

August 5, 2020

The Work Session of Lansdale Borough Council was held on Wednesday, August 5, 2020 online via Zoom Meeting and called to order at 8:46pm by President, Denton Burnell.

ROLL CALL:

- (X) Councilman Angelichio
- (X) Councilman Breish
- (X) President Burnell
- (X) Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton
- (X) Councilman DiGregorio
- (X) Vice President Fuller
- (X) Councilman Henning
- (X) Councilwoman Currie Teoh
- (X) Mayor Herbert

Borough Representatives:

Borough Manager, John Ernst
Finance Director, John Ramey
Police Chief, Mike Trail
Parks & Rec., Karl Lukens
Electric Superintendent, not present
Public Works, Rick DeLong
Fire Marshal, Rick Lesniak

Borough Solicitor, not present
Borough Engineer, not present
Library Director, Tom Meyer
IT/GIS Coordinator, Bryan Poster
Code Enforcement, Jason Van Dame
WWTP Superintendent, Dan Shinskie

Residents

Agenda Item #4 – Committee Reports

Administration and Finance Committee – Councilman Angelichio

1. Financials - 2019 compared to 2020 revenues are up \$54,000 which is mainly because of the tax increase that we did for the current year. Real estate taxes are up \$160,000 or 4%. Collections are running pretty much like last year as of June 30th we are at 90% collected and we were at 92% at the same point last year. We are running similar in comparison to prior years.
Expenses are down \$350,000 and a negative 6%. Some of the big ones there are in the Public Works Department and over-time is down \$44,000 and non-personnel is down \$77,000. It is mainly down because of the mild winter that we had. Talking about revenues, another big one that we look at is transfer tax which is down \$71,000 from the prior year. Looking at where we are compared to budget this year, we are at 63% of revenues and last year we were at 58%. In expenses, we are at 39% and last year we were at 43% and where we expect to be having missed such big benchmarks throughout the year of different taxes, permits and other things going forward. Currently, we are sitting better in 2020 than we were 2019. I really think come August we will start seeing less EIT come in.
 - Electric Fund - We see revenues are down quite a bit at \$416,000 and this is an anomaly. Some of the big items that we have on this one for revenues is primary general electric service which we are down \$441,000. We made up for it on residential because most people are staying home and up \$78,000. On

expenses, the purchase of electric is down \$626,000 which is due to the use on electric.

- Sewer Fund - The Sewer Fund revenue is up 1% and the expenses are down 1%. We are right on last year with revenue 34% this year and last year 35%. We have cut expenses to 39% from 44% in 2019.
 - Parks & Recreation Fund - We are at a 70% less right now on revenues and expenses are down 25%. Looking at revenues-to-budget, we are at 20% of budget compared to 70% in 2019 and for expenses we are at 29% this year compared to 37% in 2019.
2. A Public Hearing will be held on August 19 to review the LERTA request from Westrum, Inc. regarding the property at 117 S. Broad Street.
 3. The organizers of the BLM mural on the Liberty Bell Trail attended the meeting to state their case again about having the mural on the trail. It was decided to form a smaller committee to include the organizers, some council members and other residents to create a lasting BLM message in the Borough. This smaller committee is able to meet more frequently and report back to Council.
 4. Beginning to talk about the 2021 budget. It will be a different budget season for 2021.
Councilman Breish – Is there any other information regarding the LERTA?
Councilman Angelichio – Nothing has really changed since the last presentation back in February.
Mr. Ernst – We will also be approving the ordinance after the public hearing regarding the LERTA if that is the direction Council chooses to go. All pertinent information will be presented at the public hearing.
Councilwoman Currie Teoh – Was the block grant discussed?
Councilman Angelichio – It was not discussed tonight; we are still trying to fine tune details.

Code Enforcement Committee – Councilman DiGregorio

1. Motions to appear before Council at the next Business Meeting:
 - Prepare and Advertise the Zoning Amendment to the Downtown Business Overlay District.
 - Prepare and Advertise an Amendment to address Automated and Mechanical Parking.
 - Prepare and Advertise A Conditional Use Hearing for 1000 N. Cannon Avenue.
2. Revision to the Lansdale Borough Plumbing Ordinance 292 - Once this revised Ordinance is available, it will be placed in Dropbox for the committee to review and make comments.
3. Noise Ordinance - The proposed Ordinance is available to view in the Public Safety Committee Dropbox folder. The ability that allows this type of Ordinance to be enforced disappeared once the Codification was adopted. The Police and Code Enforcement would like to see this Noise Ordinance adopted so they can enforce it.
4. The Department of Code Enforcement continues to be very busy as there has been an increase in permit applications.
5. 512 Green Street - Applicant proposes to subdivide the property into two parcels. Existing dwelling will remain and on the second parcel proposed is a Quadruplex. There is a paper street that has been vacated and the owner will be acquiring half of what was Swinton Street.
6. 320 Madison Street - Applicant proposes to divide what was planned to be a brewery into eight apartment dwellings. A Conditional Use Hearing will be required for this

proposed use. This is still in the planning stages and more information will be provided when available.

7. Staff continues to work with Energov to help make online permitting accessible through the website.
8. Commercial Fire and Safety Inspections - Mr. Richard Lesniak, Emergency Management Coordinator/Fire Marshal, advised the committee that he expects to have a complete summary of the program at the next month's meeting.

Economic Development Committee – Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton

1. In July the EDC sent out a short survey to Borough businesses to gauge how they have fared through the COVID-19 pandemic and how they see things moving forward. The survey consisted of ten questions related to staffing, operational changes, concerns moving forward and how the Borough can help. A question about short term parking was also added to the survey. Approximately 250 surveys were sent out and 39 responses were received.
2. A summary of responses along with the complete results are in the EDC Dropbox folder, but some key takeaways include:
 - A majority of the businesses operated in some capacity throughout the pandemic
 - Of that majority, they stayed open by making changes to their operations like:
 - Adding e-commerce and increasing online presence
 - Making new products
 - Utilizing virtual and phone operations (no physical appointments)
 - Major concerns upon reopening include:
 - Reverting to yellow/red phase
 - Financial situations (owner, staff and customers)
 - Retaining customers
 - Short-Term designated parking was only applicable to nineteen of the respondents; of them only five listed that they would benefit from it.
3. EDC is also putting together a marketing piece for when the pandemic is over.
Mr. Bruce Schwartz – He encourages Council to look at the results. The businesses had a lot of suggestions.

Electric Committee – Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton

1. Solar project update - There is request for payment to BSI for work complete in the amount of \$799,547.70 and a non-monetary change order that will increase the output of the solar panels at borough Hall by 12.5%. Work is on the underground infrastructure phase.
2. Motion to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Resolution to allow the sale of Borough owned items on Municibid.
3. Main substation outages -The recent large sporadic outages have been caused by a failed power transformer on the control side of our main substation this equipment is being replaced on August 11 to rectify the issue.
4. Rear property tree trimming- Staff is working on pricing for rear property utility line tree trimming to increase our reliability in using a non-high voltage tree trimming contractor for 2020. Power will have to be turned off to trim.
5. 2020 Capital Plan- Most items have been moved to 2021 and beyond, but there is \$30,000 for this year. The department continues to assess whether an oil circuit breaker is needed at Stony Creek Substation for reclosure purposes.

6. 2021 budget- Management is currently reviewing wage sheets and will be meeting with the Finance Director next week. Also revenue is down 4.6% but expenditures are also down 12% within the electric department as of July 31, 2020.
7. We are working with residents on payment plans for anyone that has/had difficulty paying their electric bill during the pandemic.
8. Mr. Krauss did a presentation to North Penn School Board about Borough electric as they were inquiring about possibly switching from PECO during the renovation project.
 - Councilman Breish** – The crew did a great job for the work that they had to do on the tree in his back yard because of how the electric wire is located within the tree.
 - President Burnell** – No decision has been made by the school district?
 - Mr. Krauss** – Some of the members want to know how our finances work in the Borough and how the electric fund contributes.

