

**KULPMONT BOROUGH
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
FEBRUARY 14, 2024
7:00 P.M.**

Opening Prayer by Councilman Robert Chesney
The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag by the body present,
Kulpmont Borough Council held the meeting for general purpose on
Wednesday February 14, 2024

Roll call was taken, and the following members were present: Mayor Slaby, Stephen Bielskie, Robert Chesney, Robert Fanella and Marlin Hodge, Stephen Motyka and Charles Staskiel.

ABSENT: Treasurer Paul Niglio, Mr. Novakoski arrived at 7:15 p.m.

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT: Solicitor Edward Greco, Code Official Heather Owens, Police Chief Stephen Mazzeo and Borough Secretary Rhonda Wilk

OTHER PRESENT: Edwin P. Howerter, Joe Politza and Fire Chief Raymond J. Siko

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO BE HEARD ON ANYTHING THAT IS ON THE AGENDA:

None

PRESIDENTS REPORT – (Stephen Bielskie)

No Report

MAYORS REPORT- (Robert M. Slaby)

No Report

SECRETARY'S REPORT- (Rhonda Wilk)

Rhonda Wilk stated a motion is needed to approve the meeting minutes from January 10, 2024, meeting minutes.

MOTION- Mr. Fanella made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the January 10, 2024, meeting and was seconded by Mr. Hodge.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (absent), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (no), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE
5 YEAS – 1 NAYS

Rhonda Wilk stated correspondence from Tax Collector Luke Darrup, request to change the duplicate bill fee from \$15.00 to \$20.00, tax certification fee \$20.00 (no change), returned check fee \$35.00, no change)

MOTION- Mr. Chesney made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Hodge to adopt Resolution 772 setting the tax collector fees.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (absent), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE
6 YEAS – 0 NAYS

A Resignation was received from Rhonda Wilk notifying effective date as May 3, 2024

MOTION- Mr. Motyka made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Fanella to accept the resignation letter received.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (absent), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE
6 YEAS – 0 NAYS

Mr. Chesney made comments and stated Rhonda Wilk has been such an asset to this borough. Mr. Chesney stated they were not kidding when they said they were not going to accept the resignation but stated if those are her wishes, we must respect it. Mr. Motyka directed a comment to Rhonda Wilk and stated “enjoy your retirement.”

A letter was received from Northumberland County Department of Economic Development & Planning regarding the Kulpmont Dog Park as to its conformance to the Northumberland County Stormwater Management Ordinance. Copied, Mayor/Council and Solicitor.

Correspondence received from Nicholas Bozza, Sr. – notifying on March 2nd Heavy Highway Laborers Local Union 158 and the Pennsylvania Laborers Education & Training along with the Kulpmont 100 Organization will be pouring concrete parking lot at the dog park. On the morning of March 2nd PennDOT and training instructors will need a room for class work from 7 a.m. until 11 a.m. and request a room at the borough building to complete classwork. He will be providing lunch for everyone involved. Copied, Mayor/Council.

Mr. Motyka stated there was a change and it will now be held on March 16th and the class will be held in the West End and so a room at the borough building will not be needed.

A letter from Andy Gorel, Fell Township Chairperson was received, writing for assistance with two cases their Township is fighting. Copied Mayor/Council/Solicitor.

Northumberland County Department of Economic Development & Planning, Informing the Borough of Commissioners intention to take action to amend the Northumberland

County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) and associated fee schedule at its regularly public meeting on March 5, 2024. Copy Mayor/Council

Northumberland County Council for the Arts January 2024 newsletter, Copy Mayor/Council.

County of Northumberland Elections and Voter Registration, regarding the voting machines expected delivery and pick up dates for the Primary Election Tuesday April 23, 2024. Polls open 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. Copy Mayor/Council

Correspondence was received from Robert Greco notifying the Borough of the Zerbini Family Circus scheduled to be held on August 28th and requesting use of the Veterans Memorial Field Complex. No additional information or time was provided. Copy Mayor/Council. Mr. Bielskie questioned Mr. Motyka if there would be any issues with the project going on down there. Mr. Motyka replied, “no.”

