

May 27, 2021

Apollo Borough Council Meeting

Following the Pledge of Allegiance and a brief invocation, the Apollo Borough council meeting was called to order by Council President John Steele at 7:00 p.m. at 631 N 2nd Street, Apollo PA 15613 (Soldiers & Sailors Hall).

Present: Council members John Steele, Mark Tarle, Patrick Zelonka, Michelle Beck, Jennifer Mullins, Kristina Fox and Craig Williams were present. Secretary/Treasurer, Solicitor and Engineer were present. The Mayor was absent.

Public Comments:

Linda Steele: Discussed the poor management of police officer hours by the Mayor. There was an incident that occurred on Friday, May 21st that required police assistance but the officer that was scheduled was not on duty. The mayor was called due to no police coverage and said she did not know the officer was off that day and was not aware of any schedule changes. A state police officer was called but could not do anything because they do not enforce municipal ordinances. Mrs. Steele said she understands that residents have requested and feel that more police protection is needed so she inquired and researched the officers allotted hours. She discovered that 116.5 hours were not being utilized on the part-time police budget since the beginning of the year. The budget allows for one full-time officer at 40 hours per week and one part-time officer at 20 hours per week. She said hiring another officer to split the hours that are not being used would not require a budget change but hiring another officer to increase hours to the budget would require an increase in taxes.

Sara Bowser: Checking on status of residential parking permits discussed in previous council meetings. She provided information on costs of residential parking permits for another municipality. Council advised they are still working on revising the ordinance along with others that are outdated.

Jeremy Gross: Expressed his anger about the fence that was put up on the 700 block of N. Warren in the alley. He has a disabled mother who lives with him and is concerned that emergency vehicles will not be able to get through due to the location of the fence. He said there is not enough clearance at the end of the fence for a fire truck, ambulance or trash disposal truck to make a turn there. He feels that it needs addressed right away and said the placement of the fence is ridiculous. He said he has lived there all of his life and the alley has always been a thruway.

Darlene Schrock: Reiterate issue with the fence on the 700 block of N. Warren Avenue. Concerned because on December 8, 2020, her husband passed away and the only way the ambulance could get to him was through the alley. There are many families and children who live there that use the alley as a thruway. Since the fence has been put up she has seen vehicles try to get through but could not make it and had to back out of the alley due to the fence. She feels that the fence is a potential hazard. Council assured her that if there is an emergency situation and a fire truck or ambulance cannot get through because of the fence, it is in their right to cut the fence in order to respond to the emergency.

Bob Kalbaugh: Also stating that he is not happy about fence in the alley on 700 block of N. Warren Avenue. He moved there about 6 years ago and one of the reasons he moved there is because of the access in the alley for his vehicles. He said his kids like playing in the alley as well. He said that he has seen vehicles try to get through there and have to back out since the fence has been erected. He saw a pizza delivery driver get agitated trying to back out of the alley and almost took the mirror off of the car. He said it's not easy for trucks let alone an emergency vehicle to get through. He doesn't wish anything bad on the person who put up the fence but he thinks maybe it was just done because the owner thinks she's at war with us. He said he tried to talk with her to be respectful and nice but she said she was at war with all of us.

Brenda Troup: She owns a commercial business in the 700 block of N. Warren Avenue. She explained by erecting the fence the owner has hindered her ability to receive deliveries from box trucks. She has had to accommodate the drivers to get them turned around. The visibility is poor in a box truck and makes it very difficult to back out especially when you have cars parked on N. 8th Street to the corner at the edge of the alley. She said when you have twice as many people using an entrance as an exit doubling the traffic, there is a greater potential for accidents. Brenda also said normally if you put up a fence there is a purpose and that is to keep somebody out or keep something in. The fence is doing neither so what is the purpose of putting it up other than spite.

Willie Brown: Informed council that he has lived on the 700 block of N. Warren Avenue for 67 years and the alley has been there for 60 of them. He thinks the owners should move the fence back and leave space for cars to get through. It's the right thing to do. He has always had good neighbors over the years and has watched many of them grow up. He wanted to come and speak on behalf of them.

The Solicitor was asked how the borough could handle the situation. He said a letter was sent to the property owner's attorney but unfortunately the fence was already up. The fact that several residents came to the meeting to complain about the fence blocking a public thruway is a critical component to why the fence should be moved back. Nobody is asking the owners to remove the fence, simply to move it back so that it continues to remain a public thruway as it has always been.

Residents of the 700 block of N. Warren gave the solicitor permission to contact them if their assistance is needed for further discussion or comments pertaining to the erected fence. They would like to have this matter handled as soon as possible before an accident or emergency should arise on that public thruway.

Executive Session:

A motion was made by Patrick Zelonka and seconded by Craig Williams to go into Executive Session at 7:48pm for personnel. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Craig Williams and seconded by Michelle Beck to come out of Executive Session at 9:00 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by Mark Tarle and seconded by Patrick Zelonka to approve the April 22, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Patrick Zelonka and seconded by Jennifer Mullins to approve the May 13, 2021 Special Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Solicitor's Report:

A motion was made by Patrick Zelonka and seconded by Mark Tarle to pay the Solicitor's Invoices of \$2424.50. Motion passed unanimously.

Engineer's Report: Engineer gave his report.

A motion was made by Mark Tarle and seconded by Patrick Zelonka to pay the Engineer invoices of \$2666.35. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Safety: Mark Tarle, chair.

Discussed police staffing and scheduling. Part-time police officer hours were absent due to COVID-19 coverage needed at his full-time position with another municipality.

A motion was made by Patrick Zelonka and seconded by Jennifer Mullins to have OIC Romagnoli purchase a new police vest for Officer Baustert. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor's Report: The Mayor was absent.

OIC Romagnoli announced that The Leonard Miller Scholarship has been awarded to Apollo-Ridge High School student Taylor Kuntz. Officer Romagnoli presented the award to her during an assembly at the high school this morning.

Secretary/Treasurer Report:

A motion was made by Jennifer Mullins and seconded by Kristina Fox to pass Resolution #03-2021 for PMRS non-uniform employees defining full-time as 40 hours per week. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Michelle Beck and seconded by Jennifer Mullins to pass Resolution #04-2021 for PMRS uniform employees defining full-time as 40 hours per week. Motion passed unanimously.

A \$2,000 check was received from Schreck/Myers RV to lease the property for 1 month.

Finance Committee Report: John Steele, chair.

The Finance Committee will be revisiting the budget for personnel changes.

A printer is needed for Public Works for PA One calls. Council approved for Public Works to purchase a printer. It was unanimous.

A motion was made by Mark Tarle and seconded by Jennifer Mullins to pay the bills, including payroll. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of items for payment as follows (4/22/2021 – 5/25/2021)

Garbage Fund - \$8328.85
General Fund (includes payroll) - \$34686.53
Liquid Fuels Fund - \$3327.47
Parking Fund - \$155.77
Sewer Fund - \$10342.20
Sewer Separation Fund - \$2395.03
Landlord Fund - \$50.00
Leonard Miller Scholarship Fund - \$500.00
Total – \$59785.85

Personnel/HR Committee Report: Jennifer Mullins, chair.

A motion was made by Jennifer Mullins and seconded by Mark Tarle to hire Gregory Cooper for the full-time Public Works position. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Works & Streets Committee Report: Patrick Zelonka, chair:

The back door to the Borough Building is in and will need to be installed.

Owens Grove – oak tree needs to be removed from the park and will require a tree service company. Public works will get bids for the tree removal. A pine tree also needs removed but can be take care of by Public Works.

The Salt Shed is on hold for now due to the super high prices for materials.

Property & Planning Committee Report: Mark Tarle, chair.

Re-cap of the removal of trees in the Grove.

Schreck/Myers RV may be interested in renting or buying the Riverfront Property to store their RV's.

The railing is almost complete in the Borough Building office area.

Olde Towne Overhaul suggested contacting owners with abandoned properties to discuss options on whether they want to keep their property and fix it up or donate it to the borough for tax relief.

Habitat for Humanity – Andrew from Living Water Church has a program that does mapping of towns; gives score on blighted property. He offered to bring technology to Apollo for a small project.

Food Truck Events are not as busy due to events going on in multiple surrounding municipalities.

Tentative date for the Halloween Event – Saturday, October 23rd.

Tentative date for Light Up Night – Saturday, December 4th.

Council President, John Steele, read a Thank you letter from the Kittanning Salvation Army for allowing them to place pinwheels in the plaza for National Child Abuse Prevention month. In 2020 there were 52 cases reported in Armstrong County.

At 10:04 p.m. a motion was made by Patrick Zelonka and seconded by Mark Tarle to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

John Steele
Council President

Deanna Shupe
Borough Secretary/Treasurer