

Borough of Susquehanna Depot
Minutes November 9, 2016

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

Also Present: Mayor Nancy Hurley, Margaret Biegert

Guests: Eric Barnes, John Benedict, John Fabiseski, Greg Lake, C. Jason Larsen, Marla Tinklepaugh, Lillian T. Senko, John Sholtiss, Chris Vinsko,

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

MOTION: By Deborah Zayas seconded by Barbara Larsen to accept the low bid of \$27,250.00 from WEB Construction for the Demolition of Dangerous Structure Project/1248 Main St. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Susan Crawford seconded by Roy Williams to approve the bill list as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Barbara Larsen seconded by Roy Williams to approve the 2017 proposed budget as presented. Susan Crawford, Barbara Larsen, Dana Rockwell, Joseph Varsik, Roy Williams, Deborah Zayas voted yes. John Hendrickson voted no. Motion carried.

Joe Varsik opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Bid Opening: Demolition of Dangerous Structure / 1248

Joseph Varsik opened and read the following bids for the demolition of 1248 Main St:

Brdaric Excavating Inc. of Luzerne PA, \$135,000.00

Artistic Excavation Inc of Olyphant PA, \$63,428.00

T. Brennan Heavy Equipment LLC of Carbondale PA, 78,000.00

AR Poppel Construction Inc of Wilkes-Barre PA, \$57,000.00

Web Construction of Susquehanna PA, \$27,250.00

Eric Barnes of Web Construction explained that he wanted to keep the quote low as he lived in Susquehanna and felt this was an important community project. He had also taken the large amount of reclaimable material into consideration when submitting his bid. Council was advised that the bids did not cover asbestos removal. Dana Rockwell believed there was asbestos in building. Eric Barnes advised that there was a very small amount of suspected material which had been removed and disposed of properly. Roy Williams had received a report from Postupack, a licensed asbestos inspector company, that shows no asbestos in the building. The asbestos report will have to be filed with DEP. Eric Barnes outlined scaffolding and sidewalk protection plans. He will work with the borough in regards to dumpster placement and anticipates project to be complete one month after the start date. Roy Williams pointed out that funding for this demolition project comes from the Impact Fees for community improvement. Council awarded the project to WEB Construction.

Public Comment:

John Benedict advised council that the problems on Franklin Ave. are continuing. He was optimistic, but is now discouraged as the people from the drug/condemned house continue to return to the neighborhood and break in to the house. He had been given the cell numbers of two Susquehanna officers. He has called those numbers as well as the police station, but the police are never available. He and his neighbors are watching out for each other, but they need back up.

Mayor Hurley explained that the police are only available part time and not always scheduled. Mr. Benedict said that he was asked to support at full time police force at the Police & Public Combined Efforts (P&PCE) meeting, but Mr. Benedict would like to see the some part time police before he could support a full time department. Mr. Benedict asked for a copy of the schedule. Mayor Hurley it was not available to the public and that residents are to call 911. The dispatcher will know if the police are on duty and how to get a hold of them. John Benedict said that he had also sent a text to both officers. He ran into Officer Cramer with his child later that day, but never heard from Officer Sweet. When he finally did get in touch with Officer Sweet, he was told to call Dennis Murray. He felt like he was

fighting a losing battle. He asked what was going to be done about the Condemned/Drug House. Nancy asked him to come to the P&PCE meeting. John Benedict said it was a waste of time. Roy Williams advised that he had re-secured the house himself on Monday, but has been broken in again.

Jason Larsen had concerns about a nasty dog in the neighborhood that has gone after people. He was concerned that it would attack a child. He had called the dog warden who told him to catch it himself. The owner was given a fine, but he believed that the owner would only keep the dog under control for about a month. He said if the dog got out he would shoot it in the street. Mayor Hurley said that he would need to fill out a statement. Roy Williams said that he had contacted the Dog Warden. He and Officer Cramer have an appointment to meet with him the following morning.

Roy Williams said that council needs to address the police issues once and for all. If a schedule can't be adhered to, then changes need to be made.

Marla Tinkelpaugh had noticed a neighbor's door open and wanted to report it. She asked if the borough had a mutual-aid agreement with the neighboring municipalities when our officers are off duty. She was told yes.

John Benedict said the drugs are getting worse and break-ins are increasing.

