

BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

September 7, 2021

The regular meeting of the North East Borough Council was held on Tuesday, September 7, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Hall, 31 West Main Street, North East, PA.

BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESENT: David Hall, President
Heather Barnett, President Pro Tem
Bill Beardsley
Deb Wurst
Greg Henning

OTHERS PRESENT: Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager
Dan Miller, Borough Solicitor
Julio Pazmino, Wastewater Superintendent
Wayne Yokom, Streets Superintendent
Terry Daughenbaugh, Water Superintendent
Sean Lam, Captain
Nancy Anderson, Administrative Assistant
Todd Luke
Ryan MacGregor
Edith MacGregor
Robert Belson
Marilyn Belson
Bob Behrens, Jr.
Heather Hinkler
Amber Belson
David Hirtzel
Larry Morton, Sr.
Robert Hoyt, Jr.
Jacob Jones
Heather Jones
Ann Schaff
Jeff Stritzinger

CALL TO ORDER:

President David Hall called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., at which time the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

MINUTES:

♦ **August 2, 2021**

The minutes from the August 2, 2021, meeting were reviewed. H. Barnett motioned to approve the minutes as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

♦ **August 16, 2021**

The minutes from the August 16, 2021, meeting were reviewed. G. Henning motioned to approve the minutes as presented. D. Wurst seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:

Expense Approval Report

B. Beardsley motioned to approve the Accounts Payable Report as presented. D. Wurst seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Robert Hoyt, Jr., asked about the building permit for Haynes House. P. Gehrlein stated he has talked with the owner of the property and Fritzer Shunk, Building Code and Code Enforcement Officer for North East Area Code Administration, and both identified that the work currently being completed on the property does not necessitate a building permit. R. Hoyt stated he feels very strongly that commercial properties should be inspected as well. R. Hoyt asked if the barbershop applied for a zoning permit. P. Gehrlein stated a zoning permit is not needed for repairs to brick but will follow up.

Bob Behrens, Jr., asked about the \$6.5 million grant for the new business coming into town. B. Behrens asked why grants weren't received for businesses already established. P. Gehrlein stated the request referred to is through the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program and is for the new owners purchasing the Mercyhurst North East Campus who are proposing a \$13 million addition to that campus prior to arriving. There are redevelopment assistance program monies available for new start up construction projects which will incentivize further growth for this business because Phase 2 of that is a proposed \$20 million investment in the community. P. Gehrlein stated it is a grant fund and he has and will continue to apply for grants to aid the community. P. Gehrlein stated anything we can do to promote North East, Pennsylvania, will be done.

Bob Behrens, Jr. asked if there was a color code in this town and if anyone has looked at Haynes House lately? P. Gehrlein stated there are no downtown design standards.

Amber Belson, 154 South Lake Street, stated the area behind the Chinese restaurant and Julie Davis' hair salon is overgrown with weeds and there is garbage all over. P. Gehrlein stated the owner of the property was at the landlord meeting and the dumpsters are the Chinese restaurants. W. Yokom stated code enforcement letters are sent to commercially owned properties and they will address the situation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Firemen's Request for Financial Support for NEFD Annual Insurance Premiums

P. Gehrlein stated last Tuesday he attended a meeting with the township and both fire companies regarding the receipts from the drive through Cherry Festival as well as the new training facility at Gravel Pit Park for Crescent, Fuller and Greenfield firemen. P. Gehrlein stated the annual insurance premium of \$45,000.00 has been paid by the firemen from the proceeds of the Cherry Festival. D. Hall asked how much the firemen are requesting since the insurance premium has been paid. P. Gehrlein stated there is no specific amount but the original request was for half, \$22,500.00, of the total insurance premium. P. Gehrlein stated the overall cost of the training facility today is \$242,000.00 and funding has been received by the American Rescue and Protection Plan and there is funding available through the Erie County Gaming and Revenue Authority for multi-municipal projects. P. Gehrlein stated the township is looking to make a large donation toward the overall goal of completing this as a community. Discussions are also being held with Franklin Township. G. Henning asked what the potential amount of funding we could gain from these revenues. P. Gehrlein stated he would make an

