

**AVONDALE BOROUGH
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 17, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Council President, Paul Morgan, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. In attendance were members Mike Essmaker, Stephanie Reichert, and Janet Watts. Council member Lucas Ortiz was absent. Also in attendance were Mayor Susan Rzucidlo, Solicitor Kim Venzie (arrived at 7:06 PM), Treasurer Joan McVaugh, and Administrator Sharon Norris. Lieutenant Joseph Versagli and one member of the public were in the audience.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Mr. Morgan announced there was an executive session prior to the meeting to discuss personnel.

SOUTHERN CHESTER COUNTY REGIONAL POLICE REPORT – Lieutenant Versagli presented the November report and a year-end summary. Overall, things look good – thefts and drug related crimes are down. The Lieutenant covered traffic numbers, fire assists, calls for service and hiring. The Department welcomed Brian Fernandez as the newest member of the force. He also reported that Chief Greenwalt is recovering well from his recent surgery. The Mayor and Council thanked the Lieutenant and the Department for all their hard work in 2024.

BUSINESS:

- **Ordinance 2024-282 – Public Hearing: Tax Levy Ordinance** – setting the Borough tax rate. Mr. Essmaker made a motion to enact Ordinance 2024-282 setting the tax rate for 2025. The millage rate remains the same as 2024 and assigns 3.55 mills for general purposes; 1.20 mills for Emergency Services and .25 mills dedicated to street lighting. Solicitor Venzie summarized the process for enacting this ordinance and reviewed the Exhibits which included the notification to the County and a copy of the proof of publication from the Daily Local News. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0.
- **Resolution 2024-12 – Adopting the 2025 Final Budget** – Ms. Janet Watts made a motion to approve the 2025 Final Budget as advertised. The combined budget expenditure amount is \$3,053,713.75. Mr. Mike Essmaker seconded the motion. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 4-0.
- **Resolution 2024-13 – Emergency Declaration regarding Phorid Flies** – Kennett Square Mayor, Matt Fetick, requested that all neighboring municipalities consider adopting this resolution regarding accelerated testing and funding to find a solution to phorid flies. Ms. Watts made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-13 regarding securing more funding to allow scientists to escalate testing to find a solution to eliminate the phorid flies. Mr. Essmaker seconded the motion. Mayor Susan Rzucidlo explained the issue with these flies. Until 2010, there was a pesticide that managed these flies; however, this product is now banned, and no new product has been found. This is devastating to the mushroom industry as well as residents all over the area whose homes are overrun with these annoying black flies. Council members each weighed in with similar opinions that adopting this resolution is important. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 4-0.
- **Resolution 2024-14** in support of the Avondale and West Grove Fire Companies merger review – Mr. Essmaker made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-14. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion. The Council members briefly discussed the process that was outlined by the fire companies at the last meeting and voiced their support. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 4-0.

- **2025 Meeting Schedule** – Ms. Watts made a motion to adopt the 2025 meeting schedule which will be published in the Daily Local News as required. Mr. Essmaker seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0.
- **2025 Holiday Schedule** – Mr. Essmaker made a motion to adopt the 2025 holiday schedule. Paul seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0.
- **Holiday Light Contest** – Ms. Stephanie Reichert announced the winners of this year’s contest. Competition was stiff and Avondale looked especially colorful and bright this year. Mr. Cook, one of the two second place winners at 235 W. State Street, was in attendance to accept his prize and explained he and his wife’s decorating plan for attack this year. He expressed his thanks and was happy to be a winner. He painted his 75lb pumpkin to look like a Christmas ornament! Winners who were not in attendance can pick up their prizes during normal business hours.

SOLICITOR REPORT

Ms. Venzie reviewed the active liens against two property owners who have outstanding utility bills. She answered questions from the Council. She confirmed that she will be attending the second meeting of each month unless she is needed at additional meetings. Ms. Venzie followed up with the Treasurer regarding the loan, and the AQUA billing.

MAYOR’S REPORT – Mayor Susan discussed the engineering bills and recommended that Council meet with the Consultant and the person who does the billing at that Company to discuss the Borough’s concerns. It was noted that billing for developing proposals is not a widespread practice; billing for multiple people working on the same project should be a discussion topic Council directed the Secretary to gather information and make an appointment with Mr. Wilkes and a representative from the company who is familiar with billing practices.

The Mayor reviewed the Snow Emergency rules and routes and this information will be posted on the website.

ENGINEER’S REPORT

The Council reviewed Mr. Wilkes’ report and had no questions.

OTHER

Parking – The homeowner at 160 Garner Drive requested that the Borough enforce parking on the street in Carillon as he has problems getting in and out of his driveway. Council members who live in that neighborhood and the Mayor discussed the assorted options for parking with the mayor noting that the only way to enforce no parking is to have a sign. The consensus of Council is to ask Guy Swift or members of the AFC to evaluate the parking. Additionally, the staff will reach out to a traffic engineer with experience in parking solutions who could offer some solution.

OLD BUSINESS

Personnel – the Council voted in Executive Session to offer a bonus to the staff and contractor. Mr. Morgan inquired about the Webb Property signs which should be ready early in the new year. Mr. Morgan also said that December has some great Borough activities, and he would like Council to focus on offering more activities throughout the year.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Ms. Reichert made a motion to approve the November Treasurer’s report with transfers and disbursements as follows. Mr. Essmaker seconded the motion.

General Fund:	\$64,543.88
Capital Improvements	\$10,456.56
Sewer Service	\$51,152.39
Water Service	\$33,855.57
Parks & Recreation	\$ 800.00
Street Lighting	\$ 1,146.94
Emergency Services	\$ 108.90
ARPA Funds	\$ 1,500.00
Sewer & Water payments	\$63,241.31
Reserve Fund	<u>\$20,000.00</u>
Leaving a balance in all all funds of	\$374,962.67

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Essmaker made a motion to approve the December 3, 2024, minutes as presented. Mr. Morgan seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The next Borough Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 7 PM.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Norris
Sharon Norris, Secretary

