

Borough of Susquehanna Depot
Minutes November 7, 2016

Present: Susan Crawford, John Hendrickson, Barbara Larsen, Dana Rockwell, Roy Williams, Joseph Varsik and Deborah Zayas

Also Present: Margaret Biegert,

MOTION: By Roy Williams seconded by Barbara Larsen to approve the agenda. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Roy Williams seconded by Susan Crawford to approve the minutes of October 12, 2016. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Barbara Larsen seconded by Roy Williams to approve the minutes of October 19, 2016. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Roy Williams seconded by John Hendrickson to approve the minutes of October 24, 2016. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

Persons Requesting Time on the Agenda: Arctic Bear

Margaret Biegert explained that a representative from Arctic Bear asked to come to the meeting to discuss a proposed service contract and she does not know a lot about furnace repair/ maintenance. She will call to see why they did not attend the meeting.

Budget Review:

Margaret Biegert advised council that the millage rate discussed during the last budget meeting has changed. She had received updated valuation figures from the assessment office the prior Thursday. The valuation had been reduced by approximately \$170,000. The anticipated reduction was increased significantly with the fire at Drinker Creek Beverage and demolition of the Iverson house on Broad St. Additionally there are eleven blighted properties that have been either taken down over the past several years or anticipated to be taken down shortly in an effort to continue the neighborhood cleanup/revitalization efforts.

Council reviewed the general fund budget worksheet that reflected anticipated income figures based on the new millage rates. The income worksheet included figures without and with a 1.5 millage tax increase. The worksheet also included anticipated expenditures with modest increases to utilities and insurance, an increase to the police vehicle savings and no employee increases. Margaret reminded council that the last tax increase had been 9 years ago. After reviewing the expenditures and taking the lower income into consideration council felt they would need to increase the tax rate to keep up with the rising costs over the past over the past 9 years.

John Hendrickson said he did not want to increase the taxes. Other council members agreed that no one wanted to raise taxes, but felt with less income and increasing expenses they had no choice but to raise taxes after 9 years.

John Hendrickson asked about the Adams Cable fees. Margaret explained that the income from Adams CATV was approximately \$7,500. per year and originally established for sidewalks repair. John Hendrickson asked what repairs had been done. Margaret said she did not know how the prior council spent those funds and that it had only been rededicated back to Capital Reserve/Sidewalk line item after 2012. There were repairs on Main St. She also pointed out that many of the Capital Reserve Savings line items were depleted and redirected to the Police Pension / Unfunded Liabilities account the prior year in an effort to avoid raising taxes in 2016. Margaret reminded John Hendrickson that she could only provide projected figures based on history, and asked if he had an idea or an area that he wanted to cut to keep the budget in balance in order to avoid a tax increase. None was offered. Council decided to vote on adopting the proposed 2017 at the regular council meeting on meeting November 9, 2016. Council discussed taking funding for police vests by combining zoning / police capital reserve line items.

Margaret went over a list of blight removal and drainage grants totaling \$135,000 over the past couple of years. She pointed out that the borough is working on a budget about half that of Montrose and Forest City. Despite the low tax base, there have been a number of projects completed in the borough in areas that have been neglected for years.

Roy Williams updated council on the Erie Ave. and Prospect St. drainage project, the high St and Vine St. road and curbing project. He would like to see a complete or partial paving on Washington St. in 2017 depending on funding.

Meeting adjourned: 6:12 PM