

Mercersburg Borough Council Meeting
Borough Hall, 113 S. Main St., Mercersburg, PA
January 13, 2025
MINUTES

Attending: Council President Dusty Stoner, Vice-President Anthony Frisby, Mayor Michael Pedersen, Member Tom Heefner, Member Jacob Morgan, Member Kelani Craig, Borough Manager Dawn Scheller, Solicitor Rachel Hepp, and Pete Stotemyer, Chief John Zechman

Absent: Member Paul Sipes, Member Joe Burkot

Guest(s)/Press: Andy Abel 100 Academy St. Mercersburg, PA 17236, Preston Spahr 101 S Main St Mercersburg, PA 17236, Roy Sehaich 3791 Warm Spring Rd Chambersburg, PA 17202, Karl Sehaich 3791 Warm Spring Rd Chambersburg, PA 17202

Council President called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Preston Spahr stated that he would walk through the borough to recognize properties that appear to be abandoned to focus where occupancy could be improved, and see if owners could make these properties habitable. He said that this would be the final step in before presenting the Comprehensive Plan to council at the February meeting.

MINUTES

MOTION: to approve the December 9, 2024, meeting minutes as presented was made by Heefner, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

MOTION: to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending December 31, 2024, was made by Frisby, seconded by Heefner all ayes, motion carried.

BILLS PAYABLE

MOTION: to approve the Bills Payable for the month ending December 31, 2024, was made by Heefner, seconded by Craig, all ayes, motion carried.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Pedersen asked if vehicles could be moved prior to any forecasted snowfall that requires the roads to be plowed, and if this issue was something that the Streets Committee handles. Manager Scheller said there would be a recommendation from the Streets Committee to add a parking change to the Snow Emergency Plan on East California St later in the meeting. Mayor Pedersen hopes that vehicles can be moved by residents prior to the Snow Emergency Plan being enacted. His goal for the new year is to find two part-time or one full-time officer and hopes that council will support his position.

POLICE REPORT

A copy of the Police Report is available upon request.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Hepp stated that council could authorize borough staff to look into the issue of the noise caused by the automatic car wash. The current zoning does not allow for a car wash to operate in this area, but it was established prior to the zoning, so it was grandfathered in to be permitted at the current location. The automatic car wash could be in violation of the noise ordinance however, and the police would be the entity to enforce the ordinance.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Not present.

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT

The SLFRF ARPA funds online form was completed on December 12, 2024. This completes the entire allocation amount including the interest that the borough received for previous salary expenses. PWD is finishing Christmas tree pick up. The borough sent out notices to residents who did not shovel their sidewalk within 24 hours after the snow stopped. PWD is taking down the Christmas decorations in town this week. These will be stored in the blue building once council approves of the old items currently stored there to be removed. The borough is accepting nominations for the James Buchanan and Harriet Lane awards. A new contact list will be provided once board appointments are completed at the meeting tonight. The borough office will begin the process of bringing accounts payable/receivable in house. Quickbooks training will be provided by Cohick.

The borough has received interest from Luminest in building townhouses on the property behind Food Lion. Part of the property lies within the PC district where zoning does not allow townhouses, so there would need to be a text amendment. The Executive Director of Luminest, Dave Keller, and the real agent, Jim Nicholas, would like to meet with council members to discuss the project. President Stoner, Member Craig, and Mayor Pedersen agreed to meet with them to discuss the matter. Manager Scheller will reach out to Mr. Keller and Mr. Nicholas to make arrangements for the meeting.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

The report was sent electronically.

OLD BUSINESS

MOTION: to authorize the Borough Manager to discard the old and damaged furniture from the blue building and the old magistrate's office was made by Heefner, seconded by Craig, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to review and approve the mailing of the Mercersburg Band Association letter prepared by the solicitor was made by Heefner, and seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: to approve Resolution 1-25 nominating Peter Stotemyer to serve as the Assistant Zoning Office and Assistant Records Officer was made by Heefner, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 2-25 appointing Thomas Suddeth to a new term on the Vacancy Board was made by Heefner, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 3-25 appointing Dr. Michael Pedersen to a new term with the General-Purpose Authority was made by Heefner, seconded by Craig, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 4-25 appointing Dawn Scheller as the primary member and Peter Stotemyer as the secondary member to the FCCG & Franklin County Tax Board was made by Heefner, seconded by Craig, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 5-25 appointing Tom Heefner to a new term with the HARB was made by Craig, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 6-25 appointing Ed Twine to a new term with the Water Authority was made by Heefner, seconded by Craig, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 7-25 appointing Jeff Evans as Solicitor of the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Heefner, seconded by Craig, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 8-25 appointing Tim Stanton to a new term with the Sewer Authority was made by Morgan seconded by Heefner, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 9-25 appointing Donald Stoner to a new term with the Planning Commission was made by Morgan, seconded by Frisby, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 10-25 setting the tax rate for 2025 was made by Morgan, seconded by Heefner, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 11-25 appointing Tom Ralston to a new term on the Zoning Hearing Board was made by Heefner, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve Resolution 12-25 appointing Donald Stoner and Tom Heefner to new terms on the Fire Board was made by Craig, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to update the Snow Emergency Plan to include no parking on the north side of East California St was made by Heefner, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve the quotes from Signal Service for the upgrades needed for the traffic signals prior to PENNDOT milling Oregon St which includes funding through the Green Light Go Grant and Liquid Fuel dollars was made by Heefner, seconded by Craig, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to accept the resignation of PWD employee Jim Miller effective January 3, 2025, was made by Frisby, seconded by Heefner, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to authorize the borough to proceed with hiring a replacement was made by Morgan, seconded by Heefner, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to accept and approve the 2023 Auditor's report completed by Boyer & Ritter dated December 10, 2024, was made by Heefner, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

Council discussed subcontracting trucks to haul excess snow when heavy snowfall occurs because the borough lacks the manpower and equipment to handle it. Currently excess snow can be dumped at the blue building and at the Lion's Club Park. Manager Scheller stated that on a previous occasion the borough had to subcontract snow removal. The cost was close to \$30,000 to remove approximately 3 feet of snow. Since the state declared a state of emergency, the borough was reimbursed \$24,000- \$25,000 of the invoices and payroll. President Stoner stated that the last time borough had to remove snow using multiple subcontractors, it cost \$25,000 - \$30,000, and none of the funds were reimbursed. Council asked if the issue of vehicle removal and snow plowing could be addressed at the next Streets Committee meeting.

Public comment was made by Preston Spahr concerning the properties on S Fayette St that could be improved and if a historical focal point could be created for properties on S Fayette St as well. Manager Scheller stated that this issue could be addressed at the next HARB meeting.

MOTION: to enter into executive session for litigation matters with possible action to be taken was made at 7:57 pm by Heefner, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

Regular session resumed at 8:19 pm.

CORRESPONDANCE & CALENDAR

Council President reviewed the correspondence in the meeting packet and reviewed the next meetings. President Stoner decided to cancel the next meeting scheduled for January 27,2025.

No other business was brought before the Board.

MOTION: to adjourn the meeting at 8:24pm made by Morgan, seconded by Heefner, all ayes, motion carried.

Date: _____ Motion: _____ Seconded: _____

SEAL

Dawn L. Scheller, Borough Manager / Secretary / Treasurer