

JIM THORPE BOROUGH COUNCIL WORK SESSION
March 7, 2024
MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 6:34 p.m. by President Greg Strubinger with the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for the armed forces, first responders, and their families.

Roll Call of Members

Police Chief Schatz
Borough Manager Sterner
Borough Secretary Klotz
Solicitor Nanovic-absent
Mayor Cinicola

Joanne Klitsch
Mike Yeastedt
Tom Chapman
Ted LaRizzio
Engineer Amos Valenti

Sydney Wernett
Connor Rodgers
Gregory Strubinger

Announcements

Greg Strubinger welcomed everyone in the audience to the temporary new meeting place in the LGI room of the Jim Thorpe Area High School. He asked that there be no side conversations during the meeting as there was much business to discuss. The meetings will still continue to be live streamed. He thanked the school district for allowing the Borough to utilize their facilities for meetings.

The Borough is accepting letters of interest for the International Property Maintenance Board, term ending December 31, 2027. If anyone is interested, please submit a letter of interest.

The Borough is accepting letters of interest for two (2) vacancies on the Shade Tree Committee, terms ending December 31, 2028 and December 31, 2025. If anyone is interested, please submit a letter of interest.

There is a vacancy on the Planning Commission, term ending on December 31, 2027. If anyone is interested, please submit a letter of interest.

There will be a D&L Trail Tender Event on March 23rd from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Pick Up the Poconos Spring Event will be taking place on Saturday, April 20th from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

The Spring 2024 Tire and Electronic Recycling Event will be taking place on May 18, 2024 from 7:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

The Jim Thorpe Municipal Fire Department was awarded the Fire Company & Emergency Medical Services Grant. The Diligent Fire Company was awarded \$13,061.55 for a new hose for the pumper tanker to replace and outdated hose, thermal imaging camera for the pumper tanker, and a ventilation saw for the pumper tanker. Onoko Fire & Rescue was awarded \$39,450.59 for debt reduction associated with purchase of a 2020 F-350 and HMA Hydrus 20-200 ultra high-pressure fire suppression system, and the purchase of 2 thermal imaging cameras.

A reminder for residents: pertinent information for residents can be found and received through the Borough's All-Call, website, and Facebook page. Residents can sign up for the All-Calls through the Borough's website.

Public Comment

Nick Short – He asked why his utility bill went up so much, specifically the garage. Greg Strubinger explained that the Garbage contract ran out at the end of January. It went out to bid towards the end of last year. Tamaqua Transfer had the lowest bid. The increase in price are the results of everything going up post covid. Borough Council looked into various options such as sharing a transfer station with Penn Forest Township or the Borough starting their own transfer station. Lehighton also had the same problem

a few months later when they bid their contract out. The Borough only received one other offer and that was from JP Mascaro. Their bid was double what Tamaqua Transfer bid.

AJ Petrucci – He said he submitted a request for action two years ago and resubmitted it again last year. He asked about the status of his request. Police Chief Schatz explained the Police Department took care of the items they were able to take care of. The remaining items are Zoning issues and have to be addressed by the Zoning officer. He asked about changing the stop signs at the intersection of Center and Coal. Police Chief Schatz explained they are PennDOT roads. He would have to fill out a request for action requesting the Borough contact PennDOT to move the stop signs.

John McGuire – He thanked the Police Department for their hard work, especially during the incident that took place on February 21st with the man who was waving around a gun and breaking into resident's houses.

Public Hearing

NONE

SALDO-Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance

NONE

Action

The following items were reviewed:

GIS Utility Mapping – Jason Shellhammer from Carbon County GIS spoke about the GIS mapping system. This will help inventory all of the utility lines and infrastructure throughout the Borough. He explained Lehighton currently is utilizing this for their utilities, as well as using this system to help with the Lead Line inventory required by DEP. Residents would receive a QR code to take a survey about their water lines leading into their home. The information they submit would then get inputted into the mapping system. A resident in the audience asked how much the cost is for this mapping. Jason Shellhammer explained it is \$1,561.00 per year for the software. His charge is \$38.00 per hour to compile everything, which is cheaper than paying an Engineer to do this same job. Another resident asked whose responsibility it was to replace the lead pipes should anyone have them. Manager Sterner explained if it's on the property owner's side, it's their responsibility. If it's from the stop to the main, it's the Borough's responsibility. She also explained that there is talk about grant funding for residents to offset the costs for replacement. The sooner residents submit that information, the better chance the Borough has at securing grant funding should it become available.

