

TUNKHANNOCK BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
December 4, 2014

Council President Stacy Huber called the Monthly Meeting of the Tunkhannock Borough Council to order in the Borough Building, 126 Warren Street, Tunkhannock, PA at 7:00p.m. He led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present were: Mayor Norman Ball; Council Members Marshall Davis, Stacy Huber, Joseph Myers, Robert Robinson, Ruby Sands, Wendy Sweppenheiser, and Ruth Vincenti; and Borough Manager Dawn Welch. Absent: Scott Douthett.

Others present: Wyoming County Press Examiner (WCPE) Editor Bob Baker; Citizens Patti Mead, Ned Slocum, Susan DiStadio, Ned Slocum, Carl Penedos, Joey Maniskas, Mark Monsey, Nancy and Charlie VerBryck, and Police Chief Roger Hardy.

Reading of Minutes and Bills:

On a motion by Joseph Myers, seconded by Ruby Sands, the minutes of the meeting on November 6, 2014, were approved. Motion carried unanimously.

On motion by Robert Robinson, seconded Ruth Vincenti, move to approve payment of the bills. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Privilege of the Floor:

Nancy Ver Bryck read a letter that she had written to the Tunkhannock Borough Council concerning social media, specifically the Tunkhannock Borough Police Department's Facebook page. She noted that, when charges are posted (on social media) prior to a conviction, the ramifications for her, not only personally and professionally but also for the Borough, can be detrimental. The case in point involved her having been arrested for driving under the influence; however, all charges were subsequently withdrawn at her hearing, due to a "0.0" (sic) blood alcohol reading. A discussion followed, after which she requested that Council review the Facebook Policy so that, in the future, other people would not have to go through what she did.

On motion by Robert Robinson, seconded by Ruth Vincenti, move to include her letter in the minutes. Motion carried unanimously. (See attached)

Finance and Administration Committee:

President Huber reported that the 2015 Tax Levy Ordinance 2014-3, which included a one mill property tax increase, had been duly advertised.

On motion by Robert Robinson, seconded by Marshall Davis, move to adopt Ordinance 2014-3 (2015 Tax Levy Ordinance). By a vote of six to one (6 to 1), with Wendy

Sweppenheiser voting No, the motion carried.

President Huber reported that the 2015 Newsletter, along with the Holiday, Clean-Up, and Meetings schedules, has been finalized.

On motion by Marshall Davis, seconded by Joseph Myers, move to approve the 2015 Newsletter, along with the schedules for Holidays, Clean-Ups, and Meetings. Motion carried unanimously.

January's Council meeting will be on Monday, January 5, 2015 at 7 p.m.

Department of Public Works (DPW) Committee:

Committee Chairman Robert Robinson reported that: 1) a Committee meeting was held on November 24th; and 2) leaves now must be bagged for pick-up.

Building and Property Committee:

President Huber reported that the Building and Property Committee had met to review and provide comments on the draft lease (prepared by Solicitor Litwin) for A Better Today. The proposed changes were then forwarded to the Solicitor; and we are awaiting an updated draft.

Riverside Park Commission:

Mayor Ball reported that the bench honoring Chuck St. Clair had been vandalized; but he also noted that Bill Ruark (Meshoppen Stone) had volunteered to have it fixed. Manager Welch reported that it was repaired the same day

Police:

Mayor Ball reported that Univest Municipal Pension Services, in accordance with prescribed administrative procedures, established the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), for retired Police Chief David Ide, at an increase of 1.7% for 2015.

On motion by Marsall Davis, seconded by Joseph Myers, move to approve the COLA increase of 1.7% for 2015 for David Ide. Motion carried uanimoulsy.

Chief Hardy presented a summary of the Police Report for the month of November, 2014.
Note: a copy of the report is on file in the Police Department.

Planning and Zoning:

President Huber noted that the Walnut Hill Development proposal, which had been submitted for consideration by the Wyoming County Planning Commission, was denied, pending resolution of multiple issues. He further stated that he had been advised that the Developer was working toward addressing these issues.

Council of Governments (COG):

The next meeting will be December 9, 2014.

New Business: N/A

Old Business: N/A

Council Privilege of the Floor:

President Huber:

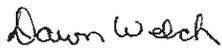
- a) Stated that he was pleased to advise that DPW Supervisor Steve Stonier had been cleared medically to return to work on Monday, December 8th. He commended the DPW Staff for "stepping up" during Steve's absence.
- b) Requested that Council Members advise Manager Welch if they wished to have changes made to their Council Committee assignments.

On motion by Robert Robinson, seconded by Joseph Myers, move to go into executive session at 7:38 p.m. for matters involving arbitration, a grievance, and potential litigation. Motion carried unanimously.

On motion by Robert Robinson, seconded by Ruth Vincenti, move to go into regular session at 8:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

On motion by Robert Robinson, seconded by Joseph Myers, move to adjourn the meeting at 8:17p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Dawn Welch
Borough Manager

Dear Tunkhannock Borough Council,

12.4.2014

I would like to thank David Ide, Stacey Huber, Dawn Welch, Mayor Ball and Officer Hardy for taking the time, to meet with me on my concerns regarding the issue of social media, after my name made the Tunkhannock Borough Police "facebook" page. We as americans have the privilege and right of freedom of speech, however when charges are " posted " prior to a conviction the ramifications to us not only personally and professionally , but also to Borough can be detrimental. We have spoke with others on this matter both professinal and personal and they feel as strongly as we do, hence this letter.

I was arrested on July 23, I was informed via text that I had been posted on facebook with my "charges" along with 20 "likes" I until that point was unaware that Tunkhannock Borough Police had a facebook page. On September 16 I was summoned to court before Magistarte David Plummer, all charges were withdrawn due to a 0.0 blood alcohol content. I called Mayor Balll in which he promptly met with me, along with Officer Hardy, prior to that I did speak with Officer Hardy and asked him if he would post that my charges were withdrawn in which he obliged, but prior to that

nothing had been posted to state otherwise. I explained to them of my concerns of the social media and its ramifications, after much discussion, I continued to support my innocence and he continued to support his officers. Officer Hardy then said that good people make mistakes and that my blood test was a fluke, (both vials were tested) I felt that was a very personal attack and unprofessional. I respect officers and feel that we as citizens should have the same common courtesy in return. I again, was found innocent of all charges. My husband also went to the borough police, Officer Hardy was very attentive. Officer Carpenter however replied, are we still beating this dead horse..... I must tell you this, on a very personal note in regards to the integrity of my reputation, I do not consider it a dead horse, I try to conduct myself, not only to my community, but to myself with highest standards. I will continue to support it not only to myself but to anyone else that may encounter these same circumstances

I am not writing this letter with any disregard to the borough council, police force and its officers, or Mayor Ball, and do respect and appreciate all of your conduct on providing community safety. If I felt that I was in any way a danger to myself or anyone, I would not be writing this letter to submit myself to any further

embarrassment. I support my innocence. The court supports my innocence. Due to all that was posted via facebook prior to my court hearing I am still receiving phone calls on our business line. So I am writing this on a very personal note on my experience, the ramifications, not only personally but professionally and what it may possibly cause in the future to the borough from another innocent citizen. I consider myself and my husband law abiding citizens, with respect for our community, community being the citizens, council borough, police etc. I do hope that this has some precedence in the future on your social media policies and charges written prior to conviction, not only for me, but someone else in the future. The local newspapers have published my dismissed charges. We not only as community, but person to person should conduct ourselves in such a manner, with the utmost respect. I do appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Thank you,

Nancy VerBryck