

JIM THORPE BOROUGH COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
JUNE 3, 2021  
MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 6:34 p.m. by President Gregory Strubinger with the pledge of allegiance and moment of silence for Councilman Tom Highland and his family.

**Roll Call of Members**

Gregory Strubinger	Thomas Highland - absent	Joanne Klitsch
Jay Miller	Kyle Sheckler - absent	Michael Yeastedt
Robert Schaninger	Mayor Michael Sofranko	Solicitor Nanovic – absent
Connor Rodgers, JCP	Police Chief Schatz	Public Service Manager Yaich
Manager Sterner	Borough Engineer – absent	Secretary Louise McClafferty - absent

**Mayor's Report**

Mayor Sofranko stated the police report has been distributed; reported electronic speed limit signs have been secured; crosswalks to be painted; Local Share Account Grant award for a police car; recognized the Chief and Manager for all the work they have done securing grants.

Chief Schatz thanked the Mayor and Council for allowing him to attend the training at the FBI, it was a great networking opportunity and he made a lot of connections. The Mayor noted that the Chief had to qualify for this training, it was not open to everyone. Only 50 people, out of thousands of applicants, were selected.

**Announcements**

Tire & Electronic Recycling – President Strubinger reported on another successful event.  
Local Share Assessment Grant – we have been awarded \$60,095.00 for a police car & equipment.  
Local Share Assessment Grant – we have been awarded \$32,000.00 for repairs to the fire stations.  
Blight Remediation Grant – Jim Thorpe, Lehigh & Palmerton Boroughs have been awarded \$300,000.00 for blight remediation.

**SALDO** - none

**Public Comment**

Kristie Fach and Dennis DeMara addressed Council on the dam removal project. Wildlands is ready to complete and submit the first grant application to the Department of Environmental Protection for a Growing Greener Grant. They are requesting a letter of support for the project and a pledge of in-kind match of \$5,000.00 in staff time for this application for design and permitting. The total match is 15% and Wildlands will provide the bulk of the in-kind match. The project is to breach dams and create/restore a trout habitat. Kristie and Dennis met with some members of the community who had questions and concerns on the project. They will move forward with this project with those who attended the meeting earlier today. The community members want to ensure their concerns are heard and considered throughout the process.

Glen Claypoole addressed Council about one of his accounts, and landlords being required to be responsible for utility bill payments at their rental properties.

Chief Chuck Demund and Rick Welker of Lenape Nation addressed Council regarding their proposed Pow-Wow event scheduled for September. They explained the event and informed Council the purpose of the event is to raise money for the Lenape Nation Scholarship Fund. They requested help for the vendors as far as fees for the borough's permits. Councilman Jay Miller asked Council to see what we can do; suggested they use the veteran exemption; we have time to see what might be done on the price. Manager Sterner is to check the ordinance.

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Ernie and Diana Brummell submitted a request for Council to consider vacating an unopened portion of Quarry Street that abuts their property. The second abutting property owner is in agreement. Maintaining an easement for the right to access the High Street Wall for maintenance would need to occur.

Katrina Gonsorick of Off Trail Outdoors company addressed Council. The company teaches people the proper way to do rustic camping and hiking. She is looking to do this on Jake Arner's property and asked council to re-consider the zoning officer's determination on their application. The proper process is an appeal of the zoning officer's decision to the Zoning Hearing Board. Council does not have the authority to over-ride the zoning officer's determination. They are looking to start the business soon. Due to that, Manager Sterner will contact the zoning officer and instruct her to return messages left by Katrina. Katrina can explain her questions and comments to the zoning officer.

Lynn Humphrey updated Council that they hope to have Jim Thorpe Trolly start operations in the next couple of weeks.

**Action**

Meeting Minutes included in council packets no comments.

Expenditures will be forwarded to council for review for next week's meeting.

Treasurer's Report for May, 2021 will be completed early next week when the Treasurer is back from vacation and forwarded to council for review for next week's meeting.

Water income review – funds budgeted from Water Capital Reserve Funds had not been transferred last month, which made the overall income appear low. The billing income was on schedule and equal to the sewer billing income percentage. Funds have been transferred.

COVID-19 Disaster Declaration Extension – proposed to extend for 90 days. This is to ensure the Borough's and our resident's eligibility in any possible state or federal funding which may be forthcoming.

