

**AVONDALE BOROUGH
COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 7, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE– Council President, Paul Morgan called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. In attendance were Vice President Mike Essmaker and Council member Stephanie Reichert. Council members Janet Watts and Lucas Ortiz arrived at 7:06 PM. Also in attendance were Mayor Susan Rzucidlo, Solicitor Kim Venzie, Engineer Tom Wilkes, Treasurer Joan McVaugh, and Administrator Sharon Norris. There were 2 members of the public in attendance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mr. Morgan announced that an executive session was held after the April 16th meeting to discuss legal issues and before tonight’s meeting to discuss personnel issues. He also announced that an executive session would be held after the meeting to discuss personnel issues.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

BUSINESS:

Resolution 2024-08 - A resolution of Borough Council to enter into a professional services agreement with National Water Specialties Companies to implement a cross connection control program in the Borough to survey the water distribution system, identify hazards and monitor the installation maintenance of backflow prevention assemblies. Solicitor Kim Venzie reviewed this resolution for Council. The consensus is to move forward with this program which is provided at no cost to the Borough. The Council will vote on this at a future meeting.

Avondale Residential Conversions: Borough Solicitor Kim Venzie explained to the Council that the staff suspected that larger homes are being used as rooming houses within the Borough. She noted that the Ordinance does allow for residential conversion of the bigger homes in the Borough. This is vastly different from rooming houses which are not allowed in the residential zoning districts. Ms. Venzie explained that the Ordinance should be updated to be more comprehensive. Additionally, the definition of family needs to be updated. Council members Stephanie Reichert and Mike Essmaker will meet with the Solicitor to begin the process. Mr. Morgan will be the backup in case either of them is unavailable.

Water Issues:

The Council discussed the recent low pressure and water outage incidents that occurred as a result of the reservoir cover project. Mr. Morgan addressed a recent communication he sent about the need to improve the communication process during the reservoir cover project. A plan of action was developed that included weekly meetings with the engineer, KBX, staff and Ms. Reichert. Following the meetings, Ms. Reichert would update the Council with what she learned. Additionally, Mr. Wilkes would provide a written summary each day. Members of Council and Mayor Rzucidlo commented positively on the new communication process. Mr. Craig Lutz from KBX was in attendance to speak about the causes responsible for the water outage and the steps KBX took to resolve the issue. Of note was that the transducer had a broken piece of pebble in it and the injection pump failed. Both items were approx. 2 years old. The monitoring system wasn’t working properly due to the failure of these items and once it was determined that the reservoir had lost 4 feet of water, the process was started immediately to fill it back up. The depth of the reservoir is what provides the pressure to the distribution system. Once the reservoir is taken offline, and the water is being provided through the bypass valve, the Borough’s backup plan is to have water tankers in the Borough tied into the system to supply water to the residents. Because there was a water outage, the DEP requires the Borough to provide an overview of the issues and the corrective action taken. Mr. Lutz provided his draft response to DEP and Council and the Mayor reviewed and commented on it.

Mission Control System – Mr. Lutz presented the reasons why a Mission Control Monitoring System is important to the monitoring of a water system. The Wastewater system has one in place. The Council agreed and authorized the purchase of the system at the last meeting.

May 9 Lead Line and Water Service Inventory Town Hall Meeting – Treasurer Joan McVaugh gave an overview of the presentation. She showed Council examples of different pipes, the diagram that the Garage Volunteers will be filling out, and she explained that they will be noting the age of the water meter as the borough would like to start a meter replacement program. The student volunteers will also be double checking serial numbers. She went through the testing kit and showed Council how the testing swab would turn color if lead was discovered. The volunteer who will be leading the student effort is a former Garage member named, Augustine Espinosa-Ortiz and he will be leading the Spanish language Town Hall meeting. He will also develop a database for the Borough to store the information we find. Residents can perform the testing themselves. They should contact the Borough office for supplies and instruction. Ms. McVaugh invited any council member to attend and provide a welcome message. Mr. Morgan volunteered for the May 9th meeting.

Council member Lucas Ortiz volunteered for the May 16 meeting. Student volunteers will be provided with ID badges so residents will recognize they are working on behalf of the Borough.

Accepting Credit Cards – Treasurer Joan McVaugh has found an offer from M&T Bank to process credit card payments for residents to pay utility bills or to pay for permits. The council discussed fees for the cards and decided that any fees would be passed on to residents. This option will not be posted on the website until the Invoice Cloud contract is completed. The consensus of Council is they would like to provide this service to residents using M&T Bank and will vote on this at the next meeting.

Speeding on Church Road – Mayor Rzucidlo has received reports of speeding on Church Street. She has contacted the Southern Chester County Regional Police Department (SCCRPD), and they put up a speed monitoring sign on Church St. She requested that council consider installing small signs with flashing lights such as “Caution/Slow Down/Pedestrian traffic sign with flashers and has provided Council with several signs to choose from. The Council picked the sign they would like to purchase. They also discussed the option of speed bumps which they will not be considering.

