

MINUTES
NORTH EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL

Monthly Meeting
February 5, 2024

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amber Belson, President
Ryan McGregor, Vice President
Todd Luke, President Pro Tem
Nancy Anderson
Heather Jones
Bill Beardsley

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bobbi Jo Morey, Mayor
Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager
Russ Warner, Solicitor
Rebecca Bliss, Administrative Assistant
Sean Lam, Police Chief
Julio Pazmino, Waste Water Supervisor
Wayne Yokom, Streets Supervisor
Tyler Simmer, Interim Water Supervisor
Robert Behrens
Michael Hamman
Diana Hanes
Ray Schaff
Ann Schaff
Tom Huber
Denise Pekelnicky
Bob Belson
Marilyn Belson
Heather Hinkler
Jim Crisswell
Joel Morey
Jeremy Morey
Eric Luke
Caroline Fynan
Mary Stewart
Dan Adamus
Others present, not signed in

The regular monthly meeting of North East Borough Council will be held Monday, February 5, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER:

Borough Council President A. Belson 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.

Council President A. Belson made an announcement, stating that the North East Marina is not on the agenda. She stated that a meeting is scheduled for February 13, 2024, at which time certain members of the North East Township, North East Borough, their solicitors, representatives from the PA Fish and Boat Commission, and possibly others, will be meeting to discuss next steps in a non-public meeting that will not violate Sunshine Act regulations.

MINUTES:

B. Beardsley motioned to approve the January 2, 2024, minutes as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

EXPENSE REPORT:

H. Jones motioned to approve the Expense Approval Report as presented. N. Anderson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

There were no Citizens to be Heard.

REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICERS:

R. McGregor gave a report from the Recreation Commission, stating that basketball sign-ups were open online for students in first through fourth grades.

B. Morey, Mayor, gave a report from the North East Public Safety Advisory Commission, stating that their last meeting on January 3 included a discussion of the proposed Erie County EMS plans and the community's desire to work out a plan locally with municipal support. B. Morey announced the next meeting of the North East Public Safety Advisory Commission on February 7, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. at the North East Township building.

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:

Junior Councilperson – Councilman McGregor

R. McGregor stated that Borough Council previously discussed and agreed to begin a Junior Councilperson program within the Borough. R. McGregor stated that he recently spoke with the junior class students at North East High School, presenting the opportunity and applications for participation in the Junior Councilperson program. One application was received.

R. McGregor motioned to appoint Joel Morey as the North East Borough Council Junior Councilperson. N. Anderson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Discussion of Borough Council Bylaws

A. Belson stated that an ad hoc committee met and discussed proposed revisions to Borough Council bylaws. She asked Council for comments regarding proposed revisions.

N. Anderson stated that the proposed spending limit of \$10,000 without prior approval could be prohibitive in cases of emergencies and for routine invoices that are already presented in monthly reports. She stated that, for example, Waste Management invoices are often over the proposed limit and that the Borough could incur up to \$1,000 per invoice in late fees if they are forced to wait until the next monthly meeting for payment approval, which would be an unnecessary expense. She stated that the department supervisors are careful to follow the budget, which the Council approves and already monitors through monthly reports. A. Belson asked if that limit could be removed from the proposed changes. H. Jones stated that the limit could be removed from the proposed changes to the bylaws. R. McGregor agreed that the limit could be removed.

A. Belson stated that the bylaws discussion would be tabled and revisited.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution 02052024-1: Application for County Aid

P. Gehrlein stated that the proposed resolution is for an annual application to the county to release Liquid Fuel funds from the county allocation to be used for repaving projects within the Borough. N. Anderson motioned to approve Resolution 02052024-1: Application for County Aid as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Request for Promotion of Ptlm. Kalicky to Patrolman First Class

Mayor Morey stated that Ptlm. Kalicky became eligible for promotion on January 25, 2024, and that his promotion is highly recommended by Chief Lam. T. Luke motioned to approve the Request for Promotion of Ptlm. Kalicky to Patrolman First Class as presented. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Letter of Interest: Civil Service Commission

P. Gehrlein stated that Denise McCumber submitted a letter of interest to be the alternate member of the Civil Service Commission. B. Beardsley motioned to approve the Letter of Interest: Civil Service Commission as presented. N. Anderson seconded. A. Belson asked if advertising was required for this position. P. Gehrlein stated that it wasn't required, but that Council could advertise if they prefer. A. Belson stated that a motion and second had already been made, so a roll call vote would be taken.

After a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-1. The vote was as follows:

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

Heard Park: Let There Be Light – Christian Concerts (May 10, 24, June 7, 21, July 26, August 9, 23)

B. Beardsley stated that he received complaints last year that the concerts went too late, and asked the representative present to make sure this years’ concerts were finished by 9:00 p.m. B. Beardsley motioned to approve the request for Heard Park: Let There Be Light – Christian Concerts (May 10, 24, June 7, 21, July 26, August 9, 23) as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Heard Park: Crescent Hose Co. – Public Safety Showcase/Open House (May 18)

H. Jones motioned to approve the request for Heard Park: Crescent Hose Co. – Public Safety Showcase/Open House (May 18) as presented. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Heard Park: North East Fire Department – 2024 Cherry Festival (July 11-24, 2024; Festival July 17-20)

T. Luke motioned to approve the request for Heard Park: North East Fire Department – 2024 Cherry Festival (July 11-24, 2024; Festival July 17-20) as presented. H. Jones seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Gibson Park: Park United Methodist Church – Church Services in the Park (Sundays, July 7 – September 1)

R. McGregor motioned to approve the request for Gibson Park: Park United Methodist Church – Church Services in the Park (Sundays, July 7 – September 1) as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Gibson Park: NE Community Foundation – Erie Philharmonic Summer Concerts (July 10, July 24, Aug 7)

N. Anderson motioned to approve the request for Gibson Park: NE Community Foundation – Erie Philharmonic Summer Concerts (July 10, July 24, Aug 7) as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Gibson Park: Enjoy North East – Gibson Farm Heritage Day (Set up June 7, Event June 8)

H. Jones motioned to approve the request for Gibson Park: Enjoy North East – Gibson Farm Heritage Day (Set up June 7, Event June 8) as presented. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Gibson Park: Enjoy North East – Gibson Open Market (Saturdays, June 15 – August 31)

T. Luke motioned to approve the request for Gibson Park: Enjoy North East – Gibson Open Market (Saturdays, June 15 – August 31) as presented. N. Anderson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Gibson Park / Heard Park: Enjoy North East – Wine Fest (September 24-29; Festival September 27-29)

H. Jones motioned to approve the request for Gibson Park / Heard Park: Enjoy North East – Wine Fest (September 24-29; Festival September 27-29) as presented. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Gibson Park / Heard Park: Enjoy North East – Tree-mendous Night of Lights (November 30)

B. Beardsley motioned to approve the request for Gibson Park / Heard Park: Enjoy North East – Tree-mendous Night of Lights (November 30) as presented. T. Luke seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Gibson Park: Enjoy North East – Sugar Plum Saturday (December 7)

H. Jones motioned to approve the request for Gibson Park: Enjoy North East – Sugar Plum Saturday (December 7) as presented. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Todd Luke	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>
Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

Second Monthly Meeting – February 19, 2024, if needed

There will be a second monthly meeting on February 19, 2024.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Police Chief Report
Code Enforcement Report
Commissions and Authorities

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. Belson stated that there will be a formal military dedication ceremony at the Mellon Heritage Foundation property, formerly Granite Ridge, on Saturday, February 17, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. She stated that Veterans and First Responders are encouraged to attend.

A. Belson stated, in an effort to encourage full transparency of all council members, that there is nothing within the Liquor Code that prohibits her from having a liquor license and being a member of Council.

T. Luke stated that there have been issues with parking on Short Street, as someone has been putting notes on cars that are parked at the church on Sundays or for special services when school is not in session. Chief Lam stated that he will have the officers check the area on Sundays to see where the notes are coming from.

T. Luke asked for an update on the Senior Center. P. Gehrlein stated that GECAC is currently operating on a month-to-month lease. He stated that a draft document will be presented to Council for increasing community use of the building.

B. Beardsley asked for an update regarding the Route 89 underpass. P. Gehrlein stated that lighting has been purchased and that electrical components and cameras will be installed. He also stated that the stairwell has been deemed structurally sound and will be improved and resurfaced. He stated that the fence that was removed by PennDOT will be replaced with a similar safety feature, and that the underpass will be painted with anti-graffiti paint as part of the multi-step process for improving the area.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

R. Behrens, 97 Wall Street, asked if there was a grant for cameras previously received. P. Gehrlein stated that there was a grant previously received that was used for façade improvements in the area.

R. Behrens, 97 Wall Street, asked if Pearl Street was going to be rerouted when Wall Street was repaved. P. Gehrlein stated that South Pearl Street will be made into a one-way street from Clinton to Wall Street, heading south, and that Wall Street will be made into a one-way street from South Pearl to South Mill Street, heading west. He also stated that Colfax Street will be made into a one-way street going south from Grant to Clay Streets.

D. Pikelnicky, 36 West Main Street, stated that there are several lights out that need replaced and that she is unable to report them to Penelec. W. Yokom stated that he would check them out and make the reports.

D. Pikelnicky, 36 West Main Street, stated that there have been significantly large purchases made by the Borough and that there should be a pre-approval spending cap. She encouraged Council to restructure the proposed \$10,000 spending limit.

C. Fynan, Sidehill Road, stated that light pollution affects nocturnal animals, bird migration, and human sleep quality. She stated that she is a child advocate and voice for real life, and she voiced her concern regarding video surveillance in public spaces, parks, and playgrounds. She asked who has access to video footage, as she is suspicious of who is behind cameras watching innocent children. She questioned the need for protection versus the personal violation of being filmed. She stated that the police need to leave their buildings and go on patrol, not rely on video footage, and that signs should be posted in all areas where cameras are in use. She

also stated that there should be areas of the parks that are not filmed so people can enjoy park activities in privacy. She requested that the Borough remove all cameras and have a third party review all video review procedures. A. Belson stated that there is limited access to camera footage, and that is often needed for investigation. D. Pekelnicky stated that there can be no expectation of privacy in a public space, and that it is the duty of the Borough and Police Department to protect the community and its properties.

E. Luke, 38 North Mill Street, asked if there was a plan in place, or if there will be a limit to the number of cameras that will be added to town.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 6:48 p.m. H. Jones motioned to adjourn. T. Luke seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Rebecca Bliss (February 6, 2024)

Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager