

**AVONDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 19, 2023
7:00 PM**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: President, Paul Morgan, Vice President Stephanie Reichert and Council members Mike Essmaker, Janet Watts and Lucas Ortiz. Mayor Susan Rzucidlo, Engineer Tom Wilkes, Treasurer Joan McVaugh and Administrator Sharon Norris were also in attendance. Two members of the public were in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER – President Paul Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and announced the meeting is being recorded. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Mr. Morgan thanked the Fire Company, the Southern Chester County Regional Police, the Fire Police and Andy DiFilippo for their response to the recent storm and flooding. He expressed that he would like people to stop going through barricades when the roads are closed. High water is dangerous as no one knows what lies beneath it. Drivers are not only putting themselves at risk but risking the lives of the emergency responders.

SOUTHERN CHESTER COUNTY REGIONAL POLICE – Chief Greenwalt summarized the activities of the force including what went on in Avondale since the last meeting. He noted that things in the Borough have been uneventful. Of note was that PENNDOT is posting the weight restriction signs and the police will soon be able to enforce the restriction by ticketing. If Council is interested, the traffic enforcement officer can come to a meeting and explain the ticketing process. The Chief reported that the Santa train was a big success.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Gabel updated the Council on his plans for a property he owns at 60 W. State (the corner of State and Pennsylvania Avenue). His plan is for an anchor restaurant that might not only be a restaurant but could also serve as a gathering spot for coffee or a venue for special events. He is in the early stages of planning but hopes to have a liquor license and be operational in 2025.

Mr. VanLoon, who owns property at 505 and 507 Pennsylvania Avenue discussed his frustration with the trees on Pennsylvania Avenue. There is a tree that appears dangerous to him with a large dead branch hanging over the road. The branch came from a tree on his neighbor's property. Additionally, he has a tree that at minimum needs trimming but due to the high costs of doing work on Pennsylvania Avenue (having to hire a flagger crew in addition to the cost of the tree work) makes the job cost prohibitive. He thinks PennDOT should do something about these trees, and he would like the Borough's assistance in persuading them to do the tree work. Mr. VanLoon has reached out to Representative Sappey's office and to John Lawrence's office. After discussion it was determined that the Mayor will call Rep. Sappey and PennDOT and Mr. VanLoon will contact PECO.

BUSINESS:

Resolution 2023-12 – Adopting The 2024 Final Budget - On a motion by Council member Mike Essmaker and seconded by Council member Janet Watts, the 2024 final budget was adopted by a 5-0 vote.

Resolution 2023-13 – Tax Levy Resolution - On a motion by Ms. Watts, seconded by Mr. Essmaker, the Tax Levy Resolution setting the 2024 Borough Real estate tax rate to 5 mills (which is the same rate as last year) was adopted by a 5-0 vote.

Advertisement of the January 2024 Meeting Schedule – On a motion by Mr. Essmaker, seconded by Mr. Morgan, the Council authorized the staff to advertise the January 2024 meeting schedule. The motion carried 5-0.

Resolution 2023-14 – 2024 Holiday Schedule - On a motion by Mr. Essmaker and seconded by Vice President Stephanie Reichert, the 2024 Holiday schedule was adopted setting the dates that are considered paid holidays and the Borough office will be closed. The motion carried 5-0.

Consideration Of New Gates At The Sewer Plant and The Public Works Building - Mr. Essmaker made a motion that Council authorize Utopia Landscapes to install an access gate at the back of the sewer plant at a cost of \$4,600 and an access gate at the public works building at a cost of \$2,000 for a total cost of \$6,600. Ms. Watts seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

Emergency Management Year End Report – Mr. Aguilera was unable to attend tonight's meeting and will be in attendance at the January 16, 2024 meeting to present his report and answer questions from Council.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Tom Wilkes, Borough Engineer, presented his pavement condition study and recommendations. The Council discussed the report focusing on money; how to pay for the improvements and securing grants to do the road and pipe work. Mr. Wilkes will speak to the grant expert at Carroll and Mr. Essmaker and Mayor Susan will contact Senator Kane's office. Mr. Wilkes also reviewed his monthly report with Council.

OTHER

Bridge Over Route 41 Discussion – The Mayor led this discussion summarizing a recent visit from a PECO inspector who happened to be inspecting a PECO line under the bridge. He shared his concerns about the condition of the bridge. Previously, Mr. Morgan went under the bridge and took pictures of the condition. He too shared his concerns with Council. The Mayor has communicated these concerns to a group of PennDOT, local and state government officials that she has been working with. She has discussed this with the Solicitor. PennDOT's recent communication to the Mayor noted that their certified inspectors did not observe a significant change in the condition of the bridge and they will continue to inspect it on a 6-month cycle. Once the holidays are over, the Mayor will continue to work with our representatives and PennDOT to try and get the bridge replaced. The Council also discussed having an independent bridge inspection performed and asked Mr. Wilkes to get an estimate together for Carroll to do a bridge inspection.

MAYOR'S REPORT – Mayor Susan announced the great news that the Borough received a PA Small Water and Sewer grant for approximately \$400,000!

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Mr. Essmaker made a motion to approve the October 2023 Treasurer's Report as presented. Council member Lucas Ortiz seconded the motion. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Morgan called for a motion. Mr. Essmaker made a motion to approve the December 5, 2023 minutes as presented. Mr. Ortiz seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Morgan made the following announcements:

- The Borough Council Organization Meeting is Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 7 PM followed by a regular Borough Council meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT – There was no public comment.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Norris
Sharon Norris, Secretary