

A meeting of Portage Borough Council was held on Monday, November 15th, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. at the Administration Office.

Those in attendance were:

George Wozniak	David Hayes	Ron Cadwallader
Kami Rocker-Lidwell	Brent Kinley	Todd Learn (tele)

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

REFLECTION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wozniak recognized the guests that were in attendance; Ron Portash; Portage Dispatch, Mrs. Irene Huschak, representing the Portage Historical Society and Mainline Trail, Jean Kinley.

ON MOTION OF MS. KISSELL, 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. CADWALLADER, MR. HAYES, MR. KINLEY, MR. WOZNIAK, MS. KISSELL, AND MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL. MOTION CARRIED 6-0. MR. LEARN TELECONFERENCED BUT COULD NOT VOTE.

Mrs. Huschak updated Council on several issues regarding the Mainline Trail (from Wilmore to Portage) is progressing rapidly. The September 11th National Memorial Trail is also assisting the Mainline Trail Committee with additional easements, grant funding resources, and other legal documentation. Brittany Blackham is also assisting in the grant writing process. Mrs. Huschak brought to Council attention of the miner's monument at the fire company side of the building to see if was going to be moved. Mrs. Huschak commented that the fire department would like it moved to make way for a macadam or parking space in that area. Mrs. Huschak also presented Council with a list of funding that is still needed and what has already been completed by the various organizations and Township. The map detailed the trail from Caldwell Avenue to Kane Run.

Ms. Kinley informed Council that she spoke with Charles Rimini at the Portage Area Ambulance Association. Ms. Kinley advised that the Portage Township Supervisors have committed their portion of the ARPA funds to pay the township residents 2022 Ambulance membership fees. A discussion took place on the various uses of the ARPA funds and also discussed later in the meeting for the budget preparation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

Item A: Update on Recreational Peer Group Committee-There will be a meeting on 11/22/21

Item B: Update on Borough Building Roof – No update.

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

Item D – Update on PennDot Project on SR 164 – No update.

Item E – Update on Phase II (MTF) for Main Street Multimodal Grant – Mr. Koban advised Council that the decorative poles are in and should be installed this week. Several members of Council questioned various concerns they had which included:

- the black silicone material that was remaining on the new sidewalks
- road signs still remaining on the project
- drainage concerns at Caldwell Avenue
- Final punch list items and walk through with PennDot, Gulisek, and the borough
- PennDot having control of the project
- Ms. Kinley questioned If the borough would be enforcing the sidewalk ordinance on Main Street for the winter months with snow removal.

Item F – Update on Phase 3A (CFA) for Main Street Improvements-No update.

Item G – Update on Phase 3B (MTF) for Main Street Improvements- No update.

Item H – Update on Phase 4 (CFA) for Sidewalk Project grant funding-There was no update.

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

Item J – Update on DCNR Crichton McCormick Park Improvements-There was a final walk though and punch list. Mr. Emerick has provided new deeds for the project that are file with the Secretary. Mr. Emerick will be advised to submit a final bill for the legal services performed on the project.

Item K – Update on Mainline Trail Feasibility Study Phase 2-Mrs. Huschak addressed earlier

Item L – Update on a proposed sidewalk ordinance-There was no update.

Item M-Update on sump pumps and drainage-There was no update.

Item N - Update on the Portage Sewer Authority resolution for testing-No update.

Item O. Update on Kowalczyk Litigation-There was no update.

Item P - Update on Christmas decorations and mounting issues- There was no update.

Item Q – Update on utility road permit and inspections application-There was no update.

Item R. Kowalczyk notation of minutes from April, 2021. The issue was removed.

Item S. Water Authority Board request was removed from the agenda.

Buildings:

Mr. Wozniak questioned if there were any updates on the buildings:

Item A – Mark Greenwalt/Rebecca Windsor, 922 Sonman Avenue (penalty dated 4/8/19): There was no update.

Item B – update on 616 Dulancey Drive property (Clair Adams): The Judicial Sale is scheduled for November 19th at 10:00 a.m. in Courthouse 1 in Ebensburg.

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

Item D – Update on Steve Panick at 925 Main Street– Discussed earlier in the meeting but will advise Mr. Panick to secure the building off of Main Street with plywood. Mr. Wozniak commented that in the future, he would like to see timelines for when demolition permits are issued with the final date for completions and inspections.

Item E- Discussion on 400 Caldwell Avenue garage (Thomas) – The issue was removed at the November 1st, 2021 meeting.

Item F. Update on 909 Jefferson (Nicholson) There was no update.

New Business

A. Approval to purchase a certificate of deposit with 1st Summit Bank-Mr. Koban informed council that two cd's matured in November and provided the terms and interest rates for a new cd with 1st Summit. A new certificate of deposit with 1st Summit would include the redeemed cd's and the 2021 approved allocation in the amount of \$16,067.69. Mr. Cadwallader commented on the annuities that are available from 1st Summit Bank with higher rates and terms. Mr. Koban advised that he didn't have an opportunity to review the documentation. After a discussion;

ON MOTION OF MS. KISSELL, SECONDED BY MR. KINLEY, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY TABLED THE PURCHASE OF A CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT UNTIL THE ANNUITY OPTIONS ARE EXPLORED. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. CADWALLADER, MR. HAYES, MR. KINLEY, MR. WOZNIAK, MS. KISSELL, AND MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL. MOTION CARRIED 6-0. MR. LEARN WAS TELECONFERENCED BUT COULD NOT VOTE.

B. Approval of authorizing three (3) signatories for First National Bank financial documents.

ON MOTION OF MR. KINLEY, SECONDED BY MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED RESOLUTION 18-2021 BY AUTHORIZING MR. CADWALLADER, MS. KISSELL, AND MS. CLAR AS FINANCIAL SIGNATORIES ON ALL FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS WITH FIRST NATIONAL BANK. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. CADWALLADER, MR. HAYES, MR. KINLEY, MR. WOZNIAK, MS. KISSELL, AND MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL. MOTION CARRIED 6-0. MR. LEARN WAS TELECONFERENCED BUT COULD NOT VOTE.

C. Review of the 2022 proposed budget for the General Fund, State Liquid Fuels, Capital Improvements, and the ARPA Funds.

Mr. Koban informed Council that he would provide the fiscal impact of each of the funds and the department revenues and expenses. Council was provided each fund and Mr. Koban commenced with the General Fund with the fiscal impact breakdowns:

General Fund:

Revenues:

- ❖ Real Estate remaining at 16.5 mills and fire protection at .5 mills for 17 mill total The value of a mill had decreased in 2022 from \$14,250.30 to \$14,234.69 or - \$16.01.
- ❖ Liquor licenses was not received in 2021 due to Gov. Wolf waiving all fees due to the Covid Pandemic. The fees should be received in 2022 at the same amount as in 2019.
- ❖ County Aid has increased in 2022 due to the 2021 encumbrance of an additional \$7,100.

- ❖ The meter collection remains the same but should improve with the new meters
- ❖ Solid Waste Collection will increase \$0.36 due to Pro Disposal 3-year contract. The 2022 collection rate is estimated at an increase from \$16.47/month to \$16.83/month for curbside service with no change to the prepaid bag service.
- ❖ Mr. Koban also commented on the Intergovernmental ARPA Funds that were received in 2021 that he would explain during the ARPA Fund preparation. There is an estimated \$62,171 being transferred from the ARPA Funds.

Mr. Koban recapped the 2022 compensation plan with the 2% cost of living increase across the board and each employee salary projections were increased by a 2% step grade increase. The 2022 compensation plan and wages will be adopted by Ordinance in December, 2021.

Expenses:

General Government:

- Secretary and Borough Manager to receive a 2% cola and 2 step grade increase
- Hospitalization increased in 2022 from \$906.72 to \$1,010.76/month with an HMO
- Mayor's Convention increased by \$300
- Professional services increased for Swift Reach mass notification agreement
- Workers Compensation for (Fire Company only) increased from \$23,049 to \$29,714 with Cassandra Borough and Portage Township being billed on census. This will reflect an income in the revenue from the reimbursement. Various insurance carriers will not provide coverage due to updated policies.
- The MMO for 2022 increased from \$20,568 to \$21,540

Public Safety:

- Wages for the Chief, Full time officer, and the part time officers increased in 2022 with a 2% COLA and 2% grade increase/letter of agreement. Included in the part time wages is a 32 hour per week agreement receiving a \$300.00 month stipend.
- Uniform allowance increased by \$50.00 per part time officer, \$200 to \$250
- Life Insurance will be no longer be available for the part time officers due to the lack of insurance carriers providing coverage. This will result in a Personnel Policy ordinance amendment.
- Computer expense in 2022 will increase with the replacement of the Informant outdated Software (1500) to the In-Sync Reporting System (1750).
- Walkies and radios remain the same due to the pandemic delay of the program implemented with the County from 2021
- Wireless charges will increase for an additional Jet Pack for the other cruiser. \$560

Solid Waste:

- Per the 3-year contract with Pro Disposal, in 2022, the cost to Pro Disposal increased by \$0.36 from \$12.19/month to \$12.55/month. The curbside pickup is estimated at 900 customers.
- The Municipal Authority billing services increased \$500.00 for the 1/3 share of computers between the borough, sewer, and water.

Public Works:

- ✚ Wages increased for a 2% COLA and a 2 step pay increase per employee
- ✚ Seasonal worker increased in 2022 by \$600.00 and a base rate pay from \$10 to \$10.50.
- ✚ Hospitalization increased in 2022 from \$466.72 to \$519.42/month. HMO plan
- ✚ New maintenance building expenses remain the same for the epoxy floors
- ✚ County Liquid Fuels increased \$7,100 in 2022 due to the encumbrance from 2021.

- ✚ The 2022 paving program is listed in the State Liquid Fuels fund.

Recreation:

- ✓ The census has declined from the 2010 census of 2,638 to 2,459 or 179.
- ✓ Based on the newly formed Portage Area Joint Parks and Recreation Commission, the revised contribution amount has increase from \$2.75 per capita to \$5.50 for a total contribution amount of \$13,524.50. This was passed by Council by Resolution 16-2021, dated November 1st, 2021 for a five-year term ending in 2026. The contribution for Portage Township also increased with their census figures to \$18,876.00.

Community Development:

- * Savings increased by \$2,500 for the estimated ½ percent received in EIT revenues
- * Capital Reserve remains the same for \$3,000 to be allocated to cd's or annuities
- * Mainline Trail Feasibility Study transferred over to the Capital Improvement Fund

Debt Service:

- Debt service decreased in 2022 with the pay off of the USDA Loan for the 2017 Cruiser.
- No other vehicle/equipment loans are anticipated in 2022.
- Mr. Koban advised Council that Mr. Maul was seeking another truck for 2022

Liquid Fuels

Revenues:

- Commonwealth State Allocation increased in 2022 from \$81,074 to \$82,262.
- Reimbursements are consistent with prior year for the 53 & Main Signal being split between the borough and township.

Expenses

- There was no street program in 2021
- Winter Maintenance remains consistent but Mr. Cadwallader cautioned Co-Stars.
- In 2022, the Street Paving Program consists of the following in the amount of \$80,540 with the remaining being budgeted from the General Fund Public Works County allocation in 2022 for \$14,200
 - Orange Avenue from Blair Street to Lee Street
 - Farren Street from Johnson Avenue to wide area
 - Farren Street from wide area to Mountain Avenue
 - Park Avenue from Grant Street to Prospect Street
 - Cambria Avenue from Conemaugh Avenue to Jefferson Avenue
 - Gillespie Avenue from Blair Street to Cambria Street
- Debt Service remains the same in 2022 with the 2018 F550 and the Case 580 SN Backhoe purchased in 2020.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FUND

Revenue:

- Continued transfer of ½ earned income tax in 2022 estimated at 160,000
- ARPA funds are deposited into the Capital Improvement Fund in 2021 and the anticipated 2022 allocation/trench from the federal government is \$124,713.

Expenses:

- Blighted properties remain the same for the demolition of 626 Dulancey (Adams)
- Main Street Grant awards with PennDot LTF and CFA Funds are below
 - Main Street Phase 2 with the borough share being \$132,300

Main Street Phase 3A with the borough share being \$127,786

Main Street Phase 3B with the borough share being \$98,297

- Trout Run Grant Project with anticipated completion in 2022 for \$93,265
- Mainline Trail Project in 2022 is based on a \$5,000 letter of support
- Main Street Phase 4 soon to be awarded but estimated on engineering for \$2,500
- Main Street Phase 5 soon to be awarded but estimated on engineering for \$2,500
- Crichton McCormick DCNR Rotary Grant app with the borough share at \$20,000. Mr. Koban advised that Mr. Burns commented on the
- Bedford Street Storm Water Project from Caldwell to Jefferson est. at \$18,692
- ARPA Funds detailed breakdown of expenditures will also be tracked separately but planned budget purposes of \$89,330 proposed for \$62,171 t the General Fund for loss of revenue during pandemic and one storm water project on Lee Street estimated at \$27,159.00. Mr. Koban commented that the ARPA funds will be discussed further at the December 6th regular meeting of Council but wanted to have these figures included in the 2022 budget calculations. Council had several suggestions for distributing the funds including: a public hearing for comments, Ambulance service/equipment, fire company, small businesses, 501C-3 organizations, Main Street Improvements, premium pay for workers during pandemic, Christmas Decorations, etc.

Approval to pay bills

Copies of the bills to be paid were distributed prior to the meeting.

ON MOTION OF MR. CADWALLADER, SECONDED BY MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE PAYMENT OF BILLS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,650.12. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. CADWALLADER, MR. HAYES, MR. KINLEY, MR. WOZNIAK, MS. KISSELL, AND MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL. MOTION CARRIED 6-0. MR. LEARN WAS TELECONFERENCED BUT COULD NOT VOTE.

GOOD OF THE BOROUGH

WinterFest December 10th thru the 12th, 2021.

Mr. Hayes departed the meeting.

There being no further business,

ON MOTION OF MR. KINLEY, SECONDED BY MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED THE MEETING. COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. CADWALLADER, MS. KISSELL, MR. KINLEY, MR. WOZNIAK, AND MRS. ROCKER-LIDWELL. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.