

**AVONDALE BOROUGH  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 15, 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, Janet Watts, and Lucas Ortiz. Also in attendance were Solicitor Kim Venzie, Engineer, Tom Wilkes, Treasurer Joan McVaugh, and Administrator, Sharon Norris. Mayor Susan Rzucidlo was absent. Guy Swift, President of the Avondale Fire Company, was in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no public comment.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Mr. Morgan announced there would be an executive session after the meeting to discuss contracts and personnel.

**BUSINESS:**

- **Fire Company Presentation** – AFC President, Guy Swift updated the Council on recent events with the Fire and Ambulance division including the continued challenges they face with budgets and personnel. He discussed grants they have received, membership drives, hall rentals, and reducing costs.
- **Ordinance 2024-281** – Public Hearing – amending Zoning to include a definition for family and to revise the definition of residential conversion; and to amend section 430-81 to update regulations applicable to residential conversions. Solicitor Venzie opened the public hearing and outlined the reasons the Council was considering this Ordinance. As part of this process, it was brought to light that the County needed to review the Borough ordinances to make sure they comply with fair housing laws. Those updates were incorporated into this ordinance. This compliance is necessary when applying for grants. Ms. Venzie outlined the Exhibits and reviewed the letter from the CCPC. She closed the public hearing. Mr. Essmaker made a motion that Council enact Ordinance 2024-281 with a second by Mr. Ortiz. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion passed 5-0.
- **Declaration of Covenants for Indian Run Park and Pomeroy Park** – It was brought to the Borough’s attention that descriptions for these two parks were not properly described in the recorded Declarations and the County asked that they be updated. Ms. Venzie worked with the County to correct these documents and the legal description so that they were correct and could be re-recorded. Mr. Essmaker made a motion that Mr. Morgan sign the Declarations and that once executed, Ms. Venzie would have them recorded. Ms. Watts seconded the motion. Mr. Morgan called for the vote. The motion carried 5-0.
- **Road Repairs** – At the last meeting, the Council had voted to fix two areas of road that have deteriorated to the point that they need repair and can’t be patched with cold patch. They areas are West Third Street from Pennsylvania Avenue to Pomeroy and 40 LF of Second Street between Morris and Chatham. Mr. Essmaker was not at that meeting and wanted to review this repair with Mr. Wilkes. Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Essmaker have been working on finding grants to pay for some bigger road projects and want to ensure that road issues are considered with the road program in mind.

**ENGINEER’S REPORT** – Mr. Wilkes reviewed his report and answered questions from the Council

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT** – Ms. Venzie summarized her meeting with Mr. Webb's son after the settlement and shared some historical information about Avondale that she learned from him. She also discussed House Bill 2265 which if it passes allows for Council to vote on salary increases for the position of Council member, Borough president and Mayor. If this bill passes, raises for Council members would go into effect after their next reelection. Ms. Venzie talked about late bill payments and putting liens on properties. Currently, there is an Avondale property on the sheriff sale list with an outstanding water balance. The staff will contact the Sheriff's office to let them know that property owes back water, sewer and trash fees.

**MAYORS REPORT** – Mr. Morgan read the Mayor's report in her absence. Topics included:

- DVRPC grant: the Mayor met with DVRPC to discuss potential projects that may qualify for TASA funding. TASA provides support and expert services throughout the grant application process free of charge to small communities like Avondale. They thought a trail or sidewalk on Indian Run Rd with stormwater management to reduce flooding on that street and protect walkers was a good candidate for this grant.
- Playgrounds are moving forward. Paving will start next week, and Andy will be removing the old fencing and other items before that starts. We are getting pricing on fences and the Mayor has submitted a grant application for help in paying for it.
- Thanks to everyone who helped out at this year's Harvest Festival. It was a big success!

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Reservoir cover** is on, and the grant should be closed out in the near future. This will come off of the agenda.

**Memorial Wall** – the Borough is waiting for a quote from a memorial company to complete the wall.

**Streetlights** – no update.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Watts made a motion to approve the October 1, 2024, minutes as presented. Mr. Essmaker seconded the motion. The motion carried 5-0.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Ms. McVaugh presented the preliminary budget to Council. They discussed the different areas where the Borough has big shortfalls including trash rates and emergency services. The Council talked about the recycling grants subsidizing trash fees, but the Borough's grant awards for recycling have been much lower than in year's past. Ms. Reichert asked Council if they were interested in moving toward tablets rather than a hard copy meeting packet. Council was agreeable and requested Ms. McVaugh do some research on affordable tablets with a larger screen. Council members discussed late fees.

## **OTHER**

Ms. McVaugh expressed a concern shared by Brent about a manhole in the train yard where Aqua was doing some sampling.

**Road Program** – Mr. Wilkes discussed the road program and using Liquid Fuels funds specifically for that purpose. They are looking at several different grants. Chatham is one of the roads identified. Ms.

McVaugh suggested the Dirt and Gravel road program for low volume roads and they discussed roads that might be good candidates.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. The next Borough Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 6, 2024, at 7 PM.

**ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 9 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sharon Norris*

Sharon Norris, Secretary