

JIM THORPE BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
October 12, 2023
MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 6:31 p.m. by President Strubinger with the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for the armed forces, first responders, and their families, as well as the service members who lost their lives while serving our country, and the people of Israel.

Roll Call of Members

Gregory Strubinger	Joanne Klitsch	Jay Miller
Michael Yeastedt	Bob Schaninger	Tom Chapman-started @6:45
Michael Rivkin	Solicitor Nanovic	Secretary Klotz
Police Chief Schatz	Borough Manager Sterner	Mayor Sofranko-left @6:48

Mayor's Report

Mayor Sofranko was wearing blue to the meeting due to the bet he lost with Mayor Don Herrman from the Borough of Palmerton. The bet was the same as last year- whichever school lost the football game, Palmerton or Jim Thorpe, the mayor would have to wear the opposing team's school colors. Palmerton won the game. During the game, non-perishable food was collected for the food pantries in each town. Mayor Sofranko noted that Palmerton is a great town and Jim Thorpe residents should check out what they have to offer.

The first weekend of Fall Foliage has passed. There were a few hiccups that will be addressed going forward, traffic on Packer Hill being one of them.

Trick or treat, trunk or treat, and the Halloween Parade will be taking place on Saturday, October 28th. This is also the last weekend of fall foliage. Mayor Sofranko asked for the residents be patient as it will be busy and traffic diverted for a short amount of time for the parade route.

There have been three car accidents within the past month on North Street, specifically between the 500 and 800 blocks. These accidents were due to distracted driving. Mayor Sofranko asked that people please slow down. There are electronic signs just after the bridge and by the monument reminding drivers to slow down. The police will be out monitoring more.

Mayor Sofranko asked Borough Council to vote on the vacant Council seat before continuing on with the agenda due to having a prior commitment and having to leave the meeting early. The Vacancy Board chairman position has been vacant since Bill Solomon's passing. Greg Strubinger asked for nominations for the Vacancy Board. There was one letter of interest submitted to Borough Council. Joanne Klitsch nominated John McGuire. There were no other nominations. **MOTION** by Bob Schaninger, second by Mike Yeasted to **close nominations for the Vacancy Board position**. There was a roll call vote:

Joanne Klitsch – yes
Mike Yeastedt – yes
Bob Schaninger – yes
Michael Rivkin – yes
Greg Strubinger – yes

Motion carries 5-0.

There were four letters of interest received for the recently vacated Borough Council seat. Greg Strubinger asked for nominations for the vacant Council seat. Joanne Klitsch nominated Tom Chapman. There were no other nominations. **MOTION** by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **close nominations for the vacant Borough Council seat**. There were no comments. Motion carries 5-0.

There was a roll call vote for Tom Chapman:
Joanne Klitsch – yes

Mike Yeastedt – yes
Bob Schaninger – yes
Michael Rivkin – yes
Greg Strubinger – yes

Motion carries 5-0. Greg Strubinger thanked the four individuals for their interest in the open Council seat. Mayor Sofranko swore in Tom Chapman.

Announcements

There is still a vacancy for the International Property Maintenance Board. Please submit letters of interest to the Borough office.

The Fall 2023 Tire & Electronics Recycling will be taking place on Saturday, October 21st from 7:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. Please arrive prior to 11:30 as Tamaqua Transfer leaves promptly at that time.

Trick or treat, trunk or treat, and the Halloween parade will be taking place on Saturday, October 28th. Trick or treat and trunk or treat is from 5 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The Halloween parade will be at 2:00 p.m. Additional information can be found on the Borough's website and Facebook page.

Leaf Collection will be from Monday, October 30th through Friday, November 17th, weather permitting.

The 2nd annual Festival of Trees will be taking place again this year. There will be more trees available this year compared to last year. Applications and more information for the trees can be found on the Borough's website and Facebook page. Greg Strubinger thanked the two sponsors of the event, Shawn Kresge and Kyle Oliver's tree service.

Public Comment

Lou Hall – He discussed his concerns with parking. More and more tourists are parking on the East side of town between 3rd, 4th, and Front Streets. He mentioned some residents brought it to his attention. Chief Schatz explained that this has been challenging and possibly in the future start making certain areas for residential parking only.

John McGuire – He discussed some safety concerns with North Street. He said he's witnessed many cars U-turning on North Street this past weekend. He also thanked the Zoning Ordinance committee members outside of Borough Council – Manager Sterner, James Dougher, and Andrew Roberts.