Verizon Pole/Stormwater Work – Mr. DiFillippo removed the pipe that was thought to have had a Verizon pole through it and did not find that a pole was in it. Council discussed how this could have happened as the video showed what looked like a pipe through the stormwater pipe and there was always flooding in that area. The Council discussed returning the check to Verizon. Treasurer Joan McVaugh requested that we do more investigation before returning the check. The staff will contact Pipe Data View and discuss the situation with them and report back at the next meeting when returning the check will be considered again.

ENGINEER’S REPORT – Borough Engineer, Tom Wilkes, reported on the reservoir cover project, noting the new communication system with daily emails and weekly update meetings. He summarized the reason for the cover which is to improve water quality by keeping the reservoir closed off. He explained that backup systems are in place. The reservoir will be drained and offline for approx. 2 weeks.

Memorial Wall – The existing monument was moved, and the two new walls have been set in place. They all must be cleaned. Bruce Mangini and Chardy have donated bronze stars, but they are still on backorder. Dave Besselman, who was not in attendance, told Mr. Manzini that he had a budget for landscaping and would be working with the scouts. Mr. DiFilippo said he would rototill around the flagpole; however, Mr. Manzini said he would take care of that. The Council targeted Veterans Day 2024 as the first celebration to be held at the new location. Mr. Manzini also spoke about a recent ruling allowing nonembalming, backyard burials.

Solicitor’s Report – Ms. Venzie explained the process we have started for posting houses we suspect are housing multiple single people in the Borough. We post the houses and the landlords’ house. This gets the immediate attention of those we are trying to reach. Ms. Norris explained that we heard immediately from half of those posted and they have explained how they will rectify the situation.

Ms. Venzie also reported she is working with the zoning officer on the application from the Presbyterian Church for a new, light up church sign also the application for a tortilla factory at 88 Pennsylvania Avenue. On both of these properties, the Borough Code does not clearly support these uses. She asked Borough Council their opinions on these applications.

Mayor’s Report – Mayor Susan reported on the following:

Railroad Track Concern – a resident had expressed a concern about the tracks and the Mayor reached out to East Penn Railroad. She reported that the tracks are inspected every week. What the resident sees in fluctuation is normal and necessary for the safe operation of the train.

Route 41 Bridge – PennDOT is agreeable to allowing Justin Coyle, the bridge engineer from Carroll Engineering, to join them when they next inspect the bridge.

Parks – The Mayor received a \$10,500 Dockstader grant for grading at the new playground area and for installation of a pollinator garden.

The **Community Garden** received a Dockstader grant of \$2,500.

Certificates of Graduation – The Mayor, as she has done in prior years, will be presenting all Avondale Borough graduating seniors with congratulatory graduation certificates from Avondale Borough at both the Avon Grove High School and the Avon Grove Charter School. The Mayor said she would gladly make certificates for students who were graduating from private or other charter schools if anyone knew of any.

MS4 Compliance Program – The Mayor was contacted by Resource Environmental Solutions to partner with them on a stream restoration project they are doing in the East Branch of the White Clay in conjunction with PennDOT. The Mayor would like to connect RES with Mr. Wilkes. This item will be placed on a future agenda.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Ms. Reichert made a motion to approve the March 2024 Treasurer’s report with disbursements and transfers as follows. Mr. Essmaker seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

General Fund

\$71,497.05

Sewer Service	\$76,102.50
Water Service	\$7,229.61
Street Lighting Fund	\$2,568.07
Emergency Services Fund	\$72.60
ARPA Funds	\$25,000
Sewer & Water Payments	\$96,825.90
Leaving a total cash balance for all funds of \$709,075.21.	

OTHER

Avondale Borough Vision 2030: Mapping our Vision for Tomorrow – this agenda item was postponed.

Review of Route 41 Bridge Pictures – Mrs. Reichert showed the pictures of the 41 bridge to the Engineer and Council. She will send the video to Justin Coyle at Carroll. The PennDOT inspection will be in June.

Constable Payment – the Borough has utilized the services of the elected Constable to post houses as discussed earlier. Council was provided with some information on how other municipalities handle fees for posting properties. Council will plan to set the fee for this service at the next Council meeting.

The Mayor noted she will not attend the May 21, 2024, meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Mrs. Reichert made a motion to approve the April 16, 2024, minutes as presented. Mr. Essmaker seconded the motion. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The next Borough Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, at 7 PM
- Town Hall Meeting regarding the drinking water service in English is May 9, 2024, at the Garage at 7 PM
- Town Hall Meeting regarding the drinking water service in Spanish is May 16, 2024, at the Garage at 7 PM.
- Bubble Palooza will be held on June 29, 2024, from 10 AM – 2 PM with Galilee UAME Church, The Garage Youth Center, and Grace and Mercy Ministries in the Second Street Park.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Norris