

**BOROUGH OF EDGEWOOD
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BOROUGH OF EDGEWOOD
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD JULY 18, 2022

Council President Petrolla called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call, the following responded: Dr. Epitropoulos (virtually), Mr. Love, Ms. Patel, Mr. Sherman and Dr. Petrolla. Mayor O'Donnell, Junior Councilperson Kochupura, Police Chief Payne, Fire Chief Ireland, Solicitor McDermott, and Borough Manager Zahorchak were also present. Dr. Blasiolo and Ms. Yaney were absent.

PLEDGE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor O'Donnell swore in Police Officer Tyler Swatchik and Officer Marcus Alston.

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR: The following public comments were received.

Ruth Pickering, 416 Locust St: Ms. Pickering spoke about the message center. She stated her thanks to the Police for getting a hold of the superintendent of Woodland Hills to open the elementary school for a reunion, when the building was not open for the start of the event. Ms. Pickering noted her support for the police department as a whole. She discussed the recent fundraiser for Officer Wyke, following a fire to his home, noting that some people may still wish to make donations. Mr. Zahorchak noted that a link to a Gofundme page was available and has been shared with the community.

Beth Battaline, 150 Washington St: Ms. Battaline stated that several times a year she helps to clean debris in the area of the Parkway East ramp, near Greendale Ave and New St. She noted that she has recently found needles that were left there. She stated that she believes someone may be sleeping in that area, based on the discovery of a bag with food and other paraphernalia that she does not normally see. She noted a large number of bottles being discovered as well.

Mr. Zahorchak stated that the Borough has a contract with PennDOT to maintain the ramp, and in addition our Public Works crew will do maintenance in that area and clear debris. He noted that in respect to the level of effort it is taking to clean the site, there seems to be a large amount of debris currently being dropped in that area.

Ms. Battaline stated that there is an abandoned house at 147 Washington St that is in a state of disrepair, creating a safety issue to neighbors. Mr. Zahorchak responded that the borough is aware of this property and has initiated conservatorship through the Tri-COG land bank. He noted that they have not been getting a response from the judge to move forward. Discussion ensued concerning this matter.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M-1 Mr. Love moved to approve the minutes of June 20, 2022 Council Meeting. Second by Mr. Sherman.

DISCUSSION: None.

The aye vote on the motion was unanimous. **Motion carried.**

M-2 Mr. Love moved to approve the minutes of July 5, 2022 Council Meeting as amended. Second by Mr. Sherman.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Love noted that there were some updates to the original minutes, for typos. Mr. Zahorchak stated that the revised copy is in the packet.

The aye vote on the motion was unanimous. **Motion carried.**

AUTHORIZATION TO PAY BILLS

M-3 Mr. Love moved to authorize the payment of bills, for goods and services received by the Borough, having been reviewed and approved by the General Government Committee, from the General Fund in the amount of \$57,820.16 and from the sewer fund in the amount of \$5,752.99 for a total of \$63,573.15. Second by Ms. Patel.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Love noted that it was mostly standard, with the exception of an \$8,000 tree removal bill, and a deposit on the retaining wall project.

Upon roll call vote the following responded yes: Dr. Epitropoulos, Mr. Love, Ms. Patel, Mr. Sherman, and Dr. Petrolla. **Motion carried.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT: Mr. Love stated that he had nothing to report.

POLICE: Mayor O'Donnell stated that had nothing to report.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Mr. Zahorchak stated that Public Safety and Infrastructure met to discuss funding and support for the Volunteer Fire Department. They discussed a new staffing model for the department. He noted that a copy of the report has been distributed to Council, and that committee discussion will continue on this matter. Mr. Zahorchak stated that if any members of Council have questions, they can email him.

Mayor O'Donnell added that Fire Chief Ireland is present, and representatives from the VFD will be available at future meetings to answer questions. He noted that Public Safety funding has been around two percent of our budget, which is lower by comparison than neighboring boroughs, and has left our department underfunded. It will likely be

recommended to Council to discuss raising taxes to fill the deficit. This would go towards member retention, purchase of a new truck, and other incidentals.

Ms. Patel noted that she was aware that in 2009