MOTION- Mr. Fanella made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Chesney to approve the circus and use of the Veterans Memorial Field for the event.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (absent), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE
6 YEAS – 0 NAYS

Certificate of insurance was received from Mt. Carmel Junior Baseball League effective 3/1/2024 – 3/1/2025. Copy Mayor/ Council

Mr. Chesney said getting back to the one correspondence on the SALDO, he stated he thinks we jumped on that wagon very quickly adopting the Ordinance of the County. He stated we would have had to write our own Ordinance for that, but we decided to go along with the County and after looking at that he questioned if we made the right decision and after discussion it was determined Mt. Carmel Township may look at writing an own ordinance. A discussion took place on the process of having to go to the county first and then the borough for their permit.

Solicitor Greco stated we needed to have something in place and stated it is not that the Borough cannot get out of it; we could keep this in place until the Borough has something to replace it, and it would require an engineer to develop our own. Solicitor Greco stated we could get out of it, but we would need something in place.

After further discussion it was clarified that the Borough has the option to change this and would require some work.

TREASURERS REPORT (Paul Niglio)

Rhonda Wilk stated all Council received a copy of the financial information and the bills to be paid.

MOTION- Mr. Hodge made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Chesney to approve and to pay the bills.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (absent), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE (yes), NOVAKOSKI (yes), STASKIEL
6 YEAS – 0 NAYS

SOLICITORS REPORT (Edward Greco)

Solicitor Greco stated concerning the property at 5 Lamplight Acres, he received correspondence from the owner's attorney and stated the owner is in the process of hiring a contractor.

Solicitor Greco stated concerning Kulp Lane, Brinkash and Associates, on an estimate for survey work on Kulp Lane to proceed. Solicitor Greco asked Rhonda if she has that estimate here available, the quote. Rhonda replied stating she does not, Solicitor Greco stated he will come back to that and provide that quote.

Solicitor Greco stated on the PPL issue, PPL hired a firm, and they filed a response and stated he must file a response on their response. He then stated it will come back to him on an associate's invoice and stated he will bring that to council.

Mr. Chesney questioned the possibility of still fining the guy up there. Mr. Motyka stated we need something more than in the process and stated next week or something. Mr. Chesney asked Heather Owens if he had been fined. Heather Owens replied and stated she does not know where he is located and stated she only found out last month there was communication.

Mr. Chesney asked Solicitor Greco to let him know he will continue to be fined until we have some satisfaction in him rectifying the situation which has become a public nuisance. Solicitor Greco agreed to do so.

POLICE CHIEFS REPORT – (Stephen Mazzeo)

Chief Mazzeo stated his report is attached. Chief Mazzeo stated officer Petrovich has given us quite a bit of hours.

Mr. Motyka questioned Rhonda about the police grant asking if he was correct on the fact that there are still some open ends on the budget end of it for the police grant we applied for. Rhonda Wilk replied stating that is correct, and they have been addressed, she stated she was told, and it is her understanding that during review each section may have areas to be addressed.

Mr. Motyka asked Chief Mazzeo as soon as that is finalized, the sign on bonus to get approval to hire. Chief Mazzeo stated our ad expires at the end of the month. Mr. Mazzeo stated if it expires to just add it to the application.

Mr. Chesney stated it is nice we are going to get \$10,000.00 to use for advertising cost, in order to get two new officers, but we must have the budget to back it up. He stated it is good to get it started and if that could keep getting renewed that may be fine, but \$10,000.00 is not going to pay for a police officer.

Mr. Motyka stated we approved a few meetings ago to hire two new officers which stated the hourly rate, benefits and a contract has been approved. Mr. Motyka stated Chief Mazzeo has been looking for officers at that rate and this is just above and beyond.

Mr. Motyka stated what the treasurer has in the budget will cover three full-time officers for 2024. Mr. Chesney stated he will sit down with him if he would like to go over the numbers.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT – (Raymond Siko)

Report is attached. Fire Chief Siko stated once again for the fourth year in a row they applied for a Federal Grant.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – (vacant)

Vacant, no report

BUILDING INSPECTOR'S REPORT– (Tri County COG)

Mr. Bielskie stated he has been on the contractor doing the work across from Scicchitano's to put some barriers up and stated the contractor is to be up tomorrow fixing some things up.

Mr. Motyka questions about landlord registrations for 2024. Heather Owen replied stating, "Yes that has been taken care of."

