

A committee of the whole meeting of Portage Borough Council was held on Tuesday, February 16th, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via teleconferencing.

Those in attendance were:

George Wozniak	Todd Learn	Bruna Kissell	Kami Rocker-Lidwell
David Hayes	Bent Kinley	Ron Cadwallader	

Also present were: Robert Koban, Borough Manager; and Michelle Claar, Borough Secretary.

REFLECTION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Kinley commenced with a reflection and then Mr. Wozniak proceeded with the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wozniak recognized the guests which included: Mr. Wozniak called for any visitors that might have been on the teleconference call, those included: Ron Portash; Portage Dispatch, Ms. Jean Kinley, Mr. Matt Decort, and Ms. Courtney Sinclair.

ON MOTION OF MR. LEARN, SECONDED BY MR. KINLEY; COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED TO GO OUT OF ORDER ON THE AGENDA TO RECOGNIZE THE VISITORS. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. HAYES, MR. LEARN, MS. KISSELL, MR. KINLEY, MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, AND MR. WOZNIAK. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Mr. Wozniak questioned the visitors if there was any input, to which there were none.

Mr. Wozniak commenced with the items on agenda. Mr. Koban provided updates on the following items:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mr. Wozniak questioned Mr. Koban if he had any updates on the agenda items.

- Item A: Update on Recreational Peer Group Committee-Mr. Koban informed Council that he received an e-mail from Ms. Jeanne Ashley suggesting to postpone the February 22nd meeting due to the inclement weather and covid-19. Ms. Ashley also provided some ideas for Council to consider:
 - ❖ Postpone the meetings until Spring-Ms. Ashley does not want to start/stop schedule for the IGA and comprehensive plan
 - ❖ Extending the meetings an additional half hour: 5-7 or 6-8
 - ❖ Conduct a 5-hour long meeting with breaks

Mr. Koban informed Ms. Ashley that he will inform Council of her ideas and advised that Council was getting antsy with moving forward. A short discussion took place on the ideas and Mr. Wozniak commented on the Zoom session suggested by Ms. Ashley. Mr. Koban will discuss those options with Ms. Ashley and advise if a meeting will be held in February.

Item B: Update on Borough Building Roof – There was no update

Item C: Update on Trout Run Rehabilitation – Mr. Koban advised that he will be meeting with Mr. Shura to review the grant project so he can become familiar with the scope of work.

Item D – Update on PennDot Project on SR 164 –There was no update.

Item E – Update on Phase II for Main Street Multimodal Grant – Mr. Koban informed Council that he received an e-mail from Mr. Schweitzer requesting an amendment to the PennDot Agreement and a resolution to an official signatory to sign future documents. The issues are on the agenda for approval later in the meeting.

Item F – Update on Phase 3A for Main Street Improvements/Sidewalks Right Side Caldwell and Mountain – To be incorporated with Phase II for funding and construction phase.

Item G – Update on Phase 3B for Main Street Improvements/Sidewalks for the left side of Caldwell and Mountain –There was no update.

Item H – Update on Sonman Avenue Bridge 12 Year Plan – There was no update.

Item I – Update on Small Community Grant Funding through DCNR for Park Improvements Mr. Shura informed Mr. Koban that the bids were advertised.

Item J – Update on Mainline Trail Feasibility Study Phase-Mr. Koban informed Council that he received confirmation from Ms. Jane Sheffield to meet on Monday, March 15th, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. An invitation to the meeting was sent to Portage Township and the Portage Area Planning Commission.

Item K – Update on Nicholson court order to pay monthly fines-There was no update.

Item L- Update on proposed sidewalk ordinance-Mr. Shura will be reviewing the current ordinance to possibly prepare an amendment.

Item M – Update on Swift Reach Networks-Mr. Koban provided Council with the information that Mr. Cadwallader had retrieved from Swift Reach. The Borough could be added as a user to the Municipal Authority with the costs being split or \$425.00/yr. The calls to the residents would also be based on how long the message is and the number of residents. Mr. Koban calculated around \$72.00 per call to approximately 700 residents. Mr. Cadwallader explained the process and commented that the individual, whom is the user for the borough, can make the announcement/message once they are set up in the system. After a short discussion;

ON MOTION OF MR. KINLEY, SECONDED BY MS. KISSELL, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED TO PARTNER WITH THE PORTAGE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY BY SPLITTING THE YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION WITH SWIFT REACH NETWORKS AND ANY BOROUGH MESSAGES TO RESIDENTS. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. HAYES, MR. LEARN, MS. KISSELL, MR. KINLEY, MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, AND MR. WOZNIAK. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Item N – Update on sump pump and drainage issues-Mr. Shura had contacted Mr. Koban that he will be reviewing and researching additional options available to the Borough.

Mr. Wozniak questioned the status of the Kowalczyk fence issue. There was no update.

Buildings:

Item A – Mark Greenwalt/Rebecca Windsor, 922 Sonman Avenue (penalty dated 4/8/19): Mr., Koban informed Council that he spoke with Frank Lombardo regarding Mr. Greenwalt and a potential buyer. Mr. Greenwalt will be receiving disability and is anticipating to pay on the liens and back taxes to the County. Mr. Koban commented that a potential buyer is waiting on the outcome of the liens and taxes.

Item B – update on 616 Dulancey Drive property (Clair Adams): Placed on judicial sale in 2021.

Item C – Update on junk vehicles: No update.

Item D – Update on Roy and Patricia Plummer at 720 Orchard Street – to be discussed later on the agenda for the \$100.00 monthly payment.

Item E – Update on Jason and Sarah Barclay at 406 Caldwell Ave-There was no update.

Item F – Update on Drayton Lewis for 925 Main Street (penalty hearing 7/22/19) – Mr. Hayes commented that the property is placed on the upcoming sale by the County Tax Claim Bureau on March 24, 2021. Ms. Claar informed Council that she advised the County the Borough has a civil suit on file. The County is aware of this.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Review and approve the 2020 Real Estate Tax Certification for uncollectable taxes
Mr. Koban informed Council that Mr. Emerick spoke with the County Attorney; Mr. Tom Swope concerning the certification. Mr. Swope advised that the County will need to have the certification before they can file any delinquent taxes or to print the 2021 tax bills. Mr. Emerick received the blank certificate and added the following language to the certificate “The Portage Borough certification is subject to amendment and/or adjustment due to issues caused by noncompliant reporting.” Mr. Koban commented that Mr. Layo submitting the required forms. The uncollectable total was still not in balance. After a discussion;

ON MOTION OF MR. CADWALLADER, SECONDED BY MR. LEARN; COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE 2020 CERTIFICATION OF UNCOLLECTED REAL ESTATE TAXES, WITH IT BEING SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT AND/OR ADJUSTMENT. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. HAYES, MR. LEARN, MS. KISSELL, MR. KINLEY, MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, AND MR. WOZNIAK. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

B. Discussion and approval to purchase a PO Box for Tax Collection

Mr. Koban informed Council that he emailed Mr. Layo regarding the complaints he received for the mailbox not being secured safely at his residence. Mr. Layo e-mailed back to request purchasing a PO Box, to which Mr. Koban advised the Borough is responsible for any fees. Three different sizes were available with the associated fees. After a short discussion;

ON MOTION OF MR. HAYES, SECONDED BY MR. LEARN; COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED TO PURCHASE A MEDUM SIZE BOX IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ 92.00 PER YEAR FOR THE BOROUGH TAX COLLECTION. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. HAYES, MR. LEARN, MS. KISSELL, MR. KINLEY, MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, AND MR. WOZNIAK. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

C. Review and approve an amendment to the PennDot Agreement and a resolution for signatories.

Mr. Koban presented Council with an amendment to the PennDot Agreement to move the Borough Grant Funds from Phase 3A and incorporate into Phase 2 PennDot funding. A resolution must also be approved for a signatory. After a discussion;

ON MOTION OF MR. CADWALLADER, SECONDED BY MR. LEARN; COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RESOLUTION 3-2021 BY AUTHORIZING ROBERT KOBAN AS A SIGNATORY ON BEHALF OF THE BOROUGH; AND TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT TO THE PENNDOT AGREEMENT TO MOVE THE BOROUGH GRANT

FUNDNG TO THE PHASE 2A PENNDOT FUNDNG. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. HAYES, MR. LEARN, MS. KISSELL, MR. KINLEY, MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, AND MR. WOZNIAK. MOTION CARRIED 7-0

D. Review and approve an amendment to the Harold and Patricia Plummer Agreement
Mr. Koban informed Council that Mrs. Plummer had questioned if there would be a penalty or a late fee if payment was not received by the 1st of the month. She explained to Ms. Claar that the social security check sometimes does not come until after the 1st and she didn't want to pay any late fees. After a short discussion;

ON MOTION OF MR. KINLEY, SECONDED BY MR. HAYES, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AMENDING THE PLUMMER AGREEMENT PAYMENT TERMS FROM THE 1ST OF THE MONTH UNTIL THE 10TH OF THE MONTH. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. HAYES, MR. LEARN, MS. KISSELL, MR. KINLEY, MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, AND MR. WOZNIAK. MOTION CARRIED 7-0

E. Review and approve waiving the permit fees and assistance for the Portage Water Authority Waterline Replacement Project.

Mr. Cadwallader had submitted a request for the Public Works to assist with the project, along with the assistance of the Township and Sewer Authority. The Authority is also seeking the borough to waive the road occupancy and permit fees for the project.

ON MOTION OF MR. KINLEY, SECONDED BY MR. LEARN, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT TO ASSIST WITH THE PORTAGE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY WATERLINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT AND TO WAIVE THE ROAD OCCUPANCY AND DRIVEWAY PERMIT FEES. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. HAYES, MR. LEARN, MS. KISSELL, MR. KINLEY, MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, AND MR. WOZNIAK. MOTION CARRIED 7-0

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Ms. Claar provided an itemized list of bills and additional bills for Council to review and approve.

FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE, ON MOTION OF MR. HAYES, SECONDED BY MR. CADWALLADER, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE BILLS AS PRESENTED IN WRITTEN FORM, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,355.04. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. HAYES, MR. KINLEY, MR. LEARN, MS. KISSELL, MR. CADWALLADER, MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, AND MR. WOZNIAK. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

GOOD OF THE BOROUGH

Ms. Jean Kinley questioned the vaccines for the elderly. Mr. Wozniak asked if she received his text about the County program to which she had. Mr. Koban also commented that Cam Tran will be assisting with transportation for the elderly to Saint Francis College. Mainline Pharmacy will soon be implementing a vaccine program.

Mr. Learn commented that Mrs. Learn is moving forward with the recruitment of members for the new Summerfest Committee.

Mr. Learn informed Mr. Koban that he would like to see the public works department pull in the v-plow so the snow does not go into the elderly driveways.

Mrs. Rocker-Lidwell informed Council that at the last Portage Planning Commission, a discussion was held on seeking an interest in regionalizing or consolidation between the Borough and the Township. Mrs. Rocker-Lidwell advised that they are only seeking IF there is an interest. Mrs. Rocker-Lidwell commented that this consolidation/regionalization is included the Portage Area Comprehensive Plan and with the decrease in population, it could be beneficial for both municipalities in shared services, financial, grant funding, etc. Council informed Mrs. Rocker-Lidwell that the consolidation/regionalization was discussed and researched by both municipalities with no interest or progression. Mrs. Rocker-Lidwell will be contacting the Township to seek their interest as well. The issue will be placed on the March committee meeting agenda for further discussion.

There being no further business,

ON MOTION OF MR. CADWALLADER, SECONDED BY MR. LEARN, COUNCIL
UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED THE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.