

BOROUGH OF WHITEHALL

INDEX

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 4, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING

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## BOROUGH OF WHITEHALL

Regular Meeting March 4, 2020

The Council of the Borough of Whitehall met at the Borough Building, 100 Borough Park Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Wednesday, March 4, 2020, at 7:00 PM, for a regular meeting. Vice President Wotus called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice President Wotus announced that all meetings will be recorded auditorily and visually.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Linda J. Book  
Kathleen N. DePuy  
Philip J. Lahr  
Robert J. McKown  
William J. Veith  
John A. Wotus  
James F. Nowalk, Mayor  
Irving S. Firman, Solicitor  
Scott Rusmiser, Engineer

Absent: Glenn P. Nagy

STAFF: James E. Leventry, Manager  
Courtney M. Wertz, Assistant Manager  
Keith P. Henderson, Chief of Police

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS & PAYROLL

- M-1 Mr. Veith moved, seconded by Mr. Lahr, that the bills contained on the bill list presented to Council on March 4, 2020 for \$84,090.64 from the General Fund, \$22,872.82 from the Storm Sewer Fund, \$3,704.94 from the Sanitary Sewer Fund and \$144,034.50 from the Liquid Fuels Fund be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- M-2 Mr. McKown moved, seconded by Mr. Lahr, that checks and transfers for \$10,304.15 from the General Fund and \$53,356.35 from the Payroll Fund be ratified. The motion carried unanimously.
- M-3 Mr. McKown moved, seconded by Mr. Lahr, that General Fund payroll for the period ending February 28, 2020 for \$155,965.35 as presented to Council on March 4, 2020, be ratified. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

M-4 Mr. Lahr moved, seconded by Ms. Book to approve the Minutes of the February 19, 2020 Council Meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

CITIZENS' REQUESTS:

Ria Fruscello , 4741 Child Drive, appeared before Council with concerns about the property next door that was damaged by a fire. Mr. Leventry stated that the Borough sent a letter to the owner. They have 30 days to apply for permits to rebuild. The original owner passed away in January. Mr. McKown stated that insurance and permitting take some time. Mr. Firman stated that the Borough must take one step at a time during the enforcement process.

Pete Swauger, 4830 Glenallen Drive, appeared before Council to request permission to install 3 recycling bins in the Library to collect alkaline batteries, CDs/DVDs and electrical wiring. Mr. Swauger would empty the bins and recycle the materials at no cost to the Borough. The Library supports the program.

M-5 Mr. McKown moved, seconded by Mr. Veith to permit the program for 1 year. The motion carried unanimously.

Greg Goga, 229 Ranger Drive, appeared before Council regarding rumors of a non-single-family home being built at the end of Ranger Drive. Mr. Leventry stated that a developer recently consolidated lots at the end of Ranger Drive to make a buildable lot. The area is zoned for single family use. Mr. Wotus stated that thus far, the Borough has been told the developer's intention is to build single family homes there.

MAYOR:

Mayor Nowalk presented his report for February 2020:

EMS Assists.....	159
Court/Hearings/Pretrial . . . . .	83
Accidents . . . . .	12
Criminal Arrests (2 DUI) . . . . .	37
Traffic Stops . . . . .	147
Traffic Details . . . . .	50
Written Traffic Citations. . . . .	147
Written Warnings Traffic Violations. . . . .	87

Total amount of money collected and turned over to the Borough during February 2020, amounted to \$4,452.18 the breakdown is as follows:

MVC from District Magistrate .....	\$1,116.16
Crimes Code and Code violations from District Magistrate .....	\$732.61
Parking Fines .....	\$990.00
Copies .....	\$210.00
Fines from Clerk of Courts.....	\$1,403.41

Mayor Nowalk presented the report of the Whitehall Fire Company for February 2020:

Calls.....	20
Calls Year to Date (12/1/2019 to 2/29/2020) .....	83

These calls included:

- 11 Alarm Activations
- 4 Mutual Aid Calls
- 4 Vehicle Accidents
- 1 Natural Gas Leak (Residential)

Notable Calls:

- 2 Mutual Aid Calls to Brentwood Borough (Dwelling Fires)
- 1 Vehicle Accident (Vehicle into Utility Pole)

Membership – On February 27, 2020, members attended a Blue Card command system lecture. From March 5, 2020 though the start of April, 5 members will be taking classes on Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) with Pleasant Hills Fire Company.

Apparatus, Stations and Equipment – Whitehall Fire Company received delivery of new battery-powered rescue tools in February. Both tools - a cutter and a spreader - are in service on 301 Rescue. These tools have replaced the outdated Hurst Jaws of Life Tools. Some members will be traveling to Ohio to meet with Sutphen representatives to review the preconstruction plans for the new engine. Five members received new turnout gear.

Mrs. DePuy stated that Senator Iovino is hosting a meeting on Fire Leadership and Municipal Officials on April 4<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. Mrs. DePuy suggested members of Whitehall Fire Company and Whitehall Borough Council attend this together. Mrs. DePuy also stated that PSAB will be hosting a webinar tomorrow at Noon regarding declaring emergencies and working with Fire Companies.