Bob Schaninger – He mentioned he noticed the trucks that are parking in the Borough parking lot are not using and should be using wood pads to prevent rolling away. He thanked John McGuire for everything that he does and has done for the Borough. Lastly, he said there is a new Federal law going into effect in April for drug consortium for CDL's. If individuals don't sign up for this, they will have to start the whole CDL process over again. Greg Strubinger stated trucks won't be able to park in the Borough lot once constructions starts on Memorial Hall.

Public Hearing

MOTION by Bob Schaninger, second by Joanne Klitsch to **advertise the Public Hearing for the updated Zoning Ordinance**. There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0.

SALDO (Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance)

NONE

Action

MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, second by Michael Rivkin to **approve Council meeting minutes from September 7, 2023**. There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Bob Schaninger, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve Council meeting minutes from September 14, 2023.** There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Bob Schaninger, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve Expenditures from all Funds as presented.** There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Bob Schaninger to **approve the Treasurer's report.** There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve Resolution 2023-17 LSA 2023 Statewide Application- Memorial Park Phase III Construction Project.** The Borough will be applying for a LSA Statewide grant for Phase III of the Memorial Park Project. In this Phase, the basketball courts will be updated to ADA standards, along with new sidewalks and lighting. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Bob Schaninger to **approve the LSA 2023 Statewide Application-Financial Commitment of \$30,000.00.** Grant guidelines do not require a match, but the Borough is planning on matching \$30,000.00 towards the Memorial Park Phase III project. By agreeing to a match, the application will look more favorable than a municipality who does not match. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve Resolution 2023-18 Eliminating Police Officer's Contribution to the Police Pension Plan for the year 2024.** There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Bob Schaninger, second by Joanne Klitsch to **offer employment to Applicant #116 for the full-time truck driver/laborer licensed water plant operator trainee. The applicant must obtain all required licenses and subclass licenses within three years.** There was an opening in the Sewer Department and a Water Department employee recently transferred over to their leaving a vacancy in the Water Department.

There was a roll call vote:

Joanne Klitsch – yes

Mike Yeastedt – yes

Bob Schaninger – yes

Tom Chapman – yes

Michael Rivkin – yes

Greg Strubinger – yes

Motion carries 6-0.

Kiosks-Flowbird – The Borough is looking to set up a new account for kiosk payments. Currently, the Borough has an account for kiosk payments with Celero and are looking to switch to West Town. West Town did not get all of the paperwork to the Borough office in time for the meeting. No action was taken.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Michael Rivkin to **approve emergency repairs to the 9th Street Garage.** The Borough received a quote for a full roof replacement, along with quotes for specific repairs. Should Borough Council want a full roof replacement, then the money would have to be budgeted for next year as there are no more additional funds to complete an entire roof replacement. The repairing of the specific items on the roof would be a temporary repair that will get the structure through this winter. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Michael Rivkin to **allow the Building Committee to make a decision from the revised quote as long as the revised quote is less than the current quote of \$43,500.00.** The HVAC unit in the Asa Packer Mansion is in need of repairs. Solicitor Nanovic reviewed this and determined this would be a maintenance item. Therefore, prevailing wages would not apply. The Lion's Club agreed to pay for the repairs from revenues collected from the Mansion Tours. The Borough received two quotes, one with prevailing wages and one without. Borough Council asked to reach out to the company that gave the quote with prevailing wages to give a new quote without them.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve the Foreign Fireman's Insurance Disbursement totaling \$24,995.21.** There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve JTTA's request for Olde Time Christmas to be held on December 2,3,9,10,16, and 17, setting up a Christmas Tree in Josiah White Park, and install wreaths on poles along Broadway.** There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve Tom Lager's request to removes two shade trees in front of his property.** The two trees' roots are causing damage to the sidewalk. Motion carries 6-0.

Public Service Garage – Solicitor Nanovic explained that at the last meeting, Borough Council opened and awarded the bids, one of them for the Public Service Garage to Bracy Construction for \$3,303,200.00 with deductions included. There was an error in the way the specs were drawn causing a discrepancy in the price. There will be a change order for this issue in the near future if Borough Council takes no action or they could rebid the project with the potential of it costing more.

