

A committee of the whole meeting of Portage Borough Council was held on Monday, March 15th, 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: Ms. Jane Sheffield; Executive Director and Mr. Randy Stager with the Allegheny Ridge Association and Mr. Joe Beyers with the Portage Area Planning Commission. Mr. Wozniak called for any visitors that might have been on the teleconference call, those included: Ron Portash; Portage Dispatch, Ms. Jean Kinley, and Mr. Matt Decort.

ON MOTION OF MR. KINLEY, SECONDED BY MR. LEARN; 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. Koban welcomed Mr. Stager and Ms. Sheffield to the meeting and introduced them to the new council members. Mr. Stager and Ms. Sheffield thanked those for attending to obtain updated information on the progress of the Main Line Canal Greenway Trail feasibility study. Ms. Sheffield provided an overview of the project to council members and where the project is currently. This study consisted of a trail from Ehrenfeld to Portage. Mr. Koban questioned the current study funding that the Township, Boro and Planning Commission had each contributed \$5,000.00. Council expressed their concerns for not receiving any information on it and requested a copy, if it was available. This also prompted Council questioning the Allegheny Ridge Corporation request for an additional \$5,000.00 in February of this year. The Township, Borough, and Planning Commission were skeptical with providing an additional \$5,000.00 when nothing has been presented from the first one. Ms. Sheffield commented with PennDot's recommendation, they can move forward with the trails initial design and engineering to at least show something is being implemented. The trail section would run from Summerhill to Portage but several property owners on the West Side of Summerhill have to be addressed before this is considered. Ms. Sheffield also advised that the estimated cost for this trail portion from Ehrenfeld to Portage would be estimated at approximately \$2 million dollars. Mr. Koban and Council agreed to not committing any additional funds until they have the initial study to review. Ms. Sheffield commented that once the study has been reviewed by Council, Supervisors, and the Planning Commission; that they would discuss the commitment of additional funds. Ms. Sheffield will try to provide copies of the study for all.

Mr. Matt Decort teleconferenced in the meeting to address a per capita issue and is seeking some type of resolution for the delinquent collection. He asked to weigh the pros and cons of having a delinquent per capita tax collector. Mr. Decort advised that the Portage Area School District had previously hired a delinquent per capita collector but they did not renew their services for 2021. Mr. Decort commented on the excessive penalties that were assessed to the residents. Mr. Koban requested the name of company so he can research it. Mr. Koban informed Mr. Decort that with

the Borough, there is no delinquent per capita tax collector. With the auditing of the per capita in 2019, Mrs. Eney and Ms. Claar had updated the listing as much as possible for current information. Mr. Koban advised that there will be errors until the list can be completely updated with current information. Mr. Koban advised that quotes/proposals are being reviewed for delinquent collectors on their services and what fees would be charged to the residents. Ms. Claar is awaiting on a quote from Berkheimer & Associates. The issue will be further discussed at the April regular meeting.

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-Meeting to be held on March 29th, 2021.

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

Item C: Update on Trout Run Rehabilitation – There was no update.

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

Item E – Update on Phase II for Main Street Multimodal Grant – There was no update.

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 DCNR Park Improvements Deeds-No update.

Item J – Update on Mainline Trail Feasibility Study Phase-discussed earlier in the meeting.

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

Item N - Kowalczyk fence issue- Mr. Koban received the order from Mr. Emerick. 14 days for removal from the date of the order.

Item O – Update on Christmas Decorations-No update

Item P – Update on Humane Society- Mr. Koban informed Council that Chief Gregory had researched the dog related incidents to 2019 which there were 11. Chief Gregory advised Mr. Koban that some of the incidents were not separated out when logged into the incident system.

Council suggested classifying separate tracking for animal related issues. The issue will be discussed further at the April meeting.

Buildings:

Item A – Mark Greenwalt/Rebecca Windsor, 922 Sonman Avenue (penalty dated 4/8/19): Mr., Koban advised that he tried to reach out to contact Mr. Greenawalt. Also, need to determine if he is still living their periodically. Fees to be re-tabulated and provided to Mr. Emerick.

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

Item C – Update on Roy and Patricia Plummer at 720 Orchard Street – payment received.

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

Item E – Update on Drayton Lewis for 925 Main Street (penalty hearing 7/22/19) –On the upcoming sale by the County Tax Claim Bureau on March 24, 2021.

Item F – Update on 907 Jefferson Avenue-Mr. Koban informed Council that the 907 Jefferson Avenue property belongs to Deborah Crum and 909 Jefferson belongs to Patrick Nicholson.

Mrs. Rocker-Lidwell informed Mr. Koban of a structure located on a property on Grant Street that is leaning and may be a safety hazard. Mr. Koban suggested that Mrs. Rocker-Lidwell also familiar herself with the dangerous structure ordinance and the he will investigate it to determine if it should be placed on the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Review and discuss the 2020 commission and penalties for the Tax Collector
Mr. Koban informed Council that the legal fees totaled \$460.00. A discussion was held regarding the penalty to be assessed for the non-compliance of reporting.

ON MOTION OF MR. LEARN, SECONDED BY MR. CADWALLADER, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED TO HAVE MR. EMERICK COMPUTE THE PENALTIES AND FEES TO BE DEDUCTED FROM THE 2020 COMMISSION FOR THE BOROUGH TAX COLLECTOR. 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.

B. Review and approve additional disposition of records

ON MOTION OF MR. HAYES, SECONDED BY MS KISSELL, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RESOLUTION 4-2021 BY AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSITION OF RECORDS PER THE MUNICIPAL RECORDS MANUAL AS LISTED WITHIN. 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.

C. Discussion of the collection of per capita taxes

The issue was discussed earlier in the meeting. Ms. Claar advised that she is awaiting on a quote/proposal from Berkheimer and Associates and already has one from J.P. Harris.

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 \$10,989.93. 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

Mr. Koban advised that he received updated guidelines concerning inside gatherings and the necessary space required. Council agreed to have to the April meeting open to the public. The public must wear masks and social distance during the meeting.

A complaint was received on the condition of Rose alley between Orchard and Prospect Street.

Mr. Wozniak informed Mr. Koban that the gas line construction done last year on Prospect is sinking. There area also drill holes on Johnson Avenue. Mr. Koban will check with Mr. Maul.

There being no further business,

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.