Mayor Nowalk reported on the following items:

- Mayor Nowalk stated that he attended Officer Artman's last DARE graduation ceremony. Officer Smith will be taking over the program after Officer Artman's retirement. St. Gabe's DARE graduation will be at the end of the month.
- Mayor Nowalk stated that he read a story to students at Whitehall Elementary today.
- Mayor Nowalk stated that the Chief is proud to report that Saturday's Pittsburgh Polar Plunge benefitting Special Olympics of Pennsylvania was well attended with Mayor Nowalk, Councilwoman Book and Recreation Director Hannah Vetere joining our team of plungers. Over \$3,200.00 was raised for the Whitehall Police Team and a freezing good time was had by all.
- Mayor Nowalk stated that he received two letters that he would like to read. One from Bishop Zubik in response to the Mayor's comments at St. Gabe's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and one from a family in Whitehall thanking Officer Terry Bradford and Dispatcher Jessica Morgan for their assistance in responding to their call about their son being bullied online. The incident is the subject of a front-page article in the current South Hills Record.

SOLICITOR:

Mr. Firman requested an executive session after the meeting for litigation matters.

ENGINEER:

Mr. Rusmisl reported on the following items; members of Council received written copies of the Engineer's report:

- 2020 Road Program – The proposed street list has been submitted to the Borough Manager for review. Gateway has started preparation of the bid documents and specifications. A copy of the proposed street list was given to Council. Bid opening is scheduled for April 9<sup>th</sup> with a potential award at the April 15<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting.
- Salt Storage – Trusses were placed today.

Mr. McKown inquired about utility work being done in his neighborhood. Ms. Wertz will check PA One Call records.

MANAGER:

Mr. Leventry reported on the following items according to the written report given to Council:

- Steeplechase Acceptance Ordinance – The bond for Phase 5 infrastructure has been received from Dan Caste. The Ordinance has been on public display for the past month and will be presented in summary form.
- M-6 Mr. McKown moved, seconded by Mr. Lahr to read the Ordinance in summary form. The motion carried unanimously.
- M-7 After the reading of the Ordinance, Mr. McKown moved for adoption. Mr. Lahr seconded the motion. On a roll call vote Ms. Book, Mrs. DePuy, Mr. Lahr, Mr. McKown, Mr. Veith and Mr. Wotus voted yes. The motion carried unanimously. The Ordinance No. is 1132.
- UCC Resolution – The Resolution appointing the UCC Appeals Board as the body to hear all International Property Maintenance Code appeals has been on public display for the past two weeks. It will be presented in summary form.
- M-8 Mr. McKown moved, seconded by Ms. Book to read the Resolution in summary form. The motion carried unanimously.
- M-9 After the reading of the Resolution, Mr. Lahr moved for adoption. Ms. Book seconded the motion. On a roll call vote Ms. Book, Mrs. DePuy, Mr. Lahr, Mr. McKown, Mr. Veith and Mr. Wotus voted yes. The motion carried unanimously. The Resolution No. is 992.
- Columbia Gas Project – Columbia Gas will soon be starting a 5000 lineal foot gas line replacement project. The streets to be affected include Greenridge, Orchard Hill, McKee and Spring Valley. The project is expected to take six months or longer. It could start as early as next week.
  - Family Swim Passes – It has been brought to the Borough's attention that some families purchase season passes and include children up to 25 years of age. Mr. Leventry suggested that Council designate a maximum age for those to qualify for a family pass.
- Mr. Veith suggested 21 be the maximum age a resident can remain on a family pool pass.
- M-10 Mr. Veith moved, seconded by Ms. Book to set the maximum age that a resident can be on a family pool pass at 21. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. DePuy inquired as to the reasoning behind the current policy of allowing only pool tag holders the option of bringing a non-resident guest to the pool. Mr. Leventry stated that it stops residents from bringing large groups of people to the pool. Council did not see a reason to change the policy.

- Rock Salt – Mr. Leventry stated that numerous remarks have been made about how the Borough must be saving on salt this year. Keep in mind that the Borough is contractually required to purchase minimum estimates on both of our contracts. The salt savings will be realized next year when the Borough greatly reduces our estimates due to the supply already on hand. Fortunately, we will have a place to store the salt going forward.

Mr. Wotus inquired about the COSTARS salt contract. Mr. Leventry stated that the Borough will not be participating in COSTARS in the future as the SHACOG contract has more advantages. The salt storage building allows the Borough to receive large deliveries to store for the year so there are no supply shortages.

Mr. Leventry stated that the Pension Committee met prior to the Council Meeting. A representative from Mockenhaupt was present and recommended lowering the assumed rate of return to 7%. The average return over the past 20 years has been 5%. This change would increase the MMO by roughly \$100,000 but would place the plan on a firmer footing for the future. Mr. McKown stated that another reduction may be needed in the future to ensure a more realistic assumption.

M-11 Mr. McKown moved, seconded by Ms. Book to reduce the assumed rate of return to 7% for the pension plans. The motion carried unanimously.

ASSISTANT MANAGER:

Ms. Wertz reported on the following items according to the written report given to Council:

- DCNR Grant – Union Park Phase I – The Parks Committee recommends that Union Park be the next park to be addressed. Phase I of the project calls for the demolition of the existing basketball court to make way for the installation of a new inclusive play area. The new play area would be connected to the parking lot via a new asphalt pathway along the outfield of the baseball field. The pathway would be ADA compliant. Ms. Wertz asked for authorization to submit a DCNR grant application for the project.

M-12 Mrs. DePuy moved, seconded by Mr. Lahr to authorize Ms. Wertz to apply for the DCNR grant for Union Park Phase I. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. DePuy stated that Governor Wolf's proposed budget calls for 60% cut to DCNR funds. The Governor's budget also calls for all municipalities to pay for State Police coverage. Under his budget, Whitehall's share would be \$21,703.63. Ms. Book stated that PSAB is strongly opposed to the Governor's proposal. Mayor Nowalk stated that it is ridiculous to ask Whitehall residents to pay for the State Police that we do not use as we have our own force.

Mr. McKown stated that Council needs to keep in mind that the grant requires matching funds. The Borough needs to stay on track with budgeting as there were several items in 2019 that came in overbudget.

#### LIBRARY:

No report.

#### PLANNING & ZONING:

Mr. Wotus stated that members of Council received a memo from Director of Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement.

#### PUBLIC WORKS:

Ms. Book stated that Public Works has been busy cleaning the parks and performing general maintenance.

Ms. Book stated that the Polar Plunge was great. Chief Henderson stated that over \$3,000 was raised by the Whitehall Police Department this year.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY:

Mr. McKown stated that the Chief reports that the final background investigations on the top 4 candidates on the current Civil Service eligibility list should be completed by Monday March 16. He asked Council for a date to conduct interviews of candidates. March 30<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM was selected.

#### RECREATION:

Recreation Director Hannah Vetere gave a report. The Comedy Show on Saturday went well. It is estimated that \$2,500 was made from the event. The Recognition Dinner will be March 27<sup>th</sup> at the South Hills Country Club. She is in talks with Gianna Via's about hosting Breakfast with the Easter Bunny this Spring. Ms. Vetere was invited to "Let's Be Safe" day to promote Whitehall Borough Recreation.

Ms. Vetere stated that residents that participate in water aerobic have asked that the fee be waived or reduced for residents. Currently, all participants pay \$55 for 26 sessions and an end of summer gift. The program sells out every year with residents getting the chance to register first before the classes are opened to non-residents. The program does make a profit but those are used to offset the expenses of paying instructors, lifeguards and the end of summer gift. Council stated the program will run as is.

Ms. Vetere stated that she has 15 vendors for the Farmers Market. It will start the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in June and run weekly until the last Monday in August.

Mr. McKown commended Ms. Vetere on the Comedy Show.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:

Mr. Veith stated that his committee will be meeting with members of the Whitehall Fire Company on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM to discuss 911.

#### DELEGATE REPORTS

ACBA – Ms. Book stated that the quarterly board meeting will be tomorrow. The deadline to submit Resolutions to PSAB for consideration at the annual conference is April 8<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Book stated that on March 11th PSAB will be hosting a free webinar about working with Fire Departments. Senator Iovino will be hosting an event on April 14<sup>th</sup>. There is also a free webinar being offered tomorrow at Noon about emergency management.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – Mr. Wotus stated that there is a meeting tomorrow at the South Hills Country Club. Mr. Wotus reviewed a series of upcoming events and dates for Chamber events.

EDS – No report.

MRTSA – Mr. McKown stated that the consultant hired by MRTSA is acting as the Interim Director, making observations for restructuring.

SHACOG – Ms. Book attended the meeting at Brentwood Borough. Senator Iovino was present to discuss the declining number of volunteer firefighters throughout the state.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Wotus stated that he may have a new grandson arriving this evening.

Ms. Book stated that Senator Iovino will be hosting "Mobile Office Hours" at the Whitehall Public Library on March 17<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM to 4 PM. Members of the Senator's staff will be available for residents to speak too.

Mr. McKown stated that Whitehall resident John Henry Smith passed away recently. Mayor Nowalk stated that Whitehall resident Peggy Parker also passed away recently.

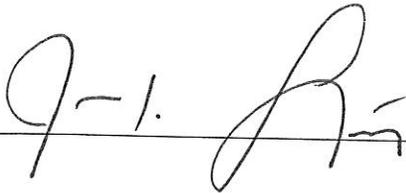
ADJORNMENT:

M-13 Ms. Book moved, seconded by Mr. McKown to adjourn the meeting in honor of John Henry Smith and Peggy Parker. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM.

READ AND APPROVED THIS DAY OF APRIL 15, 2020:

Manager

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. I. Smith", is written over a horizontal line.