CODE/HEALTH ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT – (Heather Owens)

Report attached.

SERVICE AND FACILITIES – (Robert Fanella)

Mr. Fanella stated food surplus distribution will be held on February 22, 2024, from 8:00 until 11:00 at the borough garage.

Mr. Fanella stated approval is needed for the 2024 Street Sweeper Schedule to be advertised for the season.

MOTION- Mr. Fanella made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Hodge to advertise the 2024 Street Sweeper Schedule.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

February 19th the Aqua job will start at the 500 block of Pine Street. He said the sewer authority needs to mark the laterals and since they don't have any records, they will need to get a camera in first. He said they may start on Wood Street; Wood Street does not have a sewer line.

Mr. Fanella stated he was contacted by the Mayor of Riverside on the boroughs recycling program here in the Borough, he will be coming here to meet him on Monday at 10 to discuss recycling.

Solicitor Greco stated last evening at the Marion Heights Borough meeting they found after the project and resurfacing there they had some compaction issues and just wanted to make him aware.

FINANCE AND PURCHASING – (Stephen Motyka)

Mr. Motyka stated the Department of Energy gave us an expert match analysis. We received an energy use report for Kulpmont, both fuel oil and electricity, and presented it in January and the report is available for all to read. He stated we spend about \$70,000.00 a year cost on heating oil and electricity and currently the federal government offers to pay up to 70% to switch to Solar if we are a Coal Community, which we are. Mr. Motyka stated with a 70% incentive.

Mr. Motyka stated in round numbers if we put in a two-million-dollar system it would pay for 1.12-million-dollar solar system. Mr. Motyka stated he reached out to Bettew and Engineering firm and they gave us a proposal of designing a 572 kilowatt and a 700-kilowatt field, one up top and one by the dog park which will pay for all our energy use and fuel oil use, and we would have a surplus. He stated their proposal is \$92,500.00 and stated he proposes to use the unallocated covid money of \$60,782.00 towards the proposal.

Mr. Motyka stated they would apply for grants; rebates form an agreement with PPL, does all the survey work and that proposal is \$92,500.00. Mr. Bielskie questioned if he has figures on what we pay now and what will pay then. Mr. Motyka stated they need to analyze the land for its actual size, so we profit as much as possible from the surplus. He stated the original numbers stated the total cost of the project would be one million five hundred dollars and 70% of that would be paid by federal incentives. Mr. Motyka stated our payback would be less than five years, the solar fields are good for 25 years and so we could look to profit for 20 years after payback.

Solicitor Greco stated he developed some ordinances for some municipalities on solar and stated some of the big issues are decommissioning cost after 25 years and questioned if we have a plan in place for the Borough to get rid of those panels, and asked if we have an idea of what decommissioning would cost.

Mr. Bielskie stated some of these companies, after 25 years, they will come in and say you pay for the new panels, and we will take the old stuff. Mr. Motyka stated it is a very young industry and stated he does not have an answer for that, adding it would be over a two-million-dollar savings over the life of the project. Solicitor Greco stated he is just saying if this gets approved with Bettew, this should be investigated what replacement or decommission would cost so possible there could be an escrow for that cost.

Mr. Chesney stated he thinks we are putting the cart before the horse and stated possibly they could have a meeting with us and tell us some of these concerns that may arise down the line and to take a cost efficient look at this, how much we are going to save, what is the cost and how much to get rid of the panels down the line.

Mr. Bielskie commented it will be the way of the future, adding there are a lot of big buildings installing solar and stated in his business they probably do 15 houses per month now.

Mr. Motyka stated there is a Pollution reduction grant due April first that he would like to apply for to cover the other 30% not covered. Mr. Hodge questioned if we knew we could use this covid money for that. Solicitor Greco replied stating he does not know the answer to that and stated this is the engineering we are not using it on panels and confirms with Mr. Motyka that is what he is proposing.

Solicitor Greco stated the ARPA requirements may have loosened up and stated he would say to get verification from Justin Skavery and to make the motion contingent on that ARPA money being able to be used. After discussion it was decided to confirm that the ARPA money could be used for this project. Mayor Slaby questioned if action must be taken today. Mr. Motyka replied we just need to submit for the other grant by April first.

