

**Mercersburg Council Meeting
Borough Hall, Mercersburg, PA
March 13, 2023
MINUTES**

ATTENDEES: Council President Donald Stoner, Councilman Anthony Frisby, Councilman Jacob Morgan, Councilman Raymond Minton, Councilman Paul Sipes, Councilman Joe Burkot, Mayor Dr. Michael Pedersen, Borough Manager Melissa Price, Solicitor Steve Coccoresse, and Police Chief John Zechman

ABSENT: Tom Heffner

GUEST(s)/PRESS: Matt Rockwell, Rockwell Construction, Lisa Minton, Jason Cotton, Preston Spsahr, Lisa Pierce, Erin Martin, Joe Creighton, Jon Kittridge, Andy Able, Annalisa Ambriso, Elissa Nyer

President Stoner called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, Councilman Frisby led the Pledge of Allegiance, and President Stoner opened the floor for public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Matt Rockwell, from Rockwell Construction, was present for public comment and provided an update on the project of 13 East Seminary Street, Mercersburg. He relayed the scope of work to include a complete interior demo and rebuild of the interior substructure from the ground up. The design improvement that is planned for completion is to accommodate One North, however, no other tenants for the building have been indicated at this time. Therefore, the remaining unoccupied floors will be a shell. He provided an overview of the construction phasing schedule. He noted that they have completed 5-months of shoring the property structure, the grading, and foundation pour for the west side of the building. They plan to complete work beginning from the west side of the building to the east side of the building and have an anticipated date of completion to be late 2023.

Councilman Morgan inquired about the removal of a chimney on the property and the planned restoration for the top of the building. Councilman Morgan noted that Council had received recommendations through HARB but had an inquiry regarding that work and roofline. Matt Rockwell relayed the demolition of the chimney had been scheduled to be removed and that the structure will have a new roofline as it will receive a new roof system. Matt reviewed that along Seminary Street the building will have an even plain roofline with dormers to be first removed, but then rebuilt in kind.

No other public comment was made at this time. President Stoner moved forward with the meeting Agenda.

MOTION: to approve the meeting minutes from the February 13, 2023, was made by Councilman Minton, and second by Councilman Sipes, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve the Treasurer's Report and Bills Payable for the month ending February 28, 2023, was made by Raymond Minton and second by Anthony Frisby, all ayes, motion carried.

President Stoner asked for the Mayor's Report.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Dr. Michael Pedersen provided an update on various meetings he had attended including a FCADC breakfast with various other business leaders in the community including Mike Ross and a separate breakfast meeting where Mayors from Franklin County met with Representative Rob Kauffman. He noted that he continues to work with the Chamber on various matters and he has received good information from Franklin County regarding grants that would provide money for the hiring of new officers. Mayor Pederson was happy to report that the MOO has reopened and now has pizza, that ice cream is available at the Foot of the Mountain, and he encouraged everyone to support the kids at the high school as Cinderella opens this weekend.

POLICE REPORT:

The Police Report was included in the meeting packets. Chief Zechman had nothing additional to report and no additional questions were noted at this time.

SOLICITOR REPORT:

Solicitor Steve Coccorese had nothing to report at this time.

ENGINEER REPORT:

The Engineer was not scheduled to be present.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

Borough Manager Price had nothing to report to the Council at this time, just that she is very busy.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT'S REPORT:

The Public Works Department's report was included in the meeting packets, no additional questions were noted.

President Stoner moved on to the Committee Reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

FIRE BOARD:

Mayor Pedersen provided an update on the Fire Board meeting. He reviewed that MMPW Corporation introduced a proposal suggesting changes to the Bylaws that would decrease the municipal representation on the board. Mayor Pedersen reviewed that they made a motion to change the wording to decrease the representation from the municipalities and that it would be discussed further at the next meeting. Mayor Pedersen noted his concern. He reviewed that they have a meeting with Dale scheduled to occur this week and he will provide another update at the next Council meeting.

President Stoner asked Mayor Pedersen to confirm that the Fire Board is seeking to decrease the municipalities representation on the board, but they continue to ask for more money. Mayor Pedersen confirmed that seems to be the case and shares the same concern. President Stoner noted that the four combined municipalities annual support makes up approximately 90% of the funds received by the Fire Company.

HARB:

Notes from the HARB Meeting have been included in the meeting packets. Nothing additional to be reviewed at this time.

President Stoner reviewed the need/desire to add a new Committee. He noted that a North Park Sidewalk Committee would be established. President Stoner also announced that once Tessa Holtry starts, he would ask that all of the Committees meet at least once during the next quarter with the exception of Nominating.

STREETS:

Councilman Paul Sipes noted that PennDOT reported that they will be out completing some rail repairs and sidewalk patching along the creek. He reviewed that the brake retarder signs have been installed, but others need to be added to W. Seminary. Councilman Paul Sipes noted that the Committee discussed that they have an Ordinance that prohibits truck traffic on Mercer, W. Seminary, and California Streets. He said that they just need to decide what type of signage and how much enforcement. He stated that the Committee also noted some bushes along W. Seminary Street need to be trimmed, due to line of site difficulties. Councilman Paul Sipes asked if Borough Manager Price had mailed out the letter to the property owner. She said that she had not gotten to it yet.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: for Borough Council to consider increasing the Parking Meter Ticket fine from \$5.00 to \$10.00 to discourage illegal parking.