MOTION by Bob Schaninger, second by Mike Yeastedt to **approve Spillman Invoice 8122.22.10 in the amount of \$2,785.37.** This invoice is for services pertaining to the Memorial Hall Project. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Bob Schaninger, second by Mike Yeastedt to **approve Spillman Invoice 8122.22.11 in the amount of \$1,100.00.** This invoice is for services pertaining to the Memorial Hall Project. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Bob Schaninger to **approve Spillman Invoice 8121.22.08 in the amount of \$3,000.00.** This invoice is for services pertaining to the Public Works Garage Project. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Bob Schaninger to **approve Spillman Invoice 8121.22.10 in the amount of \$41.92.** This invoice is for services pertaining to the Public Works Garage Project. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Bob Schaninger to **approve Spillman Invoice 8121.22.09 in the amount of \$1,200.00.** This invoice is for services pertaining to the Public Works Garage Project. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve Wildlands Conservancy Statement 062823 in the amount of \$70,516.50.** This invoice is for services pertaining to the Silk Mill Run Restoration Project. The Borough will be reimbursed this amount from grants received from DEP and DCNR. The next Silk Mill Run Restoration Committee meeting will be on Monday, October 30th at 10:30 a.m. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve Wildlands Conservancy Statement 100323 in the amount of \$33,100.00.** This invoice is for services pertaining to the Silk Mill Run Restoration Project. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve Community Planning & Management, LLC invoice in the amount of \$6,213.50.** This invoice is for services pertaining to the Draft Ordinance that is being worked on by the Ordinance Update Committee. The Draft Ordinance will be discussed during the Public Hearing November 9, 2023. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **approve the Garbage Only Lien Report.** There were three accounts. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Michael Rivkin to **approve the Utility Accounts Updates**. There were two accounts. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, second by Mike Yeastedt to **approve Account #8060 Sewer Credit request**. The total amount requested is \$35.60. The property owner had a hot water heater leak and the water never went into the sewer system. Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **deny Account #8420's waiver of penalties request**. There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0.

Exoneration Request

MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, second by Mike Yeastedt to **approve the monthly Exoneration Report**. There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0.

Committees

Klitsch RFA-Main Street – Joanne Klitsch's request is for the Borough to take over a section of Main Street. Mike Herishko, the President of the HOA was in attendance to discuss this. He explained the HOA has the deed to the road in possession. He was not aware that anyone was interested in having the Borough take over a portion of the road. Joanne Klitsch explained the Borough already takes care of this portion of Main Street due to the bus turn around at First Avenue. Mike Yeastedt and Street Supervisor Schoch went out to measure the distance based on Liquid Fuels measurements. The distance from Joanne Klitsch's property to First Avenue would have to be measured.

Public Service

There was a meeting on Tuesday to discuss the Water Main Replacement Project on Center Avenue. PennVest funding was discussed. With PennVest, they require projects to be shovel ready before applying.

Police

Traffic was a problem on Packer Hill during the last Fall Foliage weekend. Chief Schatz requested shutting it down during Fall Foliage Weekends. Chief Schatz discussed the corral area just before the County parking lot used to be used as a turning lane. The County is currently using it for parking, causing traffic delays.

Bob Schaninger spoke about the blacking out of the white lines at the intersection by the bike shop.

Emergency Services

Mike Yeastedt spoke about the new fire truck getting inspected on Saturday.

Old Business

There was a letter sent to PennDOT requesting they come and evaluate the area at the intersection of North and Front Streets.

Executive Session

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Michael Rivkin to **adjourn into executive session**. There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0. The meeting paused at 8:13 p.m.

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **resume the meeting**. There were no comments. Motion carries 6-0. The meeting resumed at 8:42 p.m.

Greg Strubinger announced there will be an executive session meeting Wednesday, October 18th.

MOTION by Joanne Klitsch, second by Mike Yeastedt to **contact the Carbon County D.A.'s office to investigate and possibly institute charges against Jessica Crowley for theft of a Borough owned laptop**. After Jessica Crowley's resignation, she never returned the laptop she was issued for Council

meetings. Multiple attempts were made to contact her- phone, email, mail, and certified mail, with no response from her. There was a roll call vote:

Joanne Klitsch – yes

Mike Yeastedt – yes

Bob Schaninger – yes

Tom Chapman – yes

Michael Rivkin – yes

Greg Strubinger – yes

Motion carries 6-0.

Adjourn

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Joanne Klitsch to **adjourn the meeting**. There were no comments.

Motion carries 6-0. The meeting ended at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Klotz

Borough Secretary