

**MINUTES
NORTH EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Monthly Meeting
September 5, 2023**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Denise McCumber, President
Bill Beardsley, Vice President
Todd Luke, President Pro Tem
Heather Jones
Ryan McGregor
Amber Belson

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jon Triana, Mayor, via phone
Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager
Dan Miller, Solicitor
Rebecca Bliss, Administrative Assistant
Sean Lam, Police Chief
Julio Pazmino, Waste Water Supervisor
Wayne Yokom, Streets Supervisor
Allen Dalrymple
Chris Skrekla
Adele Giles
Eric Luke
Nader Mousa
Kenneth Snyder
Jake Jones
Robert Behrens
Joseph Schneider
Nancy Schneider
Ray Schaff
Randy Anderson
Nancy Anderson
Dan Adamus
Deb Wurst

PUBLIC HEARING:

The public hearing for Ordinance No. 924 – Establishing a Residential/Commercial Rental Inspection and Registration Program began at 6:05 p.m. Borough Council President D. McCumber asked for public comment regarding the proposed Ordinance No. 924.

R. Behrens, 97 Wall Street, asked for clarification regarding the \$25 fee per apartment. R. McGregor stated that it is a one-time registration fee, therefore future fee schedules would not affect already registered units. R. Behrens asked why the checklist and ordinance were necessary when several other ordinances already exist that cover the same things. D. McCumber stated that the proposed ordinance compiles regulations into a checklist for rental inspections. T. Luke stated that complaints would be addressed directly, not causing a full rental inspection for every complaint.

The regular monthly meeting of North East Borough Council will be held Tuesday, September 5, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER:

Borough Council President D. McCumber called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m., at which time the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

INVOCATION:

R. McGregor offered the invocation.

PROCLAMATION:

Proclamation: Shawn Giles Day

D. McCumber read the Proclamation: Shawn Giles Day, recognizing and thanking Mrs. Giles, Fuller Hose Company, and all volunteer firefighters for their dedication and service.

MINUTES:

A. Belson motioned to approve the August 7, 2023, minutes as presented. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

EXPENSE REPORT:

R. McGregor asked for an update regarding the current year's budget/funds. P. Gehrlein stated that two of the funds are slightly below budget, one fund slightly above due to a one-time sewer project. H. Jones motioned to approve the Expense Approval Report as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

There were no prior requests for citizens to be heard.

REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICERS:

There were no reports from Elected Officers.

REPORTS FROM APPOINTED OFFICERS:

There were no reports from Appointed Officers.

REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES:

There were no reports from Standing Committees.

REPORTS FROM SPECIAL COMMITTEES:

There were no reports from Special Committees.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Ordinance No. 924 – Establishing a Residential/Commercial Rental Inspection and Registration Program

T. Luke motioned to approve Ordinance No. 924 – Establishing a Residential/Commercial Rental Inspection and Registration Program as presented. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call, the motion carried with a vote of 4-2. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>No</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>No</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution 09052023-1: North East Public Safety Advisory Commission

P. Gehrlein stated that the proposed Resolution 09052023-1 would establish the North East Public Safety Advisory Commission as presented, appointing a representative from Borough Council. H. Jones motioned to approve Resolution 09052023-1: North East Public Safety Advisory Commission as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

A. Belson motioned to appoint H. Jones as the Borough representative for the North East Public Safety Advisory Commission. B. Beardsley seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 09052023-2: Modification CDBG FY 2019

P. Gehrlein stated that the proposed resolution would allow for a modification of CDBG FY 2019 funds to be used for accessible curb-cut ramps in the Hutchinson Drive/Bernwood Drive neighborhood. A. Belson motioned to approve Resolution 09052023-2: Modification CDBG 2019 as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

Resolution 09052023-3: Modification CDBG FY 2021

P. Gehrlein stated that the proposed resolution would allow for a modification of CDBG FY 2021 funds to also be used for accessible curb-cut ramps in the Hutchinson Drive/Bernwood Drive neighborhood. A. Belson motioned to approve Resolution 09052023-2: Modification CDBG 2019 as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

Resolution 09052023-4: CDBG Application FY 2023

P. Gehrlein stated that the proposed resolution allows the Borough to apply for CDBG FY 2023 funds for proposed streetscape improvements to the West Street and Wall Street areas. B. Beardsley motioned to approve Resolution 09052023-4: CDBG Application FY 2023 as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

2024 MMO (Minimum Municipal Obligation) for the Police and Non-Uniform Pension Plans

P. Gehrlein stated that the 2024 MMO for the Police Pension Plan is fully funded and that no additional funding is needed to balance the plan. A. Belson motioned to approve the 2024 MMO (Minimum Municipal Obligation) for the Police Pension Plan as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

P. Gehrlein stated that the 2024 MMO for the Non-Uniform Pension Plan is \$80,322, which is typically refunded by the state. T. Luke motioned to approve the 2024 MMO (Minimum Municipal Obligation) for the Non-Uniform Pension Plan as presented. A. Belson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

Request for Promotion of Ptlm. Halligan to Patrolman Fourth Class

Chief Lam stated that Ptlm. Halligan has completed one year of probation and is recommended for promotion to Patrolman Fourth Class. He stated that Ptlm. Halligan has a passion for criminal investigation, has demonstrated growth, and is an asset to the Department. A. Belson motioned to approve the Request for Promotion of Ptlm. Halligan to Patrolman Fourth Class as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

Gibson Park: North East Community Foundation – Annual Meeting (September 13, 2023)

H. Jones motioned to approve the request for Gibson Park: North East Community Foundation – Annual Meeting as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

2nd Quarter 2023 Water Shut Off List – To be presented

A. Belson motioned to approve the 2nd Quarter 2023 Water Shut Off List as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Denise McCumber	<u>Yes</u>

Second Monthly Meeting – September 18, 2023, if needed

P. Gehrlein stated that a second monthly meeting is not needed.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Police Chief Report
- Code Enforcement Report
- Commissions and Authorities

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Proclamation: Shawn Giles Day

As presented earlier in the minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

R. Behrens, 97 Wall Street, asked why the public comment section of the agenda is only available at the end of the meeting. D. McCumber stated that the earlier portion of public comment is for individuals who request to be on the agenda for a specific purpose, whereas the later portion of public comment is open to everyone. B. Beardsley stated that the meeting format follows the bylaws and Robert’s Rules of Order.

J. Schneider, 64 Eaton Drive, asked why only one Borough Councilperson visited his house after his request at the previous meeting. He said that some of the issues are slowly being resolved, but that there are still problems with his neighbor after several complaints. J. Schneider stated that he contacted other boroughs in the county and inquired about their code enforcement procedures. He suggested that the North East Borough Council consider following their example of hiring a part-time code enforcement officer, as the condition of the town is deteriorating, and urban blight is increasing.

E. Luke, 38 North Mill Street, asked if meeting minutes could be available within a week of the public meetings. D. Miller, Solicitor, stated that minutes are not official until they have been reviewed and approved by Borough Council at the following council meeting. E. Luke also thanked the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses for their Gibson Days Salute to Veterans last month.

R. Behrens, 97 Wall Street, asked if code enforcement problems were complaint-based only, or if the code enforcement officers routinely checked for compliance, noting several issues he has noticed. D. McCumber stated that he should file complaints about problems he notices, as the code enforcement officers may not be aware.

A. Belson asked J. Schneider if the problems he has with his neighbor are all related to noncompliance with Borough Code. J. Schneider stated that there have been seven (7) complaints made and that the problem is not being corrected. He also restated his recommendation to hire a part-time code enforcement officer. J. Triana stated that chickens are not the only problem in town, as rabbits also cause damage. N. Anderson stated that the Borough had previously employed a part-time code enforcement officer but later decided to staff the position in-house.

N. Mousa, 73 South Lake Street, stated that he has lived in North East for approximately ten (10) years after having lived in several other places including Brooklyn and Jersey City. He stated that, comparatively, North East is a great town with wonderful staff, responsive police officers, and is a beautiful place to live. He stated that the whole town should not be judged based on the complaints of one person. He thanked the Borough for being helpful and considerate.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 6:53 p.m., A. Belson motioned to adjourn. R. McGregor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Rebecca Bliss (September 6, 2023)

Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager