

MINUTES
NORTH EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL

Monthly Meeting
December 4, 2023

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager
Dan Miller, Solicitor
Rebecca Bliss, Administrative Assistant
Julio Pazmino, Waste Water Supervisor
Wayne Yokom, Streets Supervisor
Bill Swan, Interim Assistant Water Supervisor
Tyler Simmer
Mark Howard
Bobbi Jo Morey
Jeremy Morey
Cindy Riedel
Bob Riedel
Mike Spellman
Rob Shaffer
Robert Behrens
Joseph Schneider
David Hirtzel
Shawn Hubbard
Diana Hanes
Amanda Hubbard
Matthew Hubbard
Howard Gordon
Ken Snyder
Tom Huber
Steve Gregory
Ann Schaff
Jeff Stritzinger
Aaron Tyson
Nancy Anderson
Randy Anderson
Ray Schaff
Tony Montefiori
Eric Luke
Mike Yori
Deb Wurst
Tim Krug
Others present, not signed in or illegible

The regular monthly meeting of North East Borough Council will be held Monday, December 4, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER:

Borough Council President D. McCumber called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., at which time the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

INVOCATION:

R. McGregor offered the invocation.

MINUTES:

B. Beardsley motioned to approve the November 6, 2023, minutes 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>

H. Jones motioned to approve the November 20, 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:

A. Belson motioned to approve the Expense Approval Report 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>

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

Mayoral Prospects

Borough Council President D. McCumber introduced the Mayoral Prospects, stating that Council had received their letters of intent, and that each person would be given two (2) minutes to speak.

Steve Gregory, 7 Eagle Street, stated that he is a lifelong resident of North East. He stated that he had previously served on Borough Council for four years and as mayor for twelve years, which would allow for a smooth transition. He described the responsibility of the mayor as working with the police department and borough council, increasing student safety, and being fiscally responsible. He stated that North East is fortunate to have 24-hour protection and that he would work with Chief Lam to provide training and maintain accreditation. R. McGregor asked what priorities he would have as mayor that would differ from his previous terms in the position. S. Gregory stated that it would depend on Chief Lam’s priorities and how he could best support him.

Shawn Hubbard, 47 Grahamville Street, stated that he grew up in North East and has worked for North East Heat and Light for over ten years. He said that he has good relationships with the Borough departments, volunteers with his church and in the community, and is involved in a local softball league. He said that he would focus on ideas and teamwork to improve and restore historic North East. R. McGregor asked what he believes the role of the mayor is and how he would execute the office. S. Hubbard stated that the mayor is a public figure that represents the town, shows leadership, sets standards for the town, and focuses on safety.

Tony Montefiori, 169 Eastwood Drive, stated that he is a life-long resident of North East. He said that he is dedicated to the town and has turned down opportunities to move away. He stated that, as mayor, he would focus on providing appropriate police presence, training, and certifications. He also stated that he is an advocate for North East and his goal is to communicate with the police department, increase safety, and give the police the tools they need. A. Belson asked if he felt those things were currently missing. He stated that he would like to increase the feelings of safety within the community.

Bobbi Jo Morey, 137 East Main Street, stated her desire to support first responders and increase communication. As mayor, she stated her desire to work with the Chief and do community outreach. She stated that the EMS Authority and fire departments deserve a voice in the decision-making process and would like to see more community engagement.

Joseph Schneider, 64 Eaton Drive, stated his interest in being mayor. He stated that he served in the Marine Corps for four years, as a PA State Trooper for 27 years, and worked as an adjunct professor. He stated that his experiences have given him exposure to many people and that he knows the importance of listening first in attempting to help. He stated that he has previously served on the sewer authority, civil service commission, and on Borough Council for ten years, and would now like to serve the Borough as mayor.

Robert Shaffer, 14 Blaine Street, stated that he has recently retired from the US Post Office where he knows many people from town. He stated that he also is a Fire Police which would help form a link between Borough Council and the fire departments. He stated that he would serve as mayor as the head of town to represent Council and the rest of North East. R. McGregor asked about the role of mayor. R. Shaffer stated that he would work with the police department and the city to make the city the best it can be.

Michael Spellman, 48 Bernwood Drive, stated that he has a vested interest in the community because he is raising children here. He described his work experience with the North East School District autistic support and his role as a union representative, stating that his relationship with the school and children would be a benefit as his goal is to do more for the children. He stated that he would also like to do more for businesses, take a grant writing class, and be available to help businesses write grants.

Jeff Stritzinger, 55 South Washington Street, stated that he and his family have lived in North East since the 1990s. He shared his work experiences and stressed the importance of working together. He stated that he is fair and nonpartisan. He states his focus on safety, children, and the future of North East. R. McGregor asked about the role of the mayor. J. Stritzinger stated that he would work with all involved and not be divided.

Aaron Tyson, 78 Delaware, stated that he is from North East but lived out of town for approximately twenty years. He stated that while he is not well-known, he would bring a new perspective having not been caught up in town drama. He also stated that North East is a town of passionate people who could benefit from a level-headed partner who would use facts over emotions in decision-making and advocating for others. R. McGregor asked about the role of the mayor. A. Tyson stated that he would work as a communication liaison with the police department and fire departments and in the case of a tie-breaking vote, his intent to understand would aid in the decision-making process.

Katie Phillips, 75 Skellie Drive, arrived after being sworn in on the North East School Board. She stated her desire to be mayor or join the board. She stated that she is a social worker and has communication skills to contribute. She described her involvement in the Jefferson Educational Society and her focus on affordable childcare. She stated that she would find a way to make things work on the board and that she could bring resources together.

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:

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

2024 Proposed Budget

D. McCumber thanked the supervisors for their diligence in creating the budget, cutting spending, and making repairs where possible. P. Gehrlein stated that a balanced budget is being presented that includes underpass and streetscape improvements, water department improvements, and upgrades to Gibson Park. He stated that the balanced budget is more detailed and narrowed in scope with some adjustments in insurance and debt repayments. H. Jones motioned to advertise the 2024 Proposed Budget 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 Tax Ordinance

P. Gehrlein stated that the Tax Ordinance is completed annually and that the 2024 Tax Ordinance has no increase. R. McGregor motioned to advertise the 2024 Tax Ordinance 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>

Appointment of Interim Water Department Superintendent

B. Beardsley stated that the Personnel Committee has recommended Tyler Simmer as the Interim Water Department Superintendent. B. Beardsley motioned to approve Tyler Simmer as the Interim Water Department Superintendent, effective January 1, 2024. 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>

Articles of Agreement – Borough of North East and Borough of North East Police Department, 2024-2026

P. Gehrlein stated that the Uniform Collective Bargaining Unit and Personnel Committee have had several meetings regarding their contract renewal. He stated that the police department has changed demographically over the years and that the proposed contract represents the needs of the department. A. Belson motioned to approve the Articles of Agreement – Borough of North East and Borough of North East Police Department, 2024-2026 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>

Discussion/Selection of Vacancy Board Chairman

D. McCumber asked each member of Council to state their selection for the Vacancy Board Chairman. The nominations were as follows:

Heather Jones	Michael Spellman
Ryan McGregor	Gregory Henning
Todd Luke	Michael Spellman
Denise McCumber	Gregory Henning
Bill Beardsley	Gregory Henning
Amber Belson	Michael Spellman

H. Jones motioned to appoint Michael Spellman as the Vacancy Board Chairman. A. Belson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried 4 to 2. The vote was as follows:

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

Discussion/Selection of Mayor

D. McCumber asked each member of Council to state their selection for Mayor. The nominations were as follows:

Heather Jones	Bobbi Jo Morey
Ryan McGregor	Bobbi Jo Morey
Todd Luke	Bobbi Jo Morey
Denise McCumber	Steve Gregory
Bill Beardsley	Steve Gregory
Amber Belson	Bobbi Jo Morey

H. Jones motioned to appoint Bobbi Jo Morey as Mayor. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried 4 to 2. The vote was as follows:

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

3rd Quarter 2023 Water Shut Off List – To be presented

B. Beardsley motioned to approve the 3rd Quarter 2023 Water Shut Off List 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>

Second Monthly Meeting – December 18, 2023, if needed

There will be a second monthly meeting on December 18, 2023.

CORRESPONDENCE:

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. Belson reminded the community of the Mistletoe Mile race on December 17, 2023. She also commended the Streets Department for the beautiful Christmas decorations in town.

T. Luke asked for an update regarding the use of the Senior Center by other organizations. P. Gehrlein stated that there have been initial meetings to discuss other uses of the building and that GECAC is currently operating on a month-to-month lease. He stated that a follow-up meeting will be scheduled within the next couple of months. He stated that there has been a lot of interest, and that the Borough will be looking into the costs, types of arrangements, and scheduling necessary.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

R. Behrens, 97 Wall Street, asked if the features removed from the underpass during the paving project will be replaced. P. Gehrlein stated that PennDOT removed them, and it is up to PennDOT to decide if they'll be replaced. R. Behrens also asked if the sidewalk on the west side of the underpass could be extended to Grahamville Street. P. Gehrlein stated that they could look into the possibility, but that it would likely be costly due to the need for a retaining wall, the slope, and possible utilities in the way. He also stated that the Borough is in the process of updating the lighting and adding cameras in the underpass. R. Behrens also asked if a crosswalk could be added near Ridg-U-Rak.

S. Hubbard, 47 Grahamville Street, asked if grant funding was available to replace streetlights with LED lighting. P. Gehrlein said he would look into the options. S. Hubbard also asked about the number of street lights out. W. Yokom explained the procedure for reporting outages to Penelec.

T. Krug, 26 Town Street, asked if there was a deadline for the Marina advertisement. D. McCumber stated that the Borough has already approved an advertisement, but that the Township had previously voted against it.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:05 p.m. A. Belson motioned to adjourn. B. Beardsley seconded.

Rebecca Bliss (December 5, 2023)

Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager