

TUNKHANNOCK BOROUGH COUNCIL
Special Meeting: Public Hearing
May 28, 2015

Council President Stacy Huber called a Special Meeting of the Tunkhannock Borough Council to order in Courtroom-1, Wyoming County Courthouse, 1 Courthouse Square, Tunkhannock, PA at 6:00p.m. He led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present were: Council Members Marshall Davis, Stacy Huber, Robert Robinson, Lisa Tesluk, Wendy Sweppenheiser, and Ruth Vincenti; and Borough Manager Dawn Welch. Absent: Council Members Scott Douthett and Joseph Myers. Also present was Borough Solicitor Paul Litwin who would serve as the moderator.

Others present: Reporters Cain Chamberlin, Wyalusing Rocket-Courier, and Josh Siegel, Wyoming County Press Examiner; Mayor Norman Ball; Citizens Bill Gaylord, Alberta Gozikowski, Ned Slocum, and Mark Monsey; Borough Police Officers Roger Hardy, Robert Roberts, Keith Carpenter, Dustin Cokely, Stephen Williams and Intern Brian Goble; Tunkhannock Township Police Officers Stanley J. Ely, Edward Morrstell, and Robert P. Reimiller; and Fraternal Order of Police representative James H. Gray.

President Huber thanked the following for allowing us the privilege of the use of the courtroom: President Judge Russell Shurtleff, County Commissioners Tom Henry, Judy Mead, and Ron Williams; and Sheriff Ned Sherman.

President Huber then presented the following prepared remarks:

Quote: This public hearing concerns the number of full-time police officers in the Borough's Police Department. In May of 2013, Police Chief William Olzewski resigned, taking the number of full-time Police Officers from five down to four. In the 24 months since Chief Olzewski's resignation, the Borough has continued to employ four full-time Police Officers. This hearing is not about reducing the number of full-time Police Officers any further; and the Borough is not contemplating laying off any Police Officers. Borough Council will not be taking any votes at this hearing.

We are here today because, in March of this year, the Union for the Borough's Police Officer filed a grievance under their Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) asking the Borough to hire an additional, fifth officer.

The CBA between the Borough and the Police Union provides that the Borough shall maintain a Department with five full-time Officers but allows Borough Council to exercise its discretion to reduce the number of Officers below five, in accordance with Pennsylvania law, which allows Borough Council to decide how many Police Officers should be in the Department.

The CBA also sets forth a process that Borough Council must abide by if it wishes to reduce the number of Officers below five. Under that process, Borough Council must give the Police Union written notice, which includes an explanation of its reasoning and hold a public hearing. Borough Council provided the Police Union with written notice on April 2, 2015 and we are here to hold the hearing called for by the CBA. Borough Council's written notice to the Union and this statement are available for at the Borough Building for review during normal business hours.

Notice of this Hearing was published in the Wyoming County Press Examiner on May 13, 2015; and additional notice was posted in the Borough Building, also on that date. Unquote.

President Huber then procedurally proposed Borough Council adopt the following rules of conduct for this hearing:

- 1) Anyone wishing to speak must sign in and include their status as a resident or taxpayer.
- 2) The Moderator will call on those residents or taxpayers that have registered to speak, in order of registration, to come to the podium and make a statement.
- 3) Statements are limited to 5 minutes. So that everyone is aware of the remaining time, we will use a visual timer; and Manager Welch will reset it for each speaker.
- 4) Only one person may speak at a time.
- 5) All comments should be directed to Council.
- 6) Our Solicitor, Paul Litwin, will act as moderator.

On motion by Robert Robinson, seconded by Wendy Sweppenheiser, move to adopt these rules. Motion carried unanimously.

President Huber then added:

Quote: This proceeding is being recorded. Anyone wishing a copy of the proceedings can contact the Borough Office and receive a copy at cost.

If you have additional information that you wish to provide to Council, or if you do not wish to speak at a public hearing but would like to offer a written statement, Council will review and consider any written statements received by Noon on June 3, 2015 at the Borough Office. Please note that any written comments received will be considered a public document and kept with the other records of this proceeding. Unquote.

The following individuals provided comments: Ned Slocum, Mark Monsey, Mayor Ball, Chief Roger Hardy, and Alberta Gozikowski.

Upon completion of the public comment portion, Solicitor Paul Litwin explained to Council that the specifications, previously approved for Borough Building roof repairs, did not include the required bonds. Manager Welch has since received three of the four companies' revised bids, including bonding.

On motion by Marshall Davis, seconded by Ruth Vincenti, move to accept the lowest responsive bid. Motion carried unanimously.

On motion by Robert Robinson, seconded by Lisa Tesluk, move to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m.. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Welch
Borough Manager

