

MINUTES FOR THE BOROUGH OF WEST MIDDLETOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MAY 13, 2024

The meeting of the Council for the Borough of West Middletown was held on Monday, May 13, 2024 at 5:30pm with President John Opal presiding.

President Opal called the meeting to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

The following members were present: John Opal, Sandra Smith, Ellen Armstrong, Fred Clark and Naudette Baxter. Solicitor Dennis Makel and Mayor Garry Armstrong were also present.

Guests included: Rebecca Lowe, Mark Craig, Lisa Clark, Kim Andrews, Lou Muth, Andrea Brichacek, and George Newsome from DCED.

Mr. Newsome is the local DCED representative and stopped in to the meeting and stayed for the meeting to get acquainted with the Council members.

Mark Craig stated that he was receiving complaints regarding dogs barking and Naudette Baxter 's dog was one of the dogs. John will post sign in the post office regarding same.

Fred Clark states that he has spoken with Doug Hour regarding the leaning chimney and was advised that the delay in fixing the same was inability to find someone to do the work. It has now been repaired.

John Opal made a motion which was seconded by Sandra Smith to approve the minutes of the April meeting. Motion carried by yes vote from Naudette Snyder and Fred Clark. Ellen Armstrong abstained as she was not on Council for that meeting.

Andrea Brichacek questioned the cost of the lawsuit brought by Lou Muth to have Patty removed from council. John Opal stated that it was estimated that \$3000 of taxpayer money (5 percent of the borough's annual budget) have been spent so far and that further expenses were likely.

Complaints were also made about the borough using KLH for the recent LSA funded sidewalk project. John Opal responded that HMT / KLH was the engineer on the project when the application was submitted and that their engineering costs were one third of Harshman's for that particular project. Mr. Opal also stated that using KLH had been discussed at an earlier meeting and that awarding the engineering of the project was approved unanimously. Fred Clark asked why we did not go back to Harshmann and tell

them their bid was too high; Dennis Makel explained that would have been illegal and opened the town to a potential lawsuit.

Lou Muth questioned why Council did not have a performance bond for the Sidewalk Project. Mark Craig suggested that Council have a road supervisor watch. Mr. Opal stated that Council has no authority over these matters as the Redevelopment Authority is in charge of the project. It was also suggested that a copy of the specs be posted at the Post Office.

Electrical work at the ballfield was discussed. Wyatt Smith has agreed to do the electrical work at the pavilion to include a kitchen circuit with GFI circuits and two extra outdoor receptacles for \$750. Mr. Makel advised that the borough speak to Harshann about the project for guidance of code issues. Mr. Opal stated that he would speak to Harshmann.

Mr. Makel also noted that installation of the septic alarm be done by a certified electrician. Kim Andrews stated she would return the alarm that was purchased with borough funds.

Naudette Snyder questioned whether volunteers who come to work at the park are covered by the Borough's insurance. She also inquired if renters at the park are covered or if they have to have their own insurance. She was referred to our insurance agent, Rob Simonin, in Canonsburg. The use of alcohol at the park is prohibited and a noise ordinance was questioned.

Naudette Snyder questioned whether volunteers who come to work at the park are covered by the Borough's insurance. All volunteers need to sign a release of liability. She also inquired if renters at the park are covered or if they have to have their own insurance. She was referred to our insurance agent, Rob Simonin, in Cannonsburg. The use of alcohol at the park is prohibited and a noise ordinance was questioned.

Ellen will look into a porta jon for the kids to use at the park. She will see what the cost would be through Ohio Valley Septic for April through October.

John Opal indicated that the website is almost ready. Lisa Clark volunteered her help. The site is West Middletown PA.com.

John Opal indicated that Council is waiting to see if we will receive a second grant for the ball park. Construction should start early spring of 2025.

The County has money for blight remediation and could be used for the demolition of the Crupe property.

Michael Hixenbaugh is scheduled for a hearing on May 30, 2024.

Information has been received that the County is considering having water run down Thompson Hill. Pennsylvania American Water will manage the project.

Bills from the general account were discussed and Mr. Opal made a motion to pay the bills from the general account. Seconded by Sandy Smith and approved unanimously.

John Opal made a motion which was seconded by Sandra Smith to pay the street light bill from the Roads Only Account. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Trash pickup day was scheduled for June 11, 2024 and R&K will pickup.

The following bills were added from the LSA account. Trash day pickup \$750.00 and \$573.10 to KLH Engineering to close out payment of grant reports for sidewalks. John Opal made a motion which was seconded by Sandra Smith to pay these bills. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

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John Opal has asked Harshman to report the violations that need to be corrected at the Temple property to the Scott family.

John Opal will talk to Harshman about the house at 49 West Main Street being renovated for apartments which is not allowed.

John Opal made a motion which was seconded by Sandra Smith to continue the meeting at the call of the President. All voted in favor. Motion carried. Next meeting is June 10, 2024 at 5:30pm.

