

Orwigsburg Borough Council
Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2017

Orwigsburg Borough Council met on Wednesday, August 9, 2017 in Council Chambers. President Touchinsky called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance were: President Buddy Touchinsky, Vice President Susan Murphy. Councilors: Brian Baldwin, Paul Bedway, Darle Cresswell. Mayor Barry Berger; Solicitor Paul Datte; Borough Manager Robert Williams and Borough Secretary Sherry Edwards.

Visitors: Kris & Sean Sadler of 508 W. Market St; Melvia & Danny Morrow of 20 Spruce Rd; Taynia Gerber of 1015 Ridgeview Dr; Athena Kukta of 345 Ridge Rd; Joshua, Anne and Frank Shamonsky of 202 E Market St; Bill Knecht of 204 S Warren St; Doris Lindenmuth of 340 Ridge Rd, Jeromy Guistwite of 930 Elizabeth Dr; John Dillabough of 325 Ridge Rd; Rick Bubeck of 415 Marshall Dr; Katie Bedway of 300 W Market St; Patrolman Tanner Noecker; Bookkeeper Kathi Mengle; Police Chief Koury.

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2017 meeting as presented was made by Darle Cresswell, second by Sue Murphy. Unanimous.

Treasurer's Report

The June 2017 Treasurer's report was presented to Council.

Tax Collector's Report

The July 2017 Tax Collector's report was presented to Council as follows:

Real Estate	\$ 1,978.19
Per Capita	\$ 285.00
Occupation	\$ 94.38

A motion to exonerate the Tax Collector from collecting Occupation Tax on Tax Exoneration list #7 was made by Sue Murphy, second by Paul Bedway. Unanimous.

Budget Review & 24/7 Police Manpower Report

At last week's meeting Council asked the Finance Committee to meet before this week's meeting to budget 2018- Budget Committee met at 6:00 this evening

Chief Koury & Budget Director Kathi Mengle addressed Council for the need of additional officers:

- 1997 DCED Police manpower study results advised the borough that the police department should be operating with 5 full time officers plus a Chief (supervisory personnel) in order to cover the borough 24/7. Currently we have 3 fulltime officers and myself.
- Costs would be \$100,000 to hire an additional officer next year
- If awarded COPS grant – grant would cover salary for:
 - 75% for the first year - 2018
 - 50% for the second year – 2019
 - 25% for the third year – 2020
- At last week’s meeting it was noted that the borough does have the funds to hire an officer now for the balance of 2017.
- By hiring an officer now 160 hours out of 168 open hours would be covered leaving 8 hours open for part time coverage – excluding vacations, sick days, personal time and training.
- If awarded the grant, extra cost would be \$70,000 for the second officer which would staff the department with 5 officers plus the Chief.
- Keep in mind per Judge Ferrier within the last 20 years crime has increased a minimum of 40%

Public Comment

-Bill Knecht of 204 S Warren St – Is in favor of additional officers; if grant awarded any overtime is at the boroughs expense not covered by grant.

-John Dillabough of 325 Ridge Rd – as a homeowner he feels it’s an investment for the community, increase in crime decreases property value

-Taynia Gerber 1015 Ridgeview Dr – respects increase in taxes; Comcast bill goes up every year and we pay it but it’s a luxury where police and fire is a necessity; by calling 911 at 2 am for an incident at your house she hopes that the borough would be nice enough to give the residents 24/7 coverage.

-Jeromy Guistwite of 930 Elizabeth Dr – has had three issues at his house over the past 6 months, truck has been egged twice and mail box smashed. He’s a teacher and goes with the territory. Kids know when there is no officer on duty. Installed a security system, accidentally went off and police were here in less than 2 minutes, with state police coverage response time would be at least 30 minutes. We have high home values and want to keep it that way. 24/7 police coverage is the way to go.

-Chris Sadler – 508 W Market – is a small business owner doesn’t have a security system depends on the eyes and ears of neighbors, with the inability to provide the coverage and having to rely on state police response is unacceptable. A rise in millage is an investment. Overtime costs could be offset by an additional officer’s regular pay.

-Katie Bedway of 300 W Market St is obviously in favor of police coverage – high school kids walking around at midnight, they know when an officer isn’t on duty. Take a look at how often the cops are out at the schools, it has happened a lot this year. We pride ourselves on having a clean cut town lets keep it that way.

-Athena Kukter of 345 Ridge Rd – she is for 24/7 police coverage. As a member of law enforcement it is concerning and alarming that we don’t have 24/7 police coverage. The opioid

crisis alone is enough to warrant 24/7 coverage. She lives here so she can have some kind of peace with her husband and children. 24/7 police coverage is the most important thing council can do for our community.

-Josh of Shakeys Gun Shop 202 E Market St – He asked after hearing everyone’s comments will council be voting tonight on bringing in another officer

-Taynia Gerber of 1015 Ridgeview Dr – Relying on State Police for coverage is not a good idea, they are understaffed as well.

Chief Koury noted that the State Police only react when there is a call they don’t patrol. And also noted the 40% increase in crime is for the District Magistrates jurisdiction.

President Touchinsky raised three potential options:

Hire officer now and we don’t get the grant

Hire officer now and we get the grant and hire another officer for next year

Don’t hire and wait until we know the outcome of the grant

After a discussion on hiring an officer now or waiting until the outcome of the grant, nothing budgeted for the deteriorating infrastructure, 3 mil increase for two officers; 60% of general budget is the police department and the need for a new police car:

A motion to hire a new police officer now was made by Brian Baldwin.

Motion failed due to lack of second.

The majority of Council would like to wait for the outcome of the COPS grant.

-Josh Shamonsky (Shakey’s Gun Shop) of 202 E Market St expressed his disappointment with the outcome of Council’s decision not to hire a new police officer this evening.

Old Business

Solicitors Report:

Solicitor Datte advised Council of the following:

- Proposed Ordinance Updates/Revisions

A Public Hearing was held before this evenings meeting – recommendation on the Zoning Ordinance is to table consideration and take back to P & Z for their review and recommendation at next Wednesday’s meeting premised on the review letter received from Susan Smith, Schuylkill County Planning Commission. Susan had comments and suggestions in regards to Tiny Houses.

Proposed SALDO #427 drafting issues have been addressed and no public comment received at Public Hearing.

- Pine Creek Retirement Community
Nothing new to report

- Blue Mountain Retirement Community

Appellant in the Zoning Hearing Board proceedings did file their brief – the borough has until October 24th to file a brief.

- Villas of Orwigsburg
Nothing new to report

- Sopko/SCMA

Recommends Council adopt Resolution 2017-15 authorizing taking of the 20' strip easement in fee by eminent domain. After adopting resolution the borough has a year to file the declaration of taking.

SCMA has indicated they would indemnify the borough for any costs involved in filing the declaration and would do so in writing. Any just compensation that would be awarded or negotiated with the Sopkos will be paid by SCMA.

Nothing new to report on the current litigation.

Committee Reports

Water Sewer & Sanitation

A motion to adopt Resolution #2017-15 authorizing Eminent Domain proceedings for a portion of the property located at 2008 Ridgeview Drive was made by Sue Murphy, second by Brian Baldwin. Unanimous.

A motion to authorize the Wexcon Final Payment Application of \$7,453.75 in accordance with Entech Engineer Bryon Killian's letter of July 28, 2017 was made by Sue Murphy, second by Brian Baldwin. Unanimous. The payment will be reimbursed to the Borough from SCMA.

Recreation & Health

A motion to authorize Benesch Engineering to resubmit a Grant Application to PA DCED for Veterans Community Memorial Hall in the amount of \$50,000, with a \$50,000 match from the Veterans Memorial Task Force. Grant application fee not to exceed \$1500.00 was made by Sue

Murphy, second by Paul Bedway. Brian Baldwin abstained due to employment with Alfred Benesch (letter attached). Motion passed.

Streets, Lights & Buildings

A motion to authorize Benesch Engineering to submit a Keystone Communities Downtown Improvement District Planning Grant to PA DCED for New sidewalks, curbs and streetscape. The amount of the Planning Grant to be \$25,000, with a \$25,000 Borough match from the Capitol Improvement Fund. Grant application fee not to exceed \$1500.00. Motion was made by Sue Murphy, second by Paul Bedway. Brian Baldwin abstained due to employment with Alfred Benesch (letter attached). Motion passed.

Planning and Zoning

A motion to adopt Ordinance #428 revising the advertised revisions in the SALDO, as reviewed at tonight's Public Meeting was made by Paul Bedway, second by Sue Murphy. Unanimous.

New Business

Personnel & Negotiations

With regret Bob announced Jake's resignation, Jake was an all-around great employee. He was the borough's IT guy, water & sewer and also maintained the borough's vehicles. He will be missed and we wish him well.

A motion to accept the resignation of Jake Brensinger, who accepted a position with SCMA, and advertise for his replacement was made by Darle Cresswell, second by Sue Murphy. Unanimous.

A motion to transfer Part-Time Employee Devin Deibert to Full Time status with the same salary and benefits package. (Devin currently earns \$11.50 per hour and does not participate in the Borough health care package.) Motion was made by Brian Baldwin second by Paul Bedway. Unanimous.

Police Department Report

Chief Koury reviewed the following report:

July report - 250 incidents – some of the major ones were:

- 3 - Thefts
- 3 - Sex offenses
- 4- DUI
- 3- Domestic
- 4- Motor Vehicle accidents
- 13- Suspicious vehicles and activities

5- Hit and Run accidents

13- Police Dept Assist

12- EMS assist

42- Traffic Warnings

19- Traffic Citations

Recovered a stolen vehicle from Mt Carmel. Jeep Cherokee was burned out in the woods along the borough right of way (end of N Franklin St).

Fire Department

Chief Dave Hardinger – None

Planning & Zoning Commission

President Touchinsky noted the next Planning & Zoning Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 6, 2017 at 7:30 pm in Council Chambers at Orwigsburg Borough Hall.

Municipal Authority

President Touchinsky noted the next Municipal Authority meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 11, 2017 at 1:00 pm in Council Chambers at Orwigsburg Borough Hall.

Zoning Hearing Board

President Touchinsky noted the Zoning Hearing Board is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, August 30, 2017 at 7:00 pm in Council Chamber at Orwigsburg Borough Hall. Setback requirement variance – Donald C. Lindenmuth of 955 Elizabeth Drive.

COG

Vice President Sue Murphy mentioned the next COG meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 21, 2017 at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers at Orwigsburg Borough Hall. Council asked Sue to revisit the possibility of police regionalization at the COG meeting.

OBPA (Orwigsburg Business & Professional Association)

President Touchinsky noted Family Funfest is scheduled for Thursday, August 10, 2017 from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm on the Square.

Community Events

President Touchinsky noted End of Summer Block Party will be held on Sunday, August 27, 2017 from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm at Salem United Methodist Church.

Correspondence – None

Bills

A motion to approve and ratify the account payable from General, Water, Sewer, Sanitation, COG, 2015 Bond, Capitol Improvement and Grant funds was made by Sue Murphy, second by Darle Cresswell. Unanimous.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry M. Edwards
Borough Secretary