DiNenna | |
| Councillor Julie A. Munden | |
| Councillor Donna M. Rogers | Borough Manager P. Michael Coll |
| Councillor Richard M. Walczak | Police Chief Brian A. Newhall |
| Councillor Courtnee Wampole | Public Works Director Steven R. Coll |

Absent from the work session meeting were Councillor Daryl Littlefield and Councillor Matthew Sholly. There was no audience participation at this meeting.

PRESENTATION

The work session began with interviews of two candidates for the position of Junior Councillor. Borough Council interviewed Estrela Sadiboko, 21 N. Second Street, Souderton and Elijah Steglik, 346 Railroad Avenue, Souderton. Following the interviews, Borough Council discussed a potential appointment to be considered at the August 1, 2022 Borough Council meeting. The term of the Junior Councillor will begin with the Monday, September 12, 2022 Borough Council meeting. Borough Council felt that both candidates presented a strong background and interest in the position, which made it very difficult to select just one of the candidates. The discussion lead to consideration in amending the Resolution of 2000 to permit the selection of up to two Junior Councillors and then to appoint both to serve in the capacity of Junior Councillor. Borough Council will formally consider the recommendations at the August 1, 2022 Borough Council meeting.

POLICE ITEMS

Police Chief Brian Newhall reported that a training program on an introduction to the Emergency Management System is planned for October and will be available to elected officials.

Chief Newhall noted that the current body camera system was purchased and serviced through a company called Watchguard, which has recently been bought by the Motorola company. Service has been poor. Chief Newhall recommended switching to another company. The equipment and features will be improved. The change will have an annual subscription cost of \$7,700. This initial startup expense will be \$3,700, with the

balance of \$4,000 paid from a legislative initiative grant secured through Representative Steve Malagari. Borough Council authorized the change in service as recommended and further expressed a desire to send a complaint to Motorola about the lack of adequate support for purchased law enforcement equipment.

Police Chief Newhall circulated sample copies of Noise Ordinance regulations utilized by other municipalities. The Public Safety Committee will create bullet points to build the body of an ordinance to be developed by the Borough Solicitor. Chief Newhall further noted that nuisance alarms are now becoming prevalent which should also be addressed by an ordinance of Borough Council.

Discussion was held on the need to improve visibility of pedestrian crosswalks across Broad and Main Street. President Burke noted that he has observed vehicles rather recklessly travelling through the crosswalk at Broad and Second Streets. The crosswalks should be hatched to make them more visible to motorists. Public Works Director Steve Coll noted that very little painting was accomplished last year due to a delay in delivery of a new paint machine. The new machine was just delivered in December. Crews will focus on improving the crosswalk markings across the main thoroughfares, such as East Broad Street and Main Street, prior to the beginning of the school year. Borough Council also discussed painting an additional crosswalk at Railroad Avenue and East Reliance Road for students walking to Indian Crest Middle School.

HIGHWAY ITEMS

Public Works Director Steven Coll summarized public works activities for the month. He noted that brush collection was heavy for the month, completed in 2 ½ days. Most of the work was in the Community Park. Paving of the base course in the new parking lot is complete and the lot has been striped with approximately 50 new parking spaces. C & S Lawn and Landscape completed final grading and seeding around the new parking lot. Work will start up in the Community Park by mid-August to prepare the site for the installation of the playground and fitness equipment.

The Borough is addressing two storm drainage issues. The Seventh Day Adventist Church in the 200 block of East Broad Street has a connection into a storm drain line running in the rear alley. The line collapsed, backing ground water into the building. A temporary repair was made to improve flow. Perkasio Regional Authority is scheduled to bring in a camera to assist with tracing the location of the storm line. We are also preparing to add an additional storm drain line to the rear of Jesse Barbeque.

Street sweeping has been performed as time permits. The machine is a 1990's model and has signs of mechanical wear. Another company who we use created a new gutter broom for street sweepers which will fit our model. The broom is designed to be more effective in ripping in weed growth in the gutters. The new broom has shown signs

of improvement, but the mechanical wear on the sweeper has resulted in broken shear pins. We will replace some of the components to improve overall performance and work towards developing a more comprehensive street sweeping program.

Franconia Township recently resurfaced Cherry Lane which is a border street with Souderton Borough. The township arranged for the contracted work and will be invoicing the Borough for a prorated share of the expense.