application on behalf of the multiple municipal effort for \$60,000.00 and we could match that with \$60,000.00 from any funding source. D. Wurst asked once the facility is in place, will the firemen charge other companies for use of the facility? P. Gehrlein stated a memorandum agreement is being created to utilize the facility and would probably be addressed in that. D. Hall requested the firemen attend the next Council meeting to address the training facility. G. Henning asked if Erie County has any COVID revenue that could be given to this project. P. Gehrlein stated there is funding for each of the 32 fire companies for lost revenues and for special projects. Council agreed to hear the presentation before making any decisions.

N. E. Area Chamber of Commerce Financial Request

P. Gehrlein stated following the resignation of the North East Chamber Executive Director, the Chamber President stated the funds requested in their request would be going directly to salaries so at this time it is not a necessary item. Knowing the Chamber’s situation with regards to the Wine Festival, P. Gehrlein has pledged the Borough’s assistance to guarantee the festival is successful. Borough Council respectfully declined the Chamber’s financial request.

NEW BUSINESS:

2022 MMO (Minimum Municipal Obligation) for the Police and Non-Uniform Pension Plans

P. Gehrlein stated the MMO’s are calculated by the actuaries to ensure the pension funds are substantiated in the coming year. The Non-Uniform Pension Plan actuarial valuation is \$138,142.00 which is based on information dated January 1, 2019. P. Gehrlein stated January 1, 2021, data was utilized in the calculation for the Police pension which equates to a zero dollar obligation.

H. Barnett motioned to approve the Minimum Municipal Obligation Worksheet (MMO) for the North East Borough Non-Uniform Pension Plan for Plan Year 2022. G. Henning seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Barnett	<u>Yes</u>	Greg Henning	<u>Yes</u>
Dave Hall	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Deb Wurst	<u>Yes</u>		

G. Henning motioned to approve the Borough of North East Police Pension Plan Financial Requirement and Minimum Municipal Obligation for 2022 Municipal Budget. D. Wurst seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Barnett	<u>Yes</u>	Greg Henning	<u>Yes</u>
Dave Hall	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Deb Wurst	<u>Yes</u>		

Shut Off List – 2nd Quarter 2021

H. Barnett motioned to approve the Shut Off List for the 2nd Quarter 2021. B. Beardsley seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Bid Results – Loomis Street and Blaine Street Sewer Relief

P. Gehrlein stated the Borough received four bids for the Loomis Street and Blaine Street Sewer Relief project. The lowest bidder was Chivers Construction Co., Inc., with a total bid of \$313,474.00. H. Barnett motioned to accept the bid from Chivers Construction Co., Inc, in the amount of \$313,474.00. D. Wurst seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Barnett Yes
Dave Hall Yes
Deb Wurst Yes

Greg Henning Yes
Bill Beardsley Yes

Second Monthly Meeting – September 20, 2021

There will not be a second monthly meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Borough Council acknowledged receipt of the following:

Manager's Report

Code Enforcement Report

Police Chief's Report

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

D. Wurst stated she was approached by a resident from the Catawba, Isabella and Agawam area about repairing the berms after the ADA ramps and curbs were installed. W. Yokom stated he has contacted Lindy Paving on more than one occasion and at this point the Streets Department will re-top and re-seed the affected areas.

P. Gehrlein commented on the forthcoming anniversary of September 11, 2001, and acknowledged the men and women, as first responders, who entered the buildings on that day and who continue to do so. He also acknowledged all men and women who served and are serving in the military and who make us proud daily.

P. Gehrlein further mentioned these individuals give us pause on September 11th and every day for the sacrifices made and continue to be made for our safety, livelihood, and freedom.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:40 p.m., G. Henning motioned to adjourn the meeting. B. Beardsley seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Nancy Anderson (September 8, 2021)

Patrick J. Gehrlein, Borough Manager