

TUNKHANNOCK BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
June 2, 2016

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 7:00 p.m. He led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present were: Mayor Norman Ball; Council Members Ben Barziloski, Marshall Davis, Scott Douthett, Stacy Huber, Robert Robinson, Lisa Tesluk, and Ruth Vincenti; and Borough Manager Dawn Welch. Absent: Council Member Joseph Myers.

Others present: Wyoming County Press Examiner Reporter C.J. Marshall; Citizens Patti Mead, Susan DiStadio, Ned Slocum, Harold May, Mark Monsey, and Justin Cooper.

Agenda Items:

On motion by Scott Douthett, seconded by Ruth Vincenti, move to approve the minutes of the meetings held on May 5, 2016 and May 18, 2016. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Public Privilege of the Floor:

Justin Cooper, Tunkhannock Area School District, came to this meeting for a school project.

Finance and Administration Committee:

Employee Healthcare Coverage: At the Council's mid-month meeting on May 18th, Representatives of Benecon Benefits Administrators and Consultants and the Pennsylvania Municipal Health Insurance Cooperative (PMHIC) met with Council for a presentation regarding their health care program and its coverage, costs, and so forth. We had asked if we could obtain, at or near the costs paid in 2015, the same level of coverage that we had prior to Highmark, Inc., taking over Blue Cross of Northeast Pennsylvania, to which they answered in the affirmative. We were advised that certain of the specifics would have to be worked out; but, in addition to competitive coverage and pricing, other positives include: a) their offer would provide a set, relatively affordable, cost for the remainder of 2016 and for 2017 coverage, something that appeared very attractive, due to the uncertainties attendant to the Affordable Care Act, which is now estimated to have increases in the range of 40-50% for 2017 (\$40,000 to \$50,000, upwards of 2 to 2.5 mills); and b) possible inclusion of retirees and their families in the program --- benefitting both them and the Borough logistically and financially. Based on that, Council agreed

to advertise, with the attempt to adopt at tonight's meeting, an ordinance to move the Borough employees' healthcare coverage to PMHIC through Benecon.

On motion by Marshall Davis, seconded by Lisa Tesluk, move to approve Ordinance 2016-3, pending confirmation that the changes do not violate the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

Note: This action will require the implementation of a side agreement, a draft copy of which was just received and which will be forwarded to the Police Bargaining Unit.

On motion by Marshall Davis, seconded by Scott Douthett, move to authorize the President of Council to sign the healthcare side agreement. Motion carried unanimously.

Transportation & Streets Committee:

Bridge Lighting: Eaton Township Supervisor Paul Rowker has advised that PennDOT approved the repairs to the damaged light poles. Pending final administrative actions (final coordination, signage, flaggers, etc.), Paul stated that he hopes that the work will begin later this month.

Note 1: the current cost estimate for this work is on the order of \$3,000 to \$3,500 total, of which the Borough share is preliminarily estimated to be in the \$1,500 to \$1,750 range).

Note 2: Eaton Township Supervisor Randy Ehrenzeller is currently preparing grant applications for the possible installation of decorative/antique-style lights; but it is expected that this process will take some time (possibly months or as much as a year or more).

Street Pavement Crack-Sealing: The pavement crack-sealing is expected to begin next week.

Borough Clean-Ups: June 6, 13, 20, 27 (Wards 1-4 respectively)

Crosswalks: Crosswalk painting was completed today.

Storm-water Issues: As stated previously, the DPW Committee met last month with the Borough Engineer for a very preliminary, informal review of the situation (near the Correctional Facility on Slocum Street), which concluded with asking Milnes Engineering to conduct an overview of the situation, with possible courses of action-options, along with baseline cost estimates, to be available for our June meeting. We have since received Ned's letter, which was forwarded to Council. We now have some workable approaches to moving ahead on this important issue. This matter will be referred to our (*ad hoc*) Storm-Water Committee for follow-on action.

Building and Property Committee:

Chairman Robert Robinson reported that the Tunkhannock Tree Association (TTA) named the

green space-beautification area (located near the Park and Ride facility and maintained by TTA) Feed Mill Park after the former Brown & Fassett Feed Mill, which had been located on this site.

Riverside Park Commission:

Endless Mountains Heritage Region is promoting the Susquehanna River as 2016 River of the Year, with an event to be held at Riverside Park on Tuesday, June 14th.

Police Committee:

Mayor Ball: a) reported that calls for service were up 50%, (37 to 57); b) requested to know the status of the 2016 Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program Grant; and c) noted that there has been some changes to the Community Highway Safety Patrol (CHPS) program, which should be addressed.

President Huber reported Council will be responding to the above.

Chairman Marshall Davis explained that the CHPS program had expanded and its structure had been changed; and he added that the Police Committee would be looking into whether the Borough should continue to participate in the program.

Mayor Ball reported that due to the retirement of Chief Hardy, he is restructuring the Police Department, effective June 1, 2016. Robert Roberts will be the officer in charge (Acting Chief); Keith Carpenter will be Acting Sergeant; and Dustin Cokely will be Acting Corporal. Also, he stated that we are in need of the fourth fulltime officer to help fill other needs of the department. He further asked Council to act in a timely manner to make these changes permanent.

President Huber reported that Council will be responding.

Mayor Ball presented a summary of the Police Report for the month of May, 2016. Note: a copy of the report will be placed on file in the Police Department.

Planning and Zoning:

The Planning Commission (PC) will meet again with Zoning Consultant Carson Helfrich next Tuesday. Carson is expected to present a finalized draft for review, etc., by the PC. Subject to their review, comment, and recommendations, it would then be referred to the Council for follow-on action, as deemed appropriate, at that time.

Hand Break Holdings (HBH), LLC, is seeking, as a Special Exception Use, a Continuation of Non-Conforming Use for their property at 21 West Tioga Street.

Council of Governments (COG): Nothing to report.

Other Business:

Manager Welch reported that, at 10:00 a.m., during the Founders' Day festivities (June 25, 2016), light refreshments will be served in recognition of the 175th Anniversary of Tunkhannock Borough's incorporation in 1841.

Council Privilege of the Floor:

President Huber expressed his thanks to Wyoming County Correctional Facility Warden Repsher for providing the Borough with an inmate to assist the Borough's clean-up projects.

Ruth Vincenti was glad that Robert Robinson shed his "turtle shell" brace.

On motion by Robert Robinson, seconded by Ben Barziloski, move to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Welch,
Borough Manager