Considerable discussion was again held on the Borough's weed control practices. President Tracy Burke recently received a resident complaint about a landscaping contractor who apparently sprayed weeds in the flower beds at the Main Street parking lot prior to mulching. The complaint criticized the Borough about not being transparent on our policy for weed control. This topic has been discussed openly in public hearings for the past few years. Souderton Borough discontinued the practice of spraying weeds in the street rights of way mainly because our previous contractor, Moyer Lawn Care services, elected to no longer offer this service. While the Borough decided to stop spraying in the right of ways, the Borough or a subcontractor may elect to apply a herbicide on Borough maintained property in the course of routine maintenance of the property. The Borough or its subcontractor should maintain a report on the type of chemical and when and where it was applied. It was also noted that PennDOT may elect to perform vegetation control along State owned roadways such as Main Street and East and West Broad Streets, which they have done in the past without notification to the Borough. SEPTA may elect to spray weeds along the railroad rights of way. Borough Council did not recommend any change in the current policy for weed control. Property owners must be responsible to address weed growth along their sidewalks and curbs with whatever option they feel comfortable.

[Amendment of Borough Council, dated August 1, 2022] "The Borough Council will request that the Public Works Department and all Borough subcontractors inform the Borough Office of the date of application, type and name of any herbicide or weed control agents used in the performance of their duties or tasks."

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll provided committee members with copies of the proposals that were received for the position of Borough Engineer. Council President Tracy Burke reminded committee members that the proposals include municipal engineering services, specialized services such as code review and inspections and some include a separate proposal for GIS mapping services. President Burke would like the committee to come back with perhaps the top three candidates for further interview with a goal to make a recommendation this fall.

Borough Council discussed the appointment to the Souderton Industrial

Development Authority. A recommendation was made to re-appoint John Young to serve another five year term.

DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll reported on the recent meeting with Brass Collar Brewing Company to develop construction plans to fit out the interior of the Freight Building. Phillips and Donovan Architects were in attendance and we now have a direct line of communication between the tenants and architect to understand various fit out requirements. The Borough confirmed arrangements with James Mohan Construction of Hatfield to assist the Borough with the interior fit out.

Borough forces are preparing to start up the site work around the Freight Building through the summer. The Borough Manager suggested that the Anchor Building fund can be made available to finance the Freight Building project.

SANITATION ITEMS

No new items were discussed under sanitation this month.

RECREATION ITEMS

Borough Council discussed operations at the Souderton Community Pool. There has been staff changes within the Benning Pool Services organization. Bennington met with the Borough Manager to review their staff changes and steps they are taking to improve overall management services. The committee noted that they will be meeting with Bennington Pool Services representatives at the close of this season, particularly to address a stronger level of management, with less reliance on Borough office staff. Ahead of the planned fall meetings, Councillor Courtnee Wampole volunteered to put together a brief survey for the membership concerning their overall pool experiences.

Councillor Matt DiNenna presented Borough Council with a rendering of the new signs for the Lawn Avenue and Chestnut Street parks. Recommendations have been made to add Souderton Borough to the sign and remove the word "Community" from the signs so as not to confuse the other parks with the main Souderton Community Park. Borough Council authorized Councillor DiNenna to finalize the order and installation of the new signs.

PROPERTY ITEMS

Phillips and Donovan Architects continue to work on the construction plans for the initial phase of the Municipal Building renovations. The Architects elected to change their mechanical engineering consultants to keep the project moving at a better pace. The

mechanical consultants surveyed the building a few weeks ago in preparation for the design work. The Borough Manager requested a quote from Uninvest Bank and Trust Company for a \$2,000,000 general obligation loan to finance the municipal building project in conjunction with the \$700,000 in federal funds from the ARPA program.

Plans for the Chestnut Street Green Parking Lot project were submitted to the Montgomery County Planning Commission for review and approval. Montgomery County has awarded a grant to assist with the construction of this project. The Planning Commission has approved the plan and authorized the Borough to proceed with the preparation of bidding documents and construction. The Borough will develop a timeline that will authorize construction activity to start November 1, 2022, following the conclusion of the Third Friday's events for this year. A recommendation was made to formally authorize the advertisement of bids for this project at the August 1, 2022 Borough Council meeting.

In preparation for the eventual construction of the Chestnut Street parking lot improvements, the Borough Manager suggested that the Borough crew remove the existing trees and flower boxes in the parking lot ahead of the construction contract to reduce overall expenses. The planter boxes are overgrown and some of the trees are dying or are nearly dead.

FINANCE ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll circulated copies of the Budget Comparison and Balance Sheet reports for the quarter ending June 30, 2022.

Council President Tracy Burke discussed concern with the potential impact on the real estate tax rate for the 2023 Budget year. There is a lot of economic pressure on the budget, several large capital projects, equipment needs and growth in the police department budget. President Burke recommended that the Finance Committee speed up the development of the Budget with special budget sessions in September and again in early October. Having the Budget developed by October should be a goal.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Secretary