

AVONDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

MAY 2, 2023

7:00 PM

Council Members Present: President, Paul Morgan, Vice President Stephanie Reichert and Council members Mike Essmaker and Janet Watts. Mayor Susan Rzucidlo, Treasurer Joan McVaugh, Administrator Sharon Norris and Acting Lt. Joseph Versagli were also in attendance.

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.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

BUSINESS

Acceptance of Resignation of Council Member – Council Member Fernando Tena-Diaz had submitted his resignation due to a change in jobs. Mr. Morgan called for a motion. Council Member Janet Watts made a motion to accept Fernando Tena's resignation. The motion was seconded by Council Member Mike Essmaker. Mayor Susan Rzucidlo presented Fernando with a Proclamation thanking him for his service and recognizing him as being the first Hispanic community member to hold a Council position. Council wished him well and hoped that he would become an active volunteer. Fernando thanked the Council for the opportunity. A notice will be placed on the Borough website indicating that the Council has a vacancy. Interested residents should provide their resumes by May 12th. Candidates will be interviewed at the May 18th Borough Council meeting and one candidate will be appointed to the Council. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 4-0.

Discussion of Trash Rates – The Council members continued this discussion from the last meeting. The rate the Borough is now paying for trash and recycling service has increased substantially. The trash and recycling rate is now \$124,500 for the first year, \$133,900 for the second year and \$144,000 for the third year. The difference in the rate the Borough pays for this service between this year and last is approximately \$39,400. The rate residents pay for trash is currently \$55.00 – a rate that residents have been paying since 2007. The Council debated raising trash and recycling rates versus using monies from other funds to cover the cost of the increase. The main points of the discussion were not increasing the trash rate since the water rate was just raised; the increased cost of living that we are all experiencing; increasing the fees to cover the costs; or increasing fees incrementally over 3 years but not completely covering the cost. In the middle of the discussion, Mr. Morgan called for an executive session to discuss personnel. When the meeting reconvened, the Council continued the discussion. The discussion ended with a motion from Mr. Essmaker to increase the trash rate to \$63.25 per quarter which is a 13.5% increase. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Watts. Mr. Essmaker called for the vote. The motion carried 3-1 with Mr. Morgan voting nay and the Mayor noting she would veto the Ordinance when it was presented to her for approval. The next step in this process is for the Solicitor to draft and advertise an Ordinance for Council approval at an upcoming meeting. This topic will be discussed at the next several meetings.

AGREM – Mr. Morgan would like the President of AGREM to attend an upcoming Council meeting to explain the role AGREM plays in the Borough. He noted that the Borough pays the yearly AGREM dues, but he thought it would be beneficial for all of the Council to hear first-hand what AGREM does. The Council briefly discussed AGREM noting that Ulises Aguilera, the Emergency Management Coordinator, is the Borough's representative to AGREM. The Staff will schedule a date for AGREM to attend a Council meeting.

MAYOR'S REPORT – The Mayor reported that Earth Day was a giant success with more than 40 volunteers attending! They found satellite dishes, air conditioners, many tires, lots of debris and trash. The Council extends their thanks to all of the great volunteers. All participants who wanted one, received a letter stating their volunteer hours.

Mayor Susan reported that long time business, Peter's Beauty Salon, has been sold. She would like to write a proclamation honoring Peter and his business. The Council was in agreement. A nail salon will be moving in.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Morgan called for a motion. Council Member Stephanie Reichert made a motion to approve the April 18, 2023 minutes as presented. Mrs. Watts seconded the motion. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 4-0.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Treasurer Joan McVaugh noted some highlights from the Treasurer's report such as interest income has increased since switching to PLGIT and the EIT tax is a bit more than last year. Mr. Morgan called for a motion to approve the Treasurer's report. Mr. Essmaker made the motion to approve the March 2023 Treasurer's Report. Mrs. Reichert seconded the motion. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 4-0. Ms. McVaugh also noted she is looking to update the current billing software and would like to eventually offer credit card payments in the office. Council discussed also allowing residents to pay on the website with credit cards (not through Invoice Cloud).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Morgan read the following:

- 1) Election Day is May 16th. The Borough office will be closed as it is a polling location. Hours for voting are 7 AM – 8 PM
- 2) The next Borough Council meeting is Thursday, May 18, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Adjournment – Mrs. Watts made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Essmaker seconded the motion. The motion carried 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:16 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Norris

Sharon Norris, Secretary