MOTION- Mr. Motyka made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Fanella to use the un-allocated covid money of \$60,782.00 toward the proposal and sign into a contract with Bettew to take this from concept to reality, contingent upon confirmation that ARPA funds being able to be used.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (no), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE
6 YEAS – 1 NAY

Mr. Motyka stated the Mill owners responded back to him and stated they hired a consultant out of New York and New Jersey to apply for grants.

Mr. Motyka stated tomorrow at 2 pm the leadership of Environmental Protection will be coming to the borough for Media Day and want to promote the \$100,000.00 they gave to Kulpmont and the Shamokin Creek Alliance adding it was invested well and they are coming here to highlight the success of that program and to meet with Council and the Shamokin Creek Alliance members. Mr. Motyka stated we will meet here for 15 minutes and then go down to see all the work we have done.

Mr. Chesney stated he attended the MAP meeting and stated there is a map on the desk with a listing of all the territory we have in our borough and Marion Heights and divided up into specific sections that could be used for zoning down the line. There will be another meeting and it was stated that the grant of \$85,000.00 would be divided between the three municipalities.

CODE HEALTH AND SAFETY- (Stephen Bielskie)

No Report

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE - (Robert Fanella)

No Report

RECREATION/GRANTS COMMITTEE – (Robert Chesney)

Mr. Chesney stated he attended the MAP meeting and stated there is a map on the desk with a listing of all the territory we have in our borough and Marion Heights and divided up into specific sections that could be used for zoning down the line. There will be another meeting and it was stated that the grant of \$85,000.00 would be divided between the three municipalities.

Mr. Chesney stated the \$50,000.00 blight money received from the county hopefully will be used. Mr. Chesney stated actions are being taken on some of the properties. We have a property on Chestnut we hope continues to be cleaned up. Mr. Chesney stated he thinks this year we need to get strong from Police action to blight action, we have got to draw a line in the sand and let the people know we want this town straightened out to the best of our ability.

PERSONNEL- (Bernard P. Novakoski)

Mr. Novakoski stated we have four applications and stated the committee will need to set up interviews. Mr. Novakoski stated we need to get together with the questions and move forward with that to schedule interviews. Mr. Hodge stated he talked to Rhonda and there were five applications received and we should have Rhonda and Paul there.

Mayor Slaby questioned whether he would be invited in. Mr. Novakoski stated he will be invited. A discussion took place, and the council will meet in executive session after the meeting for personnel.

Solicitor Greco then said going back to Kulp Lane he received an email for the surveying services for Kulp Lane from Brinkash and Associates and he explained what be included in the survey and the cost would be \$4000.00. Solicitor Greco stated we are going to need the survey.

MOTION- Mr. Fanella made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Novakoski to approve the quote from Brinkash and Associates to proceed with the survey at Kulp Lane and the quote of \$4000.00.

Mr. Fanella stated he was questioned by a person if his taxes were increased. Solicitor Greco replies probably not, but again that is part of what we are going to find out.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

FIRE/EMA/POLICE COMMITTEE – (Bernard P. Novakoski)

No Report

Mr. Fanella questioned Chief Ray Siko on the fuel spill on the 900 block of Scott Street. He stated we kind of lost that at the hearing because we did not have a report from anyone that was in the house, asking if he could provide that. Solicitor Greco stated we did not lose; we just needed someone to testify. Chief Siko stated he will reach out to Steve at the Northumberland County EMA, stating they refer to EMA because of the large quantity. Solicitor Greco stated they just need someone to testify. Chief Siko asked the solicitor if he had a date. The Solicitor replied he does in his office and will provide that to him.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

No one spoke.

OLD BUSINESS-

None

NEW BUSINESS-

Mr. Chesney stated he asked and had advertised on Facebook for people to send in the names of elderly people in Kulpmont. He stated he thinks we should honor the elder citizens in the Borough and asked The News Item to include in his article the Borough is collecting this information, and the Borough would then honor and recognize these citizens in some way. Mr. Chesney stated we have received some names of individuals and will continue to collect this information asking for friends, family members to submit

this to us so they could be honored in some way. Mr. Motyka agreed, by formal resolution.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT of the February 14, 2024, monthly meeting

Rhonda Wilk
Borough Secretary

Approval date March 13, 2024