

AVONDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 17, 2023
7:00 PM

Council Members Present: President Paul Morgan, Vice President, Stephanie Reichert, Council members Mike Essmaker, Janet Watts and Fernando Tena-Diaz and Mayor Susan Rzucidlo. Also in attendance were Solicitor Kim Venzie, Treasurer Joan McVaugh, and Sharon Norris, Borough Administrator. There were two (2) members of the public in attendance.

Call to Order – President Paul Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements – Mr. Morgan announced that an executive session was held on January 11, 2023 to discuss the Request for Proposal responses. He also announced that an Executive Session would be held after tonight’s meeting to discuss that same topic. Additionally, Solicitor Kim Venzie noted she would like to update the Council on her and Mr. O’Neill’s latest meeting with the Developer of the Quarry project during the executive session.

Public Comment – Anthony Crognale, the longtime owner of Earl’s Sub Shop and his plumber Mike Crossan, were in attendance to speak to the Council about an ongoing issue with the sewer pipe clogging every couple of months. Mr. Crognale had provided the Council with a copy of the video scoping of the pipe. The Council and the two men discussed the issue. All parties agreed that this was normally not a Borough issue; however, Mr. Crognale and Mr. Crossan’s opinion is that something installed by the Borough 50+ years ago could be causing the issue and for that reason, perhaps the Borough would contribute to the cost of the repair. The Council said they would ask Tom Wilkes, the Borough’s new Engineer, to take a look at the video and speak to Mr. Crognale.

Southern Chester County Regional Police Department (SCCRPD) – Lt Joe Versagli was in attendance and presented a thorough recap of 2022. He noted that Council would start to again be receiving weekly reports in the near future. He was available to answer any questions the Council had.

Miscellaneous: Council member Janet Watts discussed whose responsibility was it to remove cars parked in the fire line at the shopping center. Council directed Ms. Norris to contact the Police to take care of this. She also inquired about the food truck at Gizzy’s Gas Station (the Borough issues the permits for food trucks).

Business

Avondale Community Garden – Mr. Kirk Reichert volunteered to take charge of the Community Garden for the upcoming season. The Council thanked him for taking this on.

ARPA Funds for Playground Equipment – Mayor Susan Rzucidlo explained the value of the items she would like to purchase in the amount of approximately \$40,000 to supplement the items the Borough will purchase as part of the DCNR grant and the federal grant from Senator Casey’s office. These purchases are geared toward ADA accessibility and include the purchase of ADA accessible equipment. She also noted that purchasing these items at this time would allow the Borough to take advantage of sale pricing. The Council discussed how ARPA funds can be used,

focusing on one park at a time and grant match requirements. After discussion, this topic was tabled to get more information and will come back before the Council at a later date.

Request for Proposal Results – The Borough Council has chosen Carroll Engineering as the new Borough Engineering firm. Tom Wilkes will be the Engineer for every day Borough activities, such as roads, stormwater reviews and issues, subdivision and land development review, and Bill Malin, Sanitary Engineer will be overseeing the Water/Sewer plant. The Borough Council thanked Mr. O'Neill and MacCombie Engineering for their service to the Borough.

Chester County Planning Commission Urban Center Improvements Inventory (UCCII) Listing Review and Update – the UCII is a list of priority planning and capital improvements projects used in conjunction with securing grant funding from the Chester County Community Revitalization Program. The funding program has changed from yearly to every two years. Projects must be on the list to be considered for funding. The Council reviewed the list. The list is lengthy and includes items such as infrastructure mapping, infrastructure repair and upgrades, addressing flooding mitigation, improving roads, sidewalks, and stormwater projects.

Borough Sponsored Activity Schedule – in an effort to keep the meeting short, the Council moved this item to the next agenda.

Mayor's Report – Mayor Rzucidlo reported on the grant award from Senator Casey's office and that she continues to work on finding grants for playgrounds.

Approval of the December 20, 2022 Minutes – Mr. Morgan called for a motion. Council member Mike Essmaker made the motion to approve the December 20, 2022 minutes as presented. Vice President Stephanie Reichert seconded the motion. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 5-0.

Finance Committee

Approval of Treasurer's Report and Payment of the Bills – Mr. Morgan called for a motion. Mr. Essmaker made a motion to approve the December Treasurer's Report and Payment of the Bills. Ms. Watts seconded the motion. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 5-0.

Insurance and Treasurer's Bond Coverage Discussion – Treasurer Joan McVaugh outlined the differences in coverage between the Borough's current insurance carrier and switching to PIRMA the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Risk Management Association, a group self-insurance pool that offers comprehensive liability and property coverages to Pennsylvania public entities. The Council discussed the differences in cost and coverage between the two entities, noting that coverage is greater through PIRMA. Mr. Essmaker made a motion that the Borough switch to PIRMA (through HA Thompson). Ms. Reichert seconded the motion. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 5-0.

Water Rate Increase Discussion – Ms. McVaugh explained to the Council that the Water Account does not bring in enough revenue to support the water system and that rates should be raised so the account can sustain itself and the Borough can start saving for necessary upgrades and repairs to the system. Ms. McVaugh provided a sample of what the proposed increase would look like by providing each Council member with a copy of their most recent water bill and a copy of that bill with the proposed rate increase. The members noted that the proposed increase would amount to no more than approx. \$10/month per resident and in many cases, it would be 30% less than that. The Council discussed how in previous years the rates would be increased by such a minute amount that the raise did not significantly impact the Water account. After a thorough

discussion Mr. Morgan called for the vote. Mr. Essmaker made the motion to authorize the Solicitor to draft an ordinance to raise the water rates to increase revenue in the water account by \$55,000. The motion was seconded by Ms. Reichert. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 5-0.

Announcements

Mr. Morgan made the following announcements:

- 1) The next Borough Council meeting is Tuesday, February 7, 2023.
- 2) Christmas trees will be picked up through January 23, 2023.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Norris

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Borough Administrator