Junior Council Person Connor Rodgers – resignation, as he will be off to college.

Insurance Claim TNT-0159103 Proposed Settlement – any questions should be directed to the Solicitor, or held for an executive session next week prior to action (if needed), as the settlement would not be public at this stage.

Switchback Scamper October 24, 2021 – requesting approval for event.

Switchback Scamper Police Contract – requesting officer for a short period of time, provided officer is available during this busy fall foliage weekend.

Mauch Chunk Pow-Wow September 11 & 12, 2021 – requesting approval for event; see public comments.

Jim Thorpe Lions Halloween Parade October 23, 2021 – requesting approval for event, parade route, barricades and pavilion use.

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Express Employment – requesting agreement with second employment firm for temporary employee services; have matched rate of current firm; will then have two firms with pools of applicants.

**Utility Action**

Reports for 20 Garbage Only and five water/sewer/garbage for collection fees.

**Exoneration Request**

May report presented.

**Committees**

**Administration**

Act 457 Plan – a review of the two (2) plans was provided to Council. It was suggested Council invite Lee Zink back to review his plan as it has been about a year since he gave his presentation. Per Solicitor Nanovic, this would be a bargaining item for the two unions. Non-union employees and Council members would not need negotiations. We can inquire as to non-union employee interest.

Multi-modal Grants – the parking study committee is in the beginning stages of planning for DCED/CFA and PennDOT multi-modal grant applications. DCED/CFA is open; traffic calming measures, ADA handicap curb cuts and sidewalks are possible items to be included; no match is required but we will be requesting a small match; investigating two to four partners with small matches. The committee will be asking Council to take action to support the projects.

**Public Services (Sewer/Sanitation/Water/Streets)**

Streets & Sidewalk Ordinance Update – curb regulations – comments and updates by Manager Sterner and Councilman Yeastedt were provided; Manager Sterner to forward to Councilman Yeastedt the section of the current ordinance that requires work be completed by borough engineer so that it may be updated.

Hill Road-West Broadway Swale Repairs – Councilman Yeastedt and Public Service Manager Yaich reviewed the proposed repair project. Budgeted funds were reviewed.

American Rescue Plan Funds – we will be receiving over \$488,000.00; proposed projects are High Street water main and the 500 block of South Street sewer line; cost estimates for High Street were provided; need estimate from engineer on the sewer project; application is prepared; will be submitted after Council President signatures obtained. We will be requesting approval of these projects and authorization for Entech to provide a work order for High Street with project estimate and for South Street, if funds allow. Using the ARP funds for this project will allow us to reallocate CDBG funds for non-water projects, perhaps road infrastructure.

Brummell Request – see public comment.

Flatbed Trailers – our current trailer is for larger equipment; smaller equipment is difficult to load/unload; ramps are causing safety concerns; requesting purchase of a smaller, more modern trailer for smaller equipment – using funds received from sale of truck; will maintain current trailer for larger pieces of equipment if it would be necessary and for hauling pipe and materials.

Game Commission Hunter Safety Agreement – discussed the requirement that the land would fall under Game Commission regulations that Council would not have authority to override; main concern is that the only vehicles allowed would be those of hunters who receive written permission or a permit from the borough; recreational ATVs would not be allowed. This will be on the Action agenda next week.

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Yost Stormwater Inspection Fees – paid in full.

Police

Chief Schatz congratulated Junior Council Person Connor Rodgers on his term as JCP and wished him good luck with his next endeavor.

Buildings/Parks

Borough Facilities Projects – an appropriations request was submitted to Senator Casey.

Diligent Bay Window & Woodwork – awaiting updated written quotes.

Emergency Services

Chipmunk Trail Addressing – the meeting held with the property owners went well; all but one owner attended; owners requested converting their mailboxes from a cluster box to individual residences; manager to review subdivision plans, if possible, will speak with the county about contact with the post office.

Old Business

No updates

Executive Session

Personnel – will be held after this meeting.

Adjourn

**MOTION:** Mike Yeastedt, second by Jay Miller to adjourn and go into an executive session for personnel. Motion carried 4 to 0. Councilman Bob Schaninger was out of meeting at this time, returned after vote was completed.

The meeting ended at 8:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sterner  
Borough Manager