JTTA RFA-2024 Jim Thorpe Birthday Celebration – James Dougher spoke on behalf of JTTA. This would be a 1-day community event. Previously, the event was put together by Anne Marie Fitzpatrick and Ray Brader. They retired from this last year and passed the event over to JTTA. The birthday celebration will take place on May 18th starting at 10:30 a.m. at the Monument and end at 4:00 p.m. at the high school. There will be an Olympic torch run, which Police services will be needed to help runners cross North Street safely. There will be Native American festivities held at the high school starting at 12:00 p.m.

Roof Replacement at Asa Packer Mansion – Amos Valenti from Barry Isett and Associates spoke about the roof replacement at the Asa Packer Mansion. The Borough was awarded a grant to replace it. All vendors who submitted bids are COSTARS approved. The lowest base bid came in at \$348,381.50 from Alan Kunsman Roofing and Siding. Included in the bid are unit pricing allowances. There are also five alternates (enhancements) included. A resident in the audience asked why the current roof failed and why couldn't it just be patched up in the places where it's damaged. Amos Valenti explained the current roof only has a 20-year average lifespan and it is currently on year 17. The new roof has a 20-year warranty and can last longer than that. Greg Strubinger asked about the timeline of the project. The project will be awarded this month and the plan is to have all the demo work completed before the full-time hours kick in at the mansion. Tom Chapman asked what the extended warranty entails. Barry Isett

will be involved in the process of the roof install; with the warranty, the manufacturer will also be on site to oversee the install.

Tourism/Events/Parking Public Discussion – The public was asked to submit suggestions and recommendations to Police Chief Schatz and Borough Manager Sterner. Many residents, business owners, and workers submitted their thoughts. They were invited to this meeting to discuss their ideas as well with Borough Council.

Helen VanPelt – She asked if kiosks were going to be installed on the East side of town. There are no plans at this time to install kiosks on the East side of town. She explained she owns 2 Air BNB's and there is nowhere for the cleaners she's hired to park so that they can clean them. It's not feasible to drag cleaning equipment from the County lot or kiosk parking spots. She asked if a permit can be provided for this.

Jill Williams – She is a business owner in the Borough. She is worried about Council raising the price to park at the kiosk spots. This will cut into the workers' pay. Greg Strubinger explained the Borough is able to customize the kiosks and craft rate that are least impactful. Police Chief Schatz said there has not been a rate increase since switching from meters to kiosks.

Nancy Dorn – She owns a cleaning business in the Borough. She said she has nowhere to park. She has to use other people's driveways or spots. She asked if the permit parking spaces can be used until 5:00 p.m.

Jennifer Murphy – She asked if the research has been done to look into other similar municipalities and how they handle situations such as ours. Greg Strubinger said the Borough looked into New Hope and other municipalities. Police Chief Schatz said this was discussed during the round tables the Borough has already held.

Christine Reems – She currently works at Myst. She spends a lot of money on parking just to be able to work. When it's busy, she isn't able to go out a refill the kiosk with money, so she then gets a parking ticket. This turns into \$45.00 a day just to park.

Brian Evans – He said there are both pros and cons to the tourism within the area. The biggest con is there are too many people in the square and this is a safety concern. He feels that a part-time voluntary police force, moving attractions away from the square, moving vendors and food trucks up Broadway, and making the business district bigger will help disburse the crowds better.

Marriane Rustad – She work at the Broadway Grill. She said safety is the biggest concern, but said to take into consideration the businesses and residents of the Borough before approving any Ordinance amendments. She asked that Borough Council consider parking permits for workers.

Zachary Snyder – He said he lives in the Heights and works downtown. He said he doesn't understand why the Borough wants to implement residential parking because he has not had issues with parking in the Heights.

Trish Spillman – She said she looked into areas similar to ours to see how much they charge for parking. The average cost is \$1.50 an hour to park. She said the Borough should be "choosy" when establishing prices and timeframes. She said the Borough should work with the School District and County for parking areas and shuttle the visitors into downtown. She said the Borough should be looking for the opportunities of parking, not obstacles.

Valerie Salveri – She said she has not had any issues with parking that it would warrant residential parking and visitor passes. She has concerns if residential parking is implemented, that most people won't be able to get to the Borough office for visitor passes. She said there needs to be an electronic solution for it. She also asked not to eliminate alley parking. She said for the tourists, a \$50.00 parking ticket is not a deterrent to them.

John McGuire – He said there was a parking study done years ago and this document should be discussed during one of the roundtables. Greg Strubinger explained the Borough is already utilizing some of the ideas already from the study.

Luis Valdez – He said many times he walks from where he works to grab a slice of pizza at Antonios for lunch and many people stop him for help with the kiosks. Most times they aren't working right. He said the Borough should fix the kiosks first before raising the prices. He thinks the potential price increase is too rapid.

Jim Pompa – He asked Borough Council to continue to let the free block to park on Broadway be free. He believes changing the start time for kiosks to 8:00 a.m. is too early. There are residents who live along there who use the spots to park overnight that aren't able to move their cars before then. He was also concerned for people who go to St. Mark's Church on Sundays. If the price gets increased, people will be paying \$6.00 to \$8.00 just to go to church. Greg Strubinger said the County lets those people park in the lot at 76 Susquehanna. Jim said a \$2.00 an hour was not a stretch, but \$3.00 an hour is. He also said he doesn't know how residential parking will be beneficial and residents have their visitors on weekends and holidays. He said there are only 6 weeks out of the year that parking is a major issue. He said it has taken him 12 years to convince his customers to come early or after 5:00 p.m. to his business. His business is open 7 days a week, six of those days he is open until 9:00 p.m. He said most businesses in downtown are usually closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Dave Drury – He thought having this open discussion with residents was a great idea. He explained that our areas industry is tourism. He is concerned with raising the pricing at the parking kiosks. He explained during non-peak times, his workers can park in the hotel lot, but this is becoming few and far between due to the area gaining popularity as a top vacation destination. He asked that the Borough look for additional areas for workers to park. He explained in Breckinridge, Colorado, their municipality has a parking area designated for business workers to park. Their town is similar to Jim Thorpe with limited parking.

Cierra Brown – She is the building manager at the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Building. She explained the residents of this building are elderly and on fixed incomes. They cannot afford to pay the prices at the kiosks. She said there is nowhere else for them to park. Manager Sterner informed her that those living there can utilize the permit parking spaces as they are eligible as a Susquehanna Street resident. Cierra Brown explained those spaces are too far for them to walk. She asked if someone from the Borough could sit down with her to come up with a solution.

Kevin Shirley – He asked that Borough Council implement downtown business worker permit passes, reduce actively promoting Fall Foliage Weekends, increase promoting slower months to help even out the amount of tourist in town, utilize some sort of shuttle system to shuttle tourists into downtown from other parking areas, a staff parking lot for workers, consider extending the commercial district, and a voluntary police force to help the Police Department during busy times.

Margaret White – She asked why there was opposition in utilizing the school parking lots for additional parking for tourists. Manager Sterner explained the residents on the East side of town were concerned for the safety of their children. She explained the workers at her restaurant are upset with the potential kiosk price increase. She suggested during the busy times, shut down roadways to motorists, implement an additional food and beverage tax to help offset any costs to the Borough, and to have a conversation with the residents from the East side to come up with a solution to use the school parking lots without endangering the children.

Jake Arner – He offered use of his property on Flagstaff Mountain for parking for the tourists and to shuttle them to the downtown area. He also asked Borough Council to grant him zoning approval to do so. Manager Sterner explained to him that he could not ask Borough Council this and he would have to make that request to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Terri Rock – She asked what would be the purpose of the revenue from the kiosks should the prices be increased. She was told it would help offset the costs from controlling tourism.

Tripesta Chevsky -- She asked that all the residential activities (Trick or Treat and Halloween Parade) be moved from the weekends to weekdays for the safety of the children.

Tom Lux – He asked how the Borough came up with the amount to cover the tourism costs. Police services, services for traffic and pedestrian control, were some of the items Manager Sterner explained. He also said the rate increase and hours timeframe is excessive.

Katie Idem – She works at one of the businesses downtown. She said she spent around \$1,000.00 last year on parking just to be able to work. She asked Borough Council not to increase the kiosk prices.

Jamie Weaver – She explained she graduated from Kutztown University with a degree in criminal justice. They intern with Ocean City Maryland Police Department. She recommended the Police Department do something similar with other local universities. This would assist with the part-time Police needs

Ben Gleek – He lives and works on Broadway. He said the workers and residents are the life blood of the town. He requested Borough Council opens spaces up for the workers downtown.

Betty Lou McBride – She said 40 years ago, there were six businesses total downtown. She and others worked hard to bring businesses into the area. She asked for a residential discount card for reduced parking and asked for Borough Council to look at the situation for a wide range of solutions.

Andrew Underwood – He is the owner of Donerds Donuts. He asked Borough Council to come up with a special rate for residents and workers for the kiosk spaces.

Jeff Cook – He owns multiple Short-Term Rentals on High Street and West Broadway. He said he pays a lot into the Hotel Tax and requested Borough Council reach out to the state to try and get more of the hotel tax money back into the community.

Council Meeting Minutes from February 1, 2024

Council Meeting Minutes from February 8, 2024 – Greg Strubinger stated any changes that need to be made should be submitted to Secretary Klotz to make those corrections.

Expenditures from all Funds as presented

Treasurer's Report

Resolution 2024-07 DCNR Grant Phase III – The Borough will be applying for \$500,000.00 worth of grant funding for Phase III of the Memorial Park Project. Phase III includes new basketball courts, lighting, and pathways.

Resolution 2024-08 Records Disposition – Greg Strubinger asked if this was additional records needing to be disposed of. Secretary Klotz explained this was another resolution for additional records to be disposed and there would be another Resolution in the future for more records to be disposed.

Road Paving Bids Received – Bruce George Paving was the lowest bidder with a price of \$146,319.22. The streets to be paved are West 5th Street (starting at Spring Alley), Maple Street, West 6th Street, Cypress Street, and Snyder Street (ending at West 10th Street).

LCF Construction Proposal: Two 8" EZ Line Stop Complete on CI/DI Pipe \$12,570.00 – This line stop is for the new Public Works Building.

Memorial Park Phases I&II Construction-Authorization to Bid/Order from COSTARS conditioned upon DCNR approval – The Building Committee would have to give the final approval of the plans. It's being recommended by Barry Isett to move the age group playground sections to different areas of the park from how it was originally drawn up. Any equipment that can be reused, will be. Ted LaRizzio asked why the plans were drawn up the way they were when the playground equipment is where it currently is. The reasoning behind that was to keep the younger children play area separate from the older children's play area and keep the younger play area closer to the pavilions and gazebo.

PSAB Conference Attendance – Borough Secretary Klotz is able to attend the conference and would be an alternate voter for the Borough.

Bank of America Credit Card Account-name change on account – Ed Gula will need to be removed from the account as he has recently retired.

General Code Invoice-Codification of Ordinance 2023-01 Zoning-\$8,895.00 – This was an item not budgeted for. Greg Strubinger asked if the DCED Grant would cover the costs. Manager Sterner said she would have to find out.

Facilities Projects

Authority of the Buildings & Grounds Committee

Public Works Building

Contractor's Application for Payment #1 – Larry McCullion & Son Electrical \$16,200.00

Contractor's Application for Payment #1 – Brace Construction \$158,329.80

Spillman Farmer Invoice 8121.22.13 – Professional Services \$3,232.00

Requisition #2 – Partial Payment Request for Work from 10/17/23-2/29/24

KMZurawa Inc. Proposal #32824 – Project Manager

Special Testing Proposals-Soils, Concrete, Steel – Manager Sterner said she is still waiting on answers to some questions she had from the quotes that have been received.

Memorial Hall

Contractor's Application for Payment #1 – Bognet, Inc. \$186,030.00

Contractor's Application for Payment #1 – GR Noto Electric \$22,781.25

Spillman Farmer Invoice 8122.22.14 – Professional Services \$2,991.20

Requisition #2 – Partial Payment for Work from 10/17/23-2/29/24

KMZurawa Inc. Proposal #33124 – Project Manager

Special Testing Proposals-Soil, Concrete, Steel – Manager Sterner said she is still waiting on answers to some questions she had from the quotes that have been received.

Marzen RFA-Waiver of Garbage charges – The owner purchased the property in 2017 and no one has lived in the house since then. The Borough's Zoning & Code Enforcement Officer went to inspect the property. She said the structure is still habitable based on the outside of the home. She did not view the

inside of the home. The Borough's Ordinance states if a structure is habitable, they will still have to pay for garbage services.

Martinez RFA-10 Minute Parking Spot in Front of Business & Parking Permit for Business Owners – The business is on upper West Broadway, in the designated Permit Parking area. There is no parking available in the immediate area for patrons and workers. There used to be a loading zone in front of the building. The business owner is requesting a 10-minute parking spot in front of the building for patrons and one parking permit for their employees. Last year Antonio's was denied the same request for a parking space due to them being where kiosk parking is.

Mauch Chunk Historical Society RFA-PA Small Water & Sewer Grant Application request – There is a stormwater drain next to the Historical Society's building that they are requesting the Borough applies for grant funding to have it fixed. Ownership of the storm drain would need to be determined. The storm drain would also need to be inspected to see what work needs to be completed.

Account #6174 Sewer Credit Request-Burst Pipe – The property owner had a frozen pipe that burst and the water never went into the sewer system.

Utility Account Rate Changes (1)

Exoneration Request

The report was submitted for review.

Committees

International Property Maintenance Board-letter of interest – Ammon Hontz submitted the letter of interest. There were some initial concerns with this due to litigation. Solicitor Nanovic confirmed there would be no issues due to this being a volunteer only position.

Carbon County Council of Governments Representative – James Dougher, who was present in the audience, confirmed he would be interested in the Representative seat.

Administration

Filming Requirements within the Borough – There currently is no Ordinance or Policy in place for this. Solicitor Nanovic had reached out to the Borough of New Hope for their procedures for filming. They currently do not have an Ordinance, but a policy and fee within their fee schedule. Because they have no Ordinance for this, there is no enforcement. Borough Council agreed there needs to be at least a Policy in place for filming. Manager Sterner also requested Solicitor Nanovic look into clarification of Street Performers and Musicians.

Public Service (Sewer/Sanitation/Water/Streets)

Chemical Bids – The bid specs have been advertised and sent out. The bids are due on March 28th. This will be on the April agenda for approval.

Street Truck Proposal – The best option for the Borough would be to order the truck from Miracle Ford of Tamaqua and the spreader from Lancaster Truck Bodies. The total price is \$112,605.18. Payments would have to be budgeted for in the 2025 Budget. Money to cover the cost of the lease can come out of the 2026 Liquid Fuels money. Money cannot be pulled from those funds any earlier due to a prior lease being paid for with those funds and only 20% of them can be used for equipment purchase.

Water Division 2024 GMC Pick-Up Financing – Mauch Chunk Trust Company had the lowest interest rate from the three banks that were asked to provide quotes. Their rate is 5.03%. JTNB currently does not offer lease purchase options.

New Employee Licensing Classes – One employee from the Water Department and one employee from the Sewer Department would each be taking a 12-week certification course through the Pennsylvania Rural Water Association.

Utility Services Group Proposal-Sewer Line Maintenance & Repair Work – The Sewer Supervisor requested a quote, but has not received it yet. \$65,000.00 was budgeted for this work this year.

Water & Sewer Tapping Fees – The Sewer Committee recommended the hookup fee be set to \$5,000.00 and increase it by \$1,250.00 each year until capping it at \$10,000.00. The Water Committee recommended the hookup fee to be set to \$6,000.00. A new Fee Schedule will need to be made and voted on at next week's meeting to reflect these changes.

On-Lot Septic Management Program

Inspection Form -- The updated Inspection form was sent out to the Borough's SEO and haulers in the area for their input. Not everyone that the updated form was sent to has responded. Those that did respond, only suggested minor changes, if any at all. The biggest concern is will the haulers provide a sketch of where the on-lot system is on the property? Will they charge the residents extra for that drawing? Police Chief Schatz recommended the property owner complete the drawing should that be the case.

Ordinance Amendment for Pumping Intervals – Currently, the Ordinance requires pumping every 3 years. A few residents have expressed some concerns because their haulers recommend pumping every 5 years. Borough Council would like to see this amended to include pumping every 3 to 5 years at the haulers discretion.

Police

Employment

Part-Time Parking Enforcement – With the recent resignation of the Police Department's secretary/meter attendant, Police Chief Schatz would like to hire at least one parking meter attendant, but would prefer to hire two if possible.

Officers Probationary Period Status – Officer Long's and Officer Conarty's one-year probationary period ended on February 26, 2024. Police Chief Schatz recommended they be taken off of probation and placed onto permanent employment with the Borough.

Anastasia Susko Memorial Scholarship Request-2024 Jim Thorpe B.A.R. 9/14 – Police Chief Schatz has been communicating with Aki Susko about where the first leg of the race will take place. It was suggested to have the first leg on Race Street instead of Broadway like it was initially proposed. The Police Services contract still needs to be submitted.

Buildings/Parks

Memorial Hall New Phone System – The Borough received three quotes: Guyette, ET&T, and Blue Ridge/PenTeleData. After consulting with Access Office Technologies, the Borough's IT company, it was determined if the Borough were to go with PenTeleData, they would become the Borough's IT company as per the proposal. Access said they offer phone systems and would provide a quote for the Borough. Mike Yeastedt asked if a quote could be given by 3CX, a company that was recommended to him, prior to the Work Session meeting. Neither company had submitted a quote in time for the Work Session meeting.

Memorial Bench Program – Manager Sterner did not have a chance to review this item further and needs additional time to research.

Emergency Services

NONE

Old Business

NONE

Executive Session

NONE

Adjourn

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Sydney Wernett to **adjourn the meeting**. There were no comments. Motion carries 7-0. The meeting ended at 10:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Klotz
Borough Secretary