Councilman Paul Sipes noted that they have completed sidewalk inspections along Linden Avenue, Oregon Street, and Park Avenue. Some sidewalks along Linden Avenue were found to have buckling and need to be repaired. He reviewed that the Borough should send notification by letter to the property owners stating the sidewalk deficiencies and the required repairs to be completed within 6 months, or the end of summer.

Manager Price noted that 54 violations were found along Oregon St. and Park Ave.

Councilman Paul Sipes said that those letters should also be sent out.

Councilman Morgan asked if all sidewalks have been inspected throughout town.

Councilman Paul Sipes said that they have only inspected the sidewalks that they received complaints about.

Councilman Paul Sipes reviewed that they have to look into the Ordinance where parking is addressed across for Philips Flowers, as individuals are parking over the sidewalk and parking in grass. He noted they may need to make changes to the Ordinance, but this is something the Committee will look into further.

Councilman Paul Sipes reviewed that the Committee would review a map of the parking meters. The Committee would like to discuss the removal of some parking meters so they can be cannibalized for parts as it is extremely difficult to get parts for the older meters.

A question arose regarding Sidewalk Loans and if approval was determined on credit. A suggestion that the available loan details be included in the letters. Councilman Raymond Minton said that he never heard anyone being turned down for a loan, but that someone should inquire about it. A question arose regarding the UDAG Fund, President Stoner noted that the Finance Committee Meeting would occur once Tessa Holtry arrived with the anticipated start date of sometime mid-March.

OLD BUSINESS:

President Stoner reminded Council Members to complete and submit their Statement of Financial Interest to the Borough Manager A.S.A.P.

MOTION: to approve the amendment to COA: 2021-11.01 (Rockwell Construction) 13 East Seminary Street Project was made by Paul Sipes, second by Raymond Minton all ayes, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

President Stoner invited Jason Cotton to speak regarding the proposed Lions Club Park improvements. Mr. Jason Cotton introduced himself, noted that the Lions Club values the relationship between them and the Borough, and gave a handout with information regarding proposed park improvements. He provided an overview of the two organizations: 1) Mercersburg Lions Club, a civic organization, classified as a 501c4 which is unable to give tax credits for financial donations; 2) the Mercersburg Lions Community Park Association is 501c3 which does allow them to give tax credits for financial donations received. Mr. Cotton reviewed that decisions made for the park/improvements are made by the Mercersburg Lions Club. He informed Council Members that they have recently received some grant funds along with a monetary donation from a previous member. Mr. Cotton reviewed that they would continue to seek both grant and other financial contributions to begin the projects noted in the brochure as more funds are desperately needed. He encouraged everyone to take the park improvement survey online and noted that it would be available until April 1st. Mr. Cotton was present today one to ask for financial support (TBD on how much) but also to make the request to schedule a future meeting with those Borough Representatives who would be best to assist with the proposed park improvements.

President Stoner announced that a new Parks and Receptions Committee would be formed. President Stoner appointed Jacob Morgan as Chair, along with two additional Councilman to make up the Committee. Those people are Anthony Frisby, and Paul Sipes. The three individuals would be the composition of that Committee.

MOTION: to approve and authorize the execution of the Inter Government Agreement between the Borough of Mercersburg and Franklin County was made by Paul Sipes, second by Anthony Frisby, all ayes, motion carried.

Manager Price requested that the Borough Council table the listed Agenda item to approve the bid process for the sale of the F-350 '2006" – Ford Ranger until next month.

President Stoner approved her request and noted that it would be added to next month's Agenda.

President Stoner invited Preston Spahr to speak to Council.

Preston Spahr thanked Council and encouraged Council members to support the Lions Club efforts. He was glad to see the Council move forward with creating a Parks and Receptions Committee. Mr. Spahr noted that he was there today to discuss a Resolution regarding the Comprehensive Planning Process. Preston provided some history on previous plans, objectives, and the importance of having them kept current. He noted various Committees and Commissions included in the plan. He asked the Council to consider approving a Resolution in support of the creation of a Joint Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan.

Council President authorized Solicitor Coccorese to review, revise, draft a Resolution in support of creating a Joint Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan.

MOTION: to approve the Solicitor to draft and advertise an Ordinance Amendment increasing Parking Fines from \$5.00 to \$10.00 was made by Paul Sipes, second by Raymond Minton one nays Anthony Frisby, remaining ayes, motion carried.

Attorney Coccorese recommended that Borough Council further discuss the Sidewalk Ordinance Violations Letters in executive session.

Manager Price informed Council of a complaint received regarding the Band Building and concern with the deteriorating structure. Manager Price contacted the insurance company along with Clem Malot from PMCA to complete an inspection. Manager Price will post a sign of no admittance to the building for safety and liability reasons. She will provide Council with an update and any findings at the next meeting.

The upcoming meeting calendar was reviewed.

MOTION: to adjourn into executive session at 8:32 pm for personnel matters and to consult with legal counsel with possible action to be taken was made by Raymond Minton, second by Joe Burkot, all ayes, motion carried.

These meeting minutes have been transcribed and respectfully submitted for approval by Melissa Price with the use of her meeting notes and audio recording.

Date approved: 4-10-23 Motion: Raymond Minton Second: Paul Sipes

Melissa Price