

October 7, 2020

The Work Session of Lansdale Borough Council was held on Wednesday, October 7, 2020 online via Zoom Meeting and called to order at 8:45pm 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

None

Agenda Item #4 – Committee Reports

Administration and Finance Committee – Councilman Angelichio

1. Financials - Looking at the General Fund through 08/31/20, revenues are up 1%. Real Estate Taxes are up \$182,000 or 4%. EIT was up \$70,000 and for July was \$83,000. Transfer tax was down \$50,000 and for September it was only down \$23,000 and closed the gap. Expenses were down \$370,000 or 5%. Police overtime is down \$23,000 and Public Works overtime was down \$58,000. Also, legal services were down \$166,000 compared to budget, we are at 74% of revenue for 2020 compared to 79% at this time for 2019. Expenses we are at 53% in comparison to budget and 58% in 2019.
2. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Resolution to appoint a confidential liaison to work with Berkheimer. John Ramey will be the liaison.
 - Ordinance to approve the DROP program for police officers.
 - Addendum to the land development agreement with Westrum to reduce SRU fees for the Luxor in exchange for sanitary sewer and stormwater management construction.
3. 2021 Budget – as of now the budget will be balanced and we do not expect a tax increase or increase in utilities.
4. Pennoni will be presenting the E. Main Street Streetscape project at the business meeting.
5. Susan Gould from Manna on Main Street attended the meeting and explained their pandemic assistance program that they have in partnership with Montgomery County.

Each household that applies and is approved can receive \$1,500 per month (up to \$9,000) to help assist them pay their rent/mortgage and utility bills. Payments are made directly to the landlord/mortgage holder and the utility so that the resident is not just given money to pay on their own. They will be funding through at least December 2020. Borough staff can direct people to Manna for those who need it.

6. Emergency Block Grant – the Borough would have to create a policy to help those who need assistance with electric bills and then execute the plan. An ordinance will need to be developed and approved and then when the program would be needed in the future it could be activated by resolution.

President Burnell – Would it be possible to see a draft ordinance before the business meeting this month?

Vice President Fuller – She hopes we take the time to vet and not rush into approving anything. We need to get this right.

Councilman Breish – Are we looking at the procedures of the emergency declaration for sending notices or not sending notices? What is done during normal circumstances? Do we have payment plans?

Mr. Ernst – We do work with the customer on payment plans when needed outside of the pandemic, but we do have to attach penalties and late fees. This new policy would put all what we do now in writing and create a consistent plan.

Code Enforcement Committee – Councilman DiGregorio

1. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Conditional use approval for 320 Madison Street to add four apartments to the main floor of the building instead of commercial space.
 - Final land development for 43 W. Third Street project.
 - Minor subdivision and land development approval for 512 Green Street project.
2. In November, a conditional use hearing will be held regarding the addition of four new apartments at 315 W. Main Street (former PEAK Center).
3. Permits activity – Department activity continues to be high. For the month of September, the department accepted 109 applications and issued 108 permits.

President Burnell – Has the Third Street project cleared all hurdles and approved by the Planning Commission and the Fire Marshal?

Councilman DiGregorio – Yes, everyone has given their approvals.

Economic Development Committee – Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton

1. Started doing Borough Business Spotlight on social media since we really can't do business of the month right now. EDC members are responsible for picking a business, writing about it and having Tracy post.
2. Rachel Reilly from Valley Forge Tourism presented their campaign Make It Montco so that the committee could see what they do.
3. One façade improvement grant application has been received but more information is needed before it can be processed and given to the committee to review.

Councilman Breish – An application was received? He thought the remaining funds were given back to the borough.

Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton – Because of timing we would just have to move it to the 2021 budget.

Electric Committee – Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton

1. Energy consultant update- met with two energy consultants via zoom with the next steps being a site visit in October and then an update with proposed plans to both the council and mayor in November.

2. Utility complex solar project update - working to upgrade the electric service at 649 W. 9th Street and also pulling in new high-voltage cable to energize the new switchgear at the Wastewater Treatment Plant in preparation of getting the solar panels online by the end of 2020.
3. A customer expressed their opinion that the annual transfer from the Electric fund to the general fund is a hidden tax, she would like to see something either on social media or in our monthly mailer explaining what the actual electric rate pays for in Lansdale and everything you get for what you're paying.
4. Rear property tree clearance- The committee reviewed a proposal from Patriot Tree Service with pricing for rear property tree trimming while the lines remain energized. We found that Patriot offers full service high-voltage line clearing crews at a cheaper rate than our local contractors. Mr. Krauss will be reaching out to references for this company and we will try to complete the east end of town in 2020. We have \$100,000 budgeted for this year, but are looking to complete this project at \$83,000.
5. Municibid - sold items via public auction that were approved by Borough Council earlier in the year bringing the total sales up just shy of \$20,000.
6. 2021 budget- The biggest change in the 2021 draft one budget is the increase of transmission and capacity charges that increased from last year roughly \$600,000. We continue to work as a Borough to find ways to reduce our reliance on outside power vendors.
7. This week was Public Power Week and Mr. Krauss and Mr. Green presented via Zoom as experts in the EV charging station field.

Mr. Ernst – Transmission rates are not passed on to the residents.

Vice President Fuller – She likes the idea of more information in the electric wire.

Mayor Herbert – Thank you Andy and John for working with the consultants for Borough owned generation.

Library Committee – Vice President Fuller

1. Budget Review – In reviewing the budget for 2021, we noted that the requested amount from the Borough for a contribution to the library will remain the same as in 2020 at \$415,000.
2. Overdue Amnesty – During October, we are promoting Overdue Amnesty. Even though we haven't been charging late fees since March, we want to get the word out that now is the time to bring back any long overdue books. We will continue to look at possibly eliminating late fees altogether in the future.
3. Clean and Green Extravaganza – The Clean and Green event is this Saturday, October 10, from 9am to 1pm. We are accepting documents to shred and metal and electronics to recycle. No TVs. We are also running the BJs membership fundraiser for the month of October.
4. Advisory Committee volunteers – The library is looking for volunteers to serve on advisory committees. There are three committees, Early Literacy, Lifelong Learning and Diversity.
5. Discussed opening the library for regular hours but decided to stay with current hours through 2020 and will re-evaluate for 2021.

Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton – Are those the advisory committees that we talked about at the Library Board meeting?

Mr. Meyer – Yes, those committees are part of the strategic plan we discussed last year.

Parks and Recreation Committee – Vice President Fuller

1. Programs & Events - the department was able to hold thirteen events over the summer – six concerts and two movies in White's Road Park and five lunchtime concerts in

Railroad Plaza. We will not have Tuba Christmas this year or the traditional Menorah Lighting, Santa House and Tree Lighting. Ideas are being discussed on how to come up with ways to hold some events virtually.

2. Maintenance - Maintenance staff has been busy with pressure washing the boardwalks in Stony Creek Park, tree work in Memorial Park, tree mulching in White's Road Park, pruning of trees to allow better sight lines for the camera in Fourth Street Park, installing cueing areas at the skatepark, roof work at the Wissahickon Park building, end of season pool clean-up along with routine maintenance activities.
3. The rental by North Penn High School went well and ended on October 2nd. Plans for the 2021 season are underway.
4. Skatepark: The Committee is to start thinking about signage ideas for the skatepark to be unveiled at the dedication to Carl Saldutti in the spring. Mr. Lukens will receive prices on additional plantings at Fourth Street Park – approximately twenty-one evergreens, sixteen shade trees and seven flowering trees. Presently, maintenance staff has replanted grasses that were split from the front of the pool building.
5. White's Road Park Playground: Most of the playground equipment has arrived. Pre-construction meeting will take place on October 8.
6. Liberty Bell Trail: A walk through took place at Stony Creek Park with the contractor and engineer and we are happy to report that only 41 trees are now marked for removal vs the 60 originally marked.
7. The Stony Creek pond aeration system has been ordered.
8. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Seasonal salary and wage schedule updated for 2021.

Public Safety Committee – Councilwoman Currie Teoh

Councilwoman Currie Teoh presented Motion A and read as follows:

I move that Borough Council adopt attached Ordinance 1944 amending Chapter 7 of the Borough Code to amend the rules of Civil Service relating to hiring and promotion of police officers.

Motion seconded by Vice President Fuller and unanimously approved.

1. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Resolution for the destruction of police records.
 - Purchase of a new police car, Ford Explorer, not to exceed \$50,000.
2. Curbside Parking on West Main Street: The chief reported back to the committee on the results of the West Main Street business survey which revealed most of the businesses wanted to keep the "curbside spaces".
3. Traffic Concerns at Highland Avenue and Greenwood Road: The committee was advised of complaints relating to this intersection with regards to speeding vehicles and no clearly defined crosswalk. Rick Delong, of Public Works, related they would work to paint the crosswalk before the end of the year. The chief advised a speed study would be completed on Highland Avenue.
4. Parking Enforcement: The committee spoke at length regarding parking enforcement in the Borough following complaints from renters who are working from home and not using the cars during the day thusly being cited for violation metered parking time limits. The discussion concluded with the Mayor Herbert requesting a 60-day moratorium on all meter and timed parking enforcement in the Borough while a solution to the matter is developed.

Mayor Herbert – He and the chief presented multiple options to the committee. Do nothing, permits for residents or eliminate ticketing for sixty days. He prefers the permit idea.

President Burnell – Why was the permit option less favorable?

Councilwoman Currie Teoh – We wanted to think through all the options thoroughly and not just give out permits. There is a supply and demand issue and the employees of the businesses will want permits too.

Vice President Fuller – We are appeasing one group and will anger another group by not giving them permits.

Councilman Angelichio – Not everyone will be happy no matter what we do. How many apartments are there above businesses who don't have designated parking? They can't always park in front of their home or business.

Chief Trail – It is a complex issue and we can't constantly be changing what we are doing. We need a consistent plan. Temporarily not enforcing is what we need to do right now, but we need a more permanent solution.

Councilman DiGregorio – Those leasing apartments at Madison were told there was not designated parking outside of their private parking. The Freight House lot will have more parking in the future. We need a decent plan.

Councilman Breish – We may be over thinking the issue. The Parking Authority was talking about a parking study.

President Burnell – We need a larger discussion with Public Safety and the Parking Authority.

Mayor Herbert – He doesn't see a solution without permits. It is the only reasonable solution. He has a view as to where this should go.

Vice President Fuller – She is not under the impression that this is part of the Equus apartments.

Mayor Herbert – Correct. Equus residents do not belong in the public parking lot at the entrance of their private lot.

Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton – Were residents promised parking when they moved into their apartment above the stores? Why is it our responsibility to provide parking? It is not our fault they are working from home.

Chief Trail – The Borough does not make any profit on parking enforcement so it is not a money issue.

President Burnell – There is a code that allows this to happen and parking may not be required by a landlord/developer in certain areas.

Mayor Herbert – We will not enforce parking for sixty days and come up with a plan for after that time.

Councilman DiGregorio – Can a Yield sign be put up at Norway and also maybe patrol more between 3:00-5:00pm?

Councilman Breish – Has there been any conversation about having EV police cars?

Chief Trail – EV cars are currently being tested in some areas of the US, but there is not enough data as to whether they would work or not since the cars are driven and running so much.

Public Works Committee – Councilman Breish

1. 2020 Microsurfacing Program - RVE is working with Marino Corporation to finish any punch list items.
2. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - 2020 Mill & Overly Program – Change Order #1 in the amount of (-\$194,990.04). This reflects work completed on Derstine Avenue to regrade and pave the intersection of Derstine and Mitchell Avenues. It also includes additional

residential concrete curb work, reinforced concrete driveways and balancing the base bid, alternate #1, #3 and #4.

3. E. Hancock Street Rehabilitation – Work on this project is completed and RVE is working with SJM Construction to finish some punch list items.
4. There will be a presentation by Pennoni for the East Main Street Streetscape project at the business meeting.
5. Councilman Breish questioned the possibility of additional crosswalks/flashing lights on E. Hancock Street and additional road painting near the flashing pedestrian crossing at the entrance to the Liberty Bell Trail. Mr. Van Dame stated he met with Pennoni and reviewed the situation and Pennoni is drafting a recommendation letter of possible ideas for this stretch of E. Hancock Street.
6. Traffic Signal Inspection & Maintenance Program – Upon the recommendation of our engineers (RVE and Pennoni), the Borough needs to start discussions to consider a traffic signal inspection and maintenance program to identify if signal bases need to be replaced before failure occurs. Streetlight poles may be added to this program as well. A sample RFP was added to Dropbox for review by the committee.
7. 2021 ADA Ramp Program – Discussion began on the growing list of ramp locations that are currently corners with standard height curb and ongoing pedestrian issues at these locations.
8. Fire Alarm & Security System Upgrade – The contractor continues to put the final connections together to complete this project.
9. Whites Road Park Streambank Stabilization – The repair of the culvert under the walking trail has been completed and new asphalt was installed on a portion of the trail. There were some adjustments to the trail that will result in a change order next month. Planting will begin this week on the streambank.
10. Pennbrook Avenue Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation – The contractor is currently working on installing new laterals where required on Pennbrook Avenue. Once this work is complete, paving can then be completed.

Agenda Item #6 – Public Comment

None

Agenda Item #5 – Announcements

The meeting was adjourned at 10:36pm