

BOROUGH OF WILMERDING
MINUTES OF THE APRIL 7, 2015 REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL

The meeting was called to order by President Sandra Smith at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the President.

ROLL CALL: KAREN PETERSON, present; REV. DOROTHY REEVES, present; MICHAEL TRKULA, present; STEPHEN SHURGOT, absent; WILLIAM PRICENER, present; JOHN THOMAS, present; SANDRA SMITH, present. MAYOR HENRY SLACZKA was also present.

M. TRKULA / REV. D. REEVES TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 3, 2015 MEETING AS PRESENTED. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

MS. S. SMITH: at this time I would like to present two candidates that are running for District Magistrate. Tonight we have Jeff Filia and Roxanne Eichler.

MR. JEFF FILIA: thank you for having me tonight. As many of you know I grew up here in Wilmerding and I am a lifelong resident of the East Allegheny School District. I have over twenty years of law enforcement experience and I am manager of our family owned business in Wilmerding. I am currently the Assistant Director of Gateway Rehabilitation Corrections Division. I know there is a big problem with absentee landlords which has a negative effect on the community. I will make the office more accessible to working families by having the office open on weekends. I believe that we have to invest in our young people and try to help them so that we can keep them out of the system.

MS. ROXANNE EICHLER: good evening everyone. I have been a lifelong resident of the school district and an attorney for 33 years and elected public servant for 25 years. The District Judge is vital to our progress. Substance abuse, domestic disputes, property maintenance, fire code, and other civil and criminal matters. For strong and safe communities the local judge must be skilled and beyond reproach. I have been admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court and I have already passed the test so I will start from day one. I have served on the East Allegheny School Board for 25 years as President, Vice-President and am currently serving as treasurer. I am also on the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Board of Directors and have implemented many programs with the AIU. I have served five years as President of the East Allegheny Business Association which promotes businesses in our area. As District Judge I will uphold the rule of law with accuracy and fairness, protect our communities and implement vital rehabilitative programs through my legal experience, public service and established contacts in business and government. Thank you for your time.

PETITIONS & MEMORIALS

MRS. S. ZIBRAT, AIRBRAKE AVE.: is there an ordinance in the borough that allows a company to come in without getting any clearance from the borough. There is a mobile home on Airbrake Avenue by the playground and no one knows why it is there.

MS. S. SMITH: they are working on a project to patch the holes in the creek.

MR. G. EVASHAVIK: it is a temporary construction trailer to perform work in the creek. County government is providing the service so there is no action or approval required by the borough.

MS. S. SMITH: we started working on this project a couple of years ago.

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MR. T. NELIGH, PAT MEWS DRIVE: how much does the borough owe the Airbrake on back taxes?

MR. J. THOMAS: they appealed their assessment and we do not know at this time how much they are going to be reduced.

MR. T. NELIGH: is that why you raised the taxes, because you owe them money.

MS. S. SMITH: no, the county lowered the assessment on the residential properties but raised it on the businesses.

MR. T. NELIGH: then why did you raise the taxes.

MS. S. SMITH: since the total assessment is lower than last year we had to raise the taxes to run the borough.

MR. T. NELIGH: the school district did not raise their taxes. I can see raising it maybe \$40 or \$50 but over \$100 that is not reasonable.

MS. S. SMITH: we advertised in December that we were raising the taxes.

MR. T. NELIGH: you did not have to raise them that much. How much is owed in delinquent taxes. You make the ones that pay their taxes pay more to make up for the ones that don't pay.

MS. S. SMITH: we raised it two mills. We went four years without raising taxes.

MR. T. NELIGH: you only have a one man crew to clean the streets.

MR. G. EVASHAVIK: the two mill increase allowed the borough to continue services. Do you know what the budget is?

MR. T. NELIGH: you need to cut something, cut Council in half.

MR. J. THOMAS: two years ago the county was reassessed and 67% of single family homes went down in value while commercial properties went up. The Airbrake went from four million to ten million so they appealed this in court.

MR. T. NELIGH: the old fourth ward is not worth anything now. To raise the taxes two mills is a lot.

MR. J. GERARD, STATION STREET: is there anything that the borough can do about dumpsters. There is a dumpster in the alley across from me that keeps overflowing and when the wind blows I get all the garbage in my yard. Is there an ordinance that they would have to have it picked up more often than once a week?

MS. S. SMITH: we had a situation like that in the past and we asked the landlord to schedule an extra pick up.

MR. A. FRYDRYCH, WELSH AVE.: there are a lot of potholes on Wood Street.

MR. M. JAKUB: we will take care of them as soon as we can get some hot patch.

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MRS. J. TOMASIC, WESTINGHOUSE AVE.: since Ice Plant Hill has been closed my car has been hit twice. People are parking on the wrong side of the street and on the sidewalks and they are never given any tickets. I would like Council to ask the police to start tagging these cars.

MRS. T. HICKMAN, AIRBRAKE AVE.: don't we have an ordinance that restricts large trucks and boats from parking on public streets. Door's Moving has been parking their trucks on 3rd Street for three months and nothing has been done about it. They are a good neighbor and take care of their property but they keep parking their trucks on the street.

CHIEF J. MATRAZZO: they were told to park on their apron.

MRS. T. HICKMAN: if they do that then they are blocking the sidewalk.

CHIEF J. MATRAZZO: it is not a sidewalk it is their driveway.

MRS. M. MEIGHAN, PROPERTY OWNER: can I suggest that the next time you put out a newsletter that you put some important numbers in there. Numbers for the Women's Shelter, Meals on Wheels, Department of Aging, LIHEP and other numbers that the residents may need.

The gentleman brought up about dumpsters and I understand that he has been cited 30 times. Also, are you going after the people who owe back taxes?

MS. S. SMITH: we have a company that collects delinquent taxes and garbage for us at no cost to the borough. We are going to ask them if they can request a bigger down payment.

MR. J. THOMAS: we put more money into the budget to take these people to court. Also, to do a Sheriff Sale it would cost the borough between \$3,000 to \$5,000 dollars. Right now we are doing distraints against the delinquent owners.

MRS. M. MEIGHAN: does Frank Tylka get a straight fee or does he get a commission to collect the taxes.

MR. J. THOMAS: we pay Mr. Tylka a flat fee. He has nothing to do with raising taxes.

MS. B. ALEXANDER, PROPERTY OWNER: there are several property owners in the borough that take care of any problems that may come up with their property. There is a rumor going around that Council is going to cut a deal with one of the property owners.

MS. S. SMITH: it is just a rumor, we are not going to make a deal with anyone. We are going to treat everyone the same.

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CORRESPONDENCE

1. The Police Pension CD is up for renewal.

J. THOMAS / M. TRKULA TO RENEW THE POLICE PENSION CD FOR SIX MONTHS AT \$60,000. MEMEBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

2. Received a letter from the Wilmerding 125th Anniversary Committee requesting a donation for their festivities.

M. TRKULA / REV. D. REEVES TO DONATE \$2,500 TO THE ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE.

MAYOR H. SLACZKA: the letter contradicts itself, it says that it does not receive any money from any local or governmental agency yet they are asking the borough for a donation. I am opposed to this action and I am not wild about this celebration. I will contribute financially if every one of you would do the same. There are a lot of risks and effects involved if you support that motion.

M. TRKULA: I WILL RESCIND MY MOTION.

3. Received a request from Agape Fellowship Christian Community Center for permission to hold their annual block party on Saturday August 1st from 11 am to 8 pm. They would like to block of Caldwell Avenue from Clara Street to Herman Avenue.

W. PRICENER / K. PETERSON TO GRANT PERMISSION TO BLOCK THE STREET AND HOLD A BLOCK PARTY FOR AGAPE FELLOWSHIP CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CENTER ON AUGUST 1ST FROM 11 AM TO 8 PM. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

MS. S. SMITH: the Fire Marshall is supposed to be here tonight but he is with the County Fire Marshall investigating the fire last night at the apartment building.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PUBLIC SAFETY – M. TRKULA: for the month of March Eastern Area Prehospital Services responded to 45 calls making 31 transports. Their average response time for emergencies was 6.9 minutes and for non-emergencies it was 7.7 minutes. For the 1st quarter they responded to 158 calls and had 99 transports. Their average response time was 7.7 minutes for emergencies and for non-emergencies it was 8.6 minutes.

I did not receive a report from the Fire Department. The Chief will give the police report.

CHIEF MATRAZZO: for the month of March we responded to 176 calls and made 12 arrests. A brief summary of the calls are as follows: 2 assaults, 3 burglaries, 5 criminal mischief, 2 disturbances, 4 dogs running at large, 9 domestics, 2 drug investigations, 1 homicide, 2 juvenile, 1 missing person, 1 open burning, 1 overdose, 7 parking complaints, 1 public intoxication, 1 retail theft, 4 traffic accidents and 3 wanted persons.

MS. S. SMITH: Chief, there are a lot of vehicles with dark windows. Is there a tool that you use to measure the thickness?

CHIEF MATRAZZO: yes, we know the vehicles.

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MR. M. TRKULA: I would like to read a letter from the Emergency Management Coordinator, Steve Shurgot. He would like to thank the fire department for their excellent response to the fire and to everyone that was involved. They did a tremendous job.

RECREATION – M. TRKULA: there were 64 children who attended the Easter Egg Hunt and I would like to thank the volunteers who helped. The next event will be a movie on April 25th, Big Hero 6, in the community room.

CODE ENFORCEMENT – S. SMITH: we received a request to give the Building Inspector a badge number. He was using FM#1 but since we have a Fire Marshall he can no longer use that. We also need to give our Code Officer a badge number.

K. PETERSON / W. PRICENER TO HAVE DAVE BUSKIRK, OUR BUILDING INSPECTOR, TO USE BCO-1 AND MIKE JAKUB, OUR CODE OFFICER, TO US C0-1 AS THEIR BADGE NUMBERS. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

MR. W. PRICENER: the reports from our code office are never read and I believe that the residents need to know what is going on since this is the biggest complaint that we hear every month. I will read their reports for the record.

*Dave Buskirk worked a total of 57 hours in March.

*Met with Louise concerning citations to be issued.

*Received and returned phone calls to schedule inspections and answer any questions regarding inspections.

*Checked various properties for property maintenance complaints.

*Attended hearings at the Magistrate's office. We were successful on 6 of 7 citations and the fines totaled \$1,900.

*Inspected and issued occupancy permits for the following rental properties: 735-A Middle Ave., 309 Station St., 508 Airbrake Ave., 666 Airbrake Ave., 116 Middle Ave., 220-B Westinghouse Ave. and 411 Airbrake Ave.

*A roof permit was issued for 533 Westinghouse Ave.

*A sign permit was issued for 201 Airbrake Ave.

*Inspected over a period of several days the property at 324 Commerce after the water break. Had several phone discussions with Al Hussey and Sean Kerrigan on what would be necessary to get the tenants back into their apartments.

Louise collected \$16,730 in rental license fees for the year and there is \$6,440 balance due. Out of that balance due Sean Kerrigan owes \$3,010. As the forms come in I compare the landlord information with my file and update any new addresses, telephone numbers, e-mails etc. If there are new tenants, for which occupancy permits have not been obtained, a letter is sent to give them a chance to submit their forms.

MR. M. TRKULA: we need to discuss in our workshop the rental licenses and what action do we take if they are delinquent.

MAYOR H. SLACZKA: I noticed that there are a lot of occupancy permits for rental properties. We have been involved in litigation with a certain landlord over the rental license. In my opinion rentals involve Section 8 housing which is a low class of people on low income. We are now one of the poorest communities in the county. I belong to the C.I.A.C. which is doing a rehab for resale program and we are trying to change from a rental community to an ownership community.

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PUBLIC WORKS – W. PRICENER: they are doing daily trash pick up, patching potholes with cold patch, cleaning up the park, taking care of the sewer problem on Wood Street, repaired the stop sign by the deli, boarded up the broken windows at the Castle and put up no parking signs on Pat Mews Drive.

We are going to get the riding mower tuned up and replace the belts and blades at a cost of \$900. We are also going to be looking at getting a V box spreader with a tail gate spreader.

W. PRICENER / K. PETERSON TO HAVE NORWIN RENTAL REPAIR THE RIDING MOWER AT A COST OF \$900. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

MR. W. PRICENER: we are in need of a laborer, do we have to advertise for this position.

MR. G. EVASHAVIK: there is no requirement to advertise.

ENGINEER – D. GILLILAND: on April 6th bids were opened for the 2015 inlet project. We received five bids back but two of the bids received were incomplete. The low bid was received from Lawson Excavating for \$25,600 to repair nine inlets.

J. THOMAS / M. TRKULA TO AWARD THE BID TO LAWSON EXCAVATING TO REPAIR NINE INLETS AT A COST OF \$25,600 WITH THE FUNDS COMING OUT OF THE SEWER FUND. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

COG REPORT – K. PETERSON: no report due to the conference at Seven Springs.

BOROUGH PROPERTY – K. PETERSON: Sandy asked me to look into getting heat in the Fireman's Room. I am going to wait on that since summer is here and we do not need it right now. Also, there is a bank of lights that do not work in the room and I will be calling Banks Electric to come out and take a look at them.

MS. S. SMITH: we also talked about putting electricity on the island between Banquets Unlimited and Pathfinder Credit Union. Do we have the money to do this?

MR. J. THOMAS: we should discuss this at the workshop.

UTILITIES – REV, D, REEVES: no report.

MR. J. THOMAS: I would like to resurrect the program to remove some of the street lights. Can your committee take a look to see which ones we can remove?

PLANNING – REV. D. REEVES: report given at the workshop.

SOLICITOR – G. EVASHAVIK: report given at the workshop.

FINANCE – J. THOMAS:

J. THOMAS / K. PETERSON TO PAY ALL THE APPROVED BILLS. MEMBERS VOTED APPROVAL, 6-0.

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OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

MR. M. TRKULA: there is going to be a free shredding event in Dravosburg on May 9th from 9am until 12 noon. Anyone can bring up to five boxes of confidential items to be shredded.

MS. S. SMITH: anyone who sends me a letter please sign it so that I can get back to you with an answer. I will not respond to letters signed by concerned citizen.

MAYOR'S REMARKS – H. SLACZKA: I would like to pay tribute to the First Responders to the fire last night and also to Pastor Reed who opened up Holy Angels Church to accommodate the tenants.

MR. J. THOMAS: the residents over on Airbrake Avenue have tried for years to get something done with the creek and now we are getting it cleaned up. Theresa Hickman and Sylvia Zibrat got the ball rolling on this about three years ago.

W. PRICENER / REV. D. REEVES TO ADJOURN. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:50 PM