Library Committee – Vice President Fuller

1. In reviewing the proposed advisory committees from last month (early education, lifelong learning, and diversity), we realized that the library by-laws should be updated to allow for these standing committees. Currently only temporary special committees are addressed in the by-laws. Tom will work on wording for the by-laws and an announcement to seek volunteers for the committees. The new structure places the International Spring Festival committee under the Diversity Committee. This new structure will be presented to the ISF committee to see what they think.
2. In reviewing the budget, we don't see any major changes since last month. Total revenue 58% through 2020 is at 57% of budget and total expenses are at 46%. Moving into the 2021 budget, we will be looking to rename and reclassify some categories. Councilman Breish suggested it would be good to be able to compare our budget to other libraries, so we will keep that in mind when looking at categories.
3. The library has hired an accounting firm to handle the library's bookkeeping. We've been struggling to hire and keep an employee to do this, so decided a firm was the best way to go. This allows for separation of duties to be maintained since Tom has been handling bookkeeping duties in the time frames between the employees we've hired for that task that have since left the library.
4. Clean and Green Extravaganza – After contacting the vendors for our Clean and Green shredding and recycling event, we've scheduled the event to be held on Saturday, October 10. Advertising and details for that event will be released soon.
5. The library opened to the public for Browse and Borrow on July 20. There hasn't been a lot of traffic. Just a few people at a time. Curbside pickup is also still available with steady business.
6. Tom is taking a class through the PA State Library on community engagement and has begun holding some community conversations on Zoom as one of the assignments.
7. The hardware for the "Bring the Library Home" program is in and ready for circulation. The library has 4G enabled tablets, Chromebooks, and wi-fi hotspots available to loan.

Parks and Recreation Committee – Vice President Fuller

1. The first concert at White's Road Park is on Tuesday, August 11. Adjustments will be made as needed moving forward. Additionally, our third scheduled movie of the summer is set for Friday, August 14. Toy Story 4 will be shown at the White's Road Park bandshell beginning at 8:00pm.
2. Maintenance Activities - several of the maintenance activities that took place during the month of July included the site prep work for the White's Road Playground project including tree and stump removal.

- After a site inspection at Wissahickon Park, several trees were identified for removal. Two have been removed in house and six will require an outside contractor to be scheduled.
 - Stony Creek Park fountain was not operating properly so we sent a crew out in a rowboat to access it. A clog from trapped algae was removed. It clogged a second time on August 5 and now needs to be replaced.
 - Memorial Park Scoreboard controller was re-set and the scoreboard was re-lamped.
3. Pools Update – As of 7/28 we have 1,296 members which translates to revenue of \$78,000. Additional revenue of approximately \$14,000 - \$18,000 will be coming in for rental of the White's Road Pool to two separate aquatic clubs.
 4. Skatepark Update – Mr. Lukens reported that the skatepark is officially open for use. A mural is in progress on the backside of one of the ramps that faces the parking lot. An issue with hydrostatic pressure forcing some water into the base of the bowl has come up. Borough inspectors are working with RVE and the contractor to come up with a solution. The current solution recommended is to remove the base of the bowl install stone to alleviate the pressure and repour the base. The cost for this fix will be \$10,800. A punch list for the contractors will be created by RVE.
 5. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Resolution to name the skatepark the Carl W. Saldutti, Jr. Skatepark.
 - Award the bid for the Stony Creek Park Liberty Bell Trail project. Waiting to hear back from DCNR if they will cover the additional \$66,000 in funds that the bid went over our estimated budget.
 6. White's Road Park Playground – The playground bid was advertised on 7/31 & 8/4 the bid opening is scheduled for 8/25 at 11:00am. Site work to be completed in house has begun.
 7. Mr. Lukens announced the formation of a "Friends of the Skatepark" group who can help educate users on park hours, provide facemasks to anyone that needs one, clean up trash and mentor other skaters.
 8. Skatepark Landscape and/or fencing – Bids for fencing around the skatepark were reviewed. The cost ranged from \$7,000 - \$13,000. Discussion was held on the need for fencing versus adding additional trees and shrubs to help with sound and the look of the park. The committee would like to see landscaping used as natural fencing and will revisit any needed fencing in the future.

Councilman Breish – Will there be any issues with the concerts in the park and the streambank work being done?

Mr. Lukens – The contractor is aware and the area will be appropriately fenced off.

Mayor Herbert – Is tree work coordinated for the parks and electric departments?

Mr. Lukens – We got three bids from regular contractors who are not trained to work near electric lines. Plus our trees need to be done as soon as possible.

Public Safety Committee – Councilwoman Currie Teoh

1. A new noise ordinance which was prepared by Code Enforcement and the police department to deal with various types of noise issues such as early construction and other nuisances. This ordinance is currently being reviewed and tweaked as needed.
2. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Prepare and advertise an ordinance to amend the Civil Service regulations for hiring.
 - Approval of the Borough Manager to purchase body worn cameras for the police department.

3. Stove and Tap requested an extension on allowing the closure of N. Wood Street for outdoor dining on Friday and Saturday nights from 3:00pm to 10:30pm.

Councilwoman Currie Teoh presented Motion A and read as follows:

I move that Borough Council extend the approval of the Special Events application submitted by Stove & Tap for the closure and use of a portion of North Wood Street between the hours of 3:00pm to 10:30pm for outdoor dining for the following additional dates: Friday, August 7; Saturday, August 8; Friday, August 14, Saturday, August 15; Friday August 21; Saturday August 22 and Friday August 28; and Saturday August 29 with the conditions as previously stated in Council's prior June 3 approval including dining limited to reservations only, compliance with CDC guidelines for safe social practices, and full reimbursement for the costs of safety barriers, as well as, the additional condition that this Special Event approval shall immediately terminate for any of the aforementioned dates that have not yet occurred if Montgomery County is allowed to increase to 50% indoor dining.

Motion seconded by Vice President Fuller and unanimously approved.

Councilman Angelichio – Is it true that S&T re-hired employees at a lower rate than what they were making before the pandemic?

Vice President Fuller – Does that matter when voting on a motion?

Councilman Angelichio – It may change how I think as people are really struggling right now. Businesses shouldn't be hiring back people at lower rates.

Mr. Stephen DiGregorio of Stove and Tap – Employees had the option to come back if they were comfortable doing so and were brought back at the same pay rate or greater.

Councilman Breish – Does this motion include Sundays?

Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton – Since we are voting on body cameras for officers in two weeks was research done about what happens if a camera is turned off when it should be on? There is a quote that she read, "You can't fix culture with technology."

Chief Trail – The cameras can't always be on, but in critical situations they must be turned on.

Vice President Fuller – The motion will include a not to exceed amount of \$78,000.

Chief Trail – That is for the purchase of the cameras and one year's worth of video storage.

Mayor Herbert – We want to increase transparency in the department and training as well.

Public Works Committee – Councilman Breish

1. Updates regarding the 2020 Microsurfacing, Mill & Overlay and the E. Hancock Rehabilitation project were given and all are moving along nicely. Payments that were paid for each project are in Dropbox for Council to review.
2. White's Road Pedestrian Crossing – The foundations for the cross walk were installed the week of 7/27/20. We are waiting for the equipment to complete the installation of the flashers and controls.
3. Columbia Avenue Roadway Rehabilitation – NPWA has gone out to bid to replace the water main and service lines. The scope of this project is to have work completed from Valley Forge Road to Cannon Avenue this fall and Cannon Avenue to Susquehanna Avenue next spring. We are waiting to hear about grant opportunities for this project.
4. Motion to appear before Council at the next business meeting:

- Master Casting Agreement –Enter with PennDOT when they repave any State highway in town. It allows the State to adjust any storm sewer or sanitary sewer manholes to the proper elevation.
5. At an upcoming Council meeting we will have a presentation regarding the E. Main Street Streetscape project.

WWTP

1. Fire Alarm & Security System Upgrade – We received a payment request from AN Lynch in the amount of \$85,135.14. This project is 76% complete and they hope to finish within the next couple of weeks.
2. White's Road Park Streambank Stabilization – We received a payment request in the amount of \$50,044.68 from Land Tech.
3. Pennbrook Avenue Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation – Work is scheduled to begin within the next couple of weeks.
4. Dan discussed the need to replace the emergency generator and transfer switch at the Pennbrook Pumping Station as it over 40 years old. This project is on the Capital Project List and the design is 90% complete.

Agenda Item #6 – Public Comment

Nancy Frei of Cypress Street – If we pay for new hire officers to go to the police academy can they up and leave and go to another police department? Do they have to put a certain amount of time in with the LPD?

Chief Trail – New officers that we put through the academy would have to stay for a certain amount of time or reimburse us the cost of their training. Most other police departments pay for the academy.

Bill Allen of 421 York Avenue – Has there been any feedback from police officers about the cameras and is there data yet for conviction rates or accusations by the public?

Chief Trail – Body cameras can be a good thing and they can help the officer. Essentially officers are on camera all the time anyway and with the body cams they have the ability to show the complete story, not just clips posted online.

Councilman Angelichio – Can a person request not to be recorded in their own home?

Chief Trail – These cameras are exempt from that law.

Agenda Item #5 – Announcements

Councilman Breish – Crews did an amazing job yesterday through the storms.

President Burnell – We will appoint a new council person at the business meeting this month.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:39pm