

**Mercersburg Borough Council Meeting  
Borough Hal, Mercersburg, PA  
December 7, 2015  
MINUTES**

**Attending:** President Tom Suddeth, Mayor Jim Zeger, Treasurer Catalin Bonciu, Amy Burkot, Jonathan Kittredge, Chief of Police John Zechman, Borough Manager Dawn Scheller, Assistant Borough Manager Derek Stoy, Solicitor Steve Coccorese, and Engineer Lance Kegerreis

**Absent:** Vice-President Jeff Main, Lisa McCoy, and Donald Stoner

**Press:** Rachel Nichols, Mercersburg Journal

**Guests:** See Attached Sign-in Sheet

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm with Mayor Zeger leading the Pledge of Allegiance. President Suddeth welcomed the guests and opened the floor for Public Comment.

Sergeant Bob Wertz, noting that he was representing the Police Association, he asked Council to take another look at the 2016 Police Budget. He stated that they were very concerned about staffing, safety of the members of the community. Sergeant Wertz added that they had a \$20,000 reduction in the budget and although he didn't expect an increase, he would like to see it with the same funding if at all possible. He noted that they are in some pretty precarious times and if they look at national news or local news, they have had a criminal attempted homicide, armed robbery and some other major incidents. He believes that the Borough should do everything possible to protect the community and restore funding. He said that no one likes to hear tax increase, that he is a tax payer as well, and doesn't disagree with that, but he added that Council should properly fund us to be affective to do our jobs and do the best we can to protect the community. Sergeant Wertz stated that he does have some extra things that are best left for executive session for personnel matters.

Tom Heefner spoke about the Free Parking Wednesdays that Council enacted. He asked if Council what the results for the Free Parking Wednesdays and if it increase patronage to the local businesses. He knew that the Borough has lost revenue for those Wednesdays but was interested in seeing what the results were, if there were any adverse effects with people parking all day. Tom Suddeth asked the Chief if he knew anything about that. Chief stated that he did not, that all they do is not to enforce the parking meter regulations on Wednesday. Tom asked Dawn Scheller and Chief Zechman if anyone had heard complaints with people parking all day. Dawn Scheller answered that she was not aware of any. Tom Suddeth said that the Library reported that it was positive, he said that he would check with the Chamber. Tom Heefner stated that it was time to follow-up on it to see if it is doing what it was intended to do and if it's not they should get rid of it. Tom Suddeth stated that now since Council is trying the Parking Permits that maybe Council could revisit Free Parking Wednesdays. Derek Stoy informed Council that new parking meter stickers have already been ordered and during his report he wanted to discuss painting the parking meters. Tom asked if the new stickers included the Free Parking Wednesdays on them. Derek answered that they do. Tom Suddeth stated that the Chamber had supplied them in the past. Tom said that Council would wait until they receive feedback from the Chamber.

Kelly Renner spoke about a parking place in front of the Library that there is some confusion with the recent yellow curb and still have the white lines on it. Tom Suddeth answered the question that the spot

is not far away enough from the fire hydrant. Derek Stoy confirmed that a meter will not be placed there.

Josh Meyers said that he would not comment on whether he thinks Mercersburg can afford to have a Police Department, but if they do it should be staffed with enough officers to cover. Josh said that he spoke with Mayor as to why there was no coverage the other night and he was told that there was no coverage to cover the shift. Mayor confirmed the statement. Amy Burkot asked for clarification. Josh explained that there was a loud and unruly crowd at the Star Theatre which resulted into a number of phone calls into the dispatch center. He added that the State Police came, handled it and it was fine, but noted not having an officer on duty at 10:00 pm on a Saturday is a bit concerning and restated that the Department should be staffed.

Kelly Renner reviewed that the public doesn't see the Police due to them not having a Secretary to complete all the paperwork that is required. She suggested hiring someone to assist with the paperwork. She feels that it is a thankless job and that appreciates the job they do and encouraged the community to thank the officers.

Police Chief John Zechman stated that he has items for an Executive Session.

No additional Public Comments were made and Council moved on to the other items listed on the Agenda.

**MOTION: to approve the November 16, 2015 Meeting Minutes as presented was made by Jonathan Kittredge, second by Catalin Bonciu, all ayes, motion carried.**

**MOTION: to approve the Treasurer's Report and Bills Payable for the month ending November 30, 2015 was made by Jonathan Kittredge, second by Catalin Bonciu, all ayes, motion carried.**

Mayor asked that Council review the end of year figures and should there be a surplus that Council consider restore the cuts to the Police Department. Dawn Scheller noted that the January 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting Packet may not have all of the end of year financials in it as Council will receive the packet on the 31<sup>st</sup> and the month hasn't ended yet. She stated that she would try to have as much in the report as possible, however Council may not receive that information until the February packet. Steve added that anytime Council makes changes to the budget Council would need to call a second meeting as there is a window of time to do so. Mr. Heefner added that Council could make minor changes to the Budget. Steve noted that his office uses 10% of the total of the group of items.

Mayor Zeger presented his report to Council. He thanked Chris Ardinger for the work he had done with the wreaths and the Christmas Tree Lighting event. He thanked MMP& W, Flannery's, Buchanan Lioness, First Community Bank of Mercersburg, for the nice evening where children enjoyed hot chocolate and a visit from Santa. Mayor spoke about the Lions Organization is celebrating 75 years in the community and in honor of volunteers, the Lions Club donated \$200 in appreciation for the volunteer luncheon. He stated that the donation is in appreciation of all the volunteers in the community. Mayor stated that they really believe that the community is only as good as the volunteers in the community and appreciates everyone who volunteers.

Police Chief Zechman's report was included in the Council packets for review. Jonathan Kittredge noted that approximately \$500 was lost in revenue on Parking Meters which he attributed to Free Parking Wednesdays.

Solicitor had nothing to report at the time, but would be available for executive session matters.

Engineer Lance Kegerreis had nothing to report at the time.

Dawn Scheller reviewed her report which included the Reappointment Requests, Vacancies, and letters of interests for the Borough's Boards and Committees. Dawn stated that the Borough still needs volunteers and she would post the information on the Borough's Website and send the information to the Journal. She provided information to the Council Members for the reorganizational meeting scheduled for January 4, 2016. Dawn reviewed that this was typically the meeting that the Borough discusses Holiday Bonuses and this was something for the Borough to consider and act on if desired. She included information about the Family Nights and encouraged everyone to attend.

Derek Stoy presented the Assistant Manager's Report which included information about the Paving Project, which had come to a close. Both he and Lance felt that it was a successful project and the additional work at MacFarland Road was complete as well. Derek discussed an update on the repairs needed on the white Ford F350. He stated that once the injector module was replaced the mechanic ran diagnostic testing and found that the additional work was required. Derek reported that Council had approved repairs up to \$3047, however the additional work brings a repair bill up to approximately \$8350 as the repairs would now include engine work. Council Members discussed the costs and extensive work needed. Derek Stoy noted that this truck is one of the plow trucks and is extremely important if the Borough has winter weather. Dawn Scheller reviewed that the General will be reimbursed from the Liquid Fuels account for expenses paid on the PERCS Street Light repairs made in 2015. Jonathan Kittredge asked if Derek has looked into a remanufactured engine would cost with a warranty. Derek Stoy answered that he felt one would cost between \$15,000-\$20,000 and there is no warranty. Catalin Bonciu added that one could be purchased for \$12,000. Catalin asked Derek to check on a motor, he said he could check, however the other plow truck also needs work of \$748.00 and he has concerned with both plow trucks not being available this time of year. Catalin asked which one would you fix first, Derek answered both of them, but if he had to choose it would be the 2006 which they have had since it was new. The 1997 truck was acquired/purchased from Montgomery Township. Catalin asked Derek to look into what it would cost to replace the older vehicles in the fleet so the Borough can prepare for the future. Derek reviewed that there is no guarantee with vehicles, Catalin said the guarantee is his paycheck.

**MOTION: to approve the repairs on the 2006 white Ford 350 not to exceed \$9,000 by Diesel Systems in St. Thomas was made by Jonathan Kittredge, second by Catalin Bonciu, all ayes, motion carried.**

**MOTION: to approve the work on the 1997 Ford Pickup truck at Statler Garage not to exceed \$1,000 was made by Catalin Bonciu, second by Jonathan Kittredge, motion carried.**

Derek Stoy reviewed some additional items needed for the new truck such as floor mats, brackets, step, a tow hitch which he estimated all items for the cost of \$471.80 in the estimate #4207.

**MOTION: to approve the cost for the additional items listed on estimate #4207 for the new 2015 white truck in the amount of \$471.80 was made by Catalin Bonciu, second by Jonathan Kittredge, all ayes, motion carried.**

Derek added and asked for Council's approval to paint the parking meters' gold since they have the meters off to calibrate them. Council agreed gold would be appropriate.

President Suddeth moved on to the Committee reports.

**MOTION: to dissolve HARB was made by Jonathan Kittredge, second by Catalin Bonciu, discussion occurred; Amy Burkot spoke how doing so would change the street scape in town; Tom Suddeth added that when it was put in place some supported it, while others did not, but in the end it was created and enacted; Jonathan Kittredge spoke and stated that the reasons why he doesn't agree with HARB due to the picking and choosing allowing one property owner to do something, another not being allowed to and Jon doesn't feel the government should be telling people what to do with their property; a discussion occurred with past work allowed by HARB and some questioned the consistency of decisions by past Councils/HARB Boards; a vote was taken, Amy Burkot and Tom Suddeth voted no, Catalin Bonciu and Jonathan Kittredge voted yes, Mayor Zeger broke the tie and voted against the motion, the motion failed.**

**MOTION: to approve COA:15-12-01 to approve the work at 101 South Main Street was made by Catalin Bonciu, second by Amy Burkot, Jonathan Kittredge abstained and wrote a letter for the abstention, remaining ayes, motion carried.**

**MOTION: to approve Ordinance 2-28 establishing the tax rate for 2016 for a total millage of 24.96 was made by Catalin Bonciu, second by Jonathan Kittredge, all ayes, motion carried.**

**MOTION: to approve the 2016 Borough Budget as presented was made by Jonathan Kittredge, second by Catalin Bonciu, all ayes, motion carried.**

**MOTION: to approve the Borough's News Invoice dated November 19, 2015 was made by Jonathan Kittredge, second by Catalin Bonciu, all ayes, motion carried.**

**MOTION: to authorize Council President, Borough Treasurer, and Borough Manager to sign the Pension Plan Documents once reviewed by the Solicitor was made by Jonathan Kittredge, second by Catalin Bonciu, all ayes, motion carried.**

Council President reviewed the additional items in the meeting packet and asked any Council Member interested in attending the training that they contact Dawn Scheller.

**MOTION: to enter into executive session at 8:02 pm for personnel matters, possible litigation matters with possible action to be taken was made by Catalin Bonciu, second by Jonathan Kittredge, all ayes, motion carried.**

Regular session resumed at 9:25 pm.

**MOTION: to approve Holiday Bonuses to be paid to Borough Employees for the following amounts; Borough Manager and Assistant Borough Manager \$200.00, Billing Clerk \$100.00, and all other Borough Uniformed and Non-Uniformed Employees \$50 each was made by Catalin Bonciu, second by Amy Burkot, discussion occurred- Jon Kittredge did not think approving bonuses was appropriate with**

reducing the 2016 Police Wages, other Catalin Bonciu expressed that it is Christmas and he was in support of employee bonuses, after the discussion a vote was taken, Jonathan Kittredge opposed, remaining ayes, motion carried.

**MOTION:** to authorize the Solicitor to respond via letter to 34 E. Seminary Street rescinding the denial of HARB Application COA: 15-11-01 for 32/34 East Seminary Street was made by Catalin Bonciu, second by Amy Burkot, Jonathan Kittredge abstained from the vote for previously stated reasons, remaining ayes, motion carried.

**MOTION:** to adjourn at 9:30 pm was made by Catalin Bonciu, second by Jonathan Kittredge, all ayes, motion carried.

*These meeting minutes were transcribing and respectfully submitted for approval by Dawn Scheller with the use of her meeting notes and audio recording of the meeting.*

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Made by: \_\_\_\_\_ Second by: \_\_\_\_\_