Nancy said that the police department is working around the schedule of people who work full time elsewhere. Four part-time people cannot be on duty all the time. The drugs and break-ins will continue to get worse until the borough can hire more officers. She has had an incident at her home where she had to call 911. She said that it's a scary situation, but they are trying their best. John Benedict said it was hard to sleep at night. Joe Varsik asked about the scheduled for the next P&PCE meeting. Mayor Hurley advised that they are normally scheduled the last Thursday of the month, but the next meeting was rescheduled to December 1st because of the Thanksgiving holiday. John Benedict asked if some of the other officers could attend in order to get other opinions.

Persons Requesting Time on the Agenda

John Fabiseski of Trehab told council that he has been recovering from drug addiction since 2014. He is a certified recovery specialist working for Trehab. Mr. Fabiseski had come to Susquehanna after reading the articles about the current drug problems. He had witnessed drug deals while sitting at the parking area outside the Chinese restaurant. He recognized these activities as drug deals, because he has had experience with them. He contacted the mayor and met with her, Chief Sweet and Councilmen Williams to see if there was a way he could help the people with addiction. He understood Chief Sweet's frustration with the cycle of addicts being arrested, released from jail and arrested again. He is looking to provide the community with recovery options and hoping to schedule a town hall meeting that would provide a venue for community organization to offer recovery solutions. He does not want to take the lead, but assist the community while they come up with a fix. He has spoken with members of the Mormon church who are willing to donate. Other Churches may have babysitting services that they can offer. There are a variety of ways that various community members assist. He said the town can be resilient, but is destroying itself now. He has been seeing this situation in other communities as well. Nancy felt there are a number of people who would be willing to help.

Joe Varsik said that it is sad, but also the number one issue in the community that needs to be addressed. He thanked Mr. Fabiseski for coming and congratulated him on his recovery.

DPW:

Council reviewed a report provided by Kevin McKee. Roy Williams advised council that they had taken possession of the spreader for the GMC. The DPW had worked with the Fire Department to determine "No Parking from Here to Corner" limits that would accommodate the newer fire trucks. Barbara Larson asked about the cars parked at the bottom of Franklin Ave near the Fire Hydrant. She said it was difficult to see and asked if it was a "No Parking" Area. She wondered if she would need to call 911 to have the issue addressed.

Treasurer's Report:

Council reviewed and approved the bill list. Council reviewed the proposed budget with a 1.5 mill increase. Margaret Biegert explained that the borough has not raised taxes in 9 years. The total assessed valuation has recently decrease due to the removal of a number of blighted building while the costs of operations such as insurance, electric has continued to increase over the past 9 years. She pointed out that, along with the 9 year reprieve from increases, Susquehanna Borough was the only large borough in Susquehanna County that has not implemented the EIT tax. She also advised council that the tax increase for the year would average about \$30.00 per parcel. All of council, with the exception of John Hendrickson, approved the tax increase.

Mayor's Report:

Council reviewed the police report and two quotes for police vests: Galls SE Series IIIA Body Armor for \$759.00 and Second Chance Summit MN01 11A Vest for \$749.00. Nancy was advised that the Second Chance Vest was the better quality. Sue Crawford noted that they were offered by the same company. Roy Williams noticed that the Second Chance Vest did not come with plates and asked about additional costs since vest usually cost around \$1,200. Barbara Larsen asked if the vests would be worn only within the borough or if the neighboring municipalities would assist with costs if they were to be worn when our officers are working in their boroughs. John Hendrickson had called the procurement office but did not receive a phone call back. Lillian Senko believed that vest expired in 5 years.

Emergency Management:

John Hendrickson has been checking street lights and asked that residents be prepared for the cold weather.

Codes:

Council reviewed submitted codes report. Joe Varsik thanked Roy Williams and Lillian Senko for their diligent work with citations. Roy Williams reminded everyone that the sidewalk ordinance will be enforced and that property owners have 24 hours after a snow fall to remove snow over two inches. He hopes the police will work with the DPW department to have roads clear for safer plowing. He said the roads are narrow enough without trying to get around cars to plow the roads.

OLD Business:

Roy Williams asked about the estimates for the rust repair for the Durango. Mayor Hurley said they were not ready yet. Sue Crawford pointed out that Roy has been handling many areas outside of codes referring to the house that was recently broken into and meeting with the dog warden. She felt this was work the police should be doing. Nancy Hurley asked who would be meeting with dog warden the next day. Roy told her he and Officer Cramer would meet with the dog warden and the owner of the dog. Sue Crawford commended Roy Williams for all he is doing. John Benedict said that Roy Williams has always been willing to help in any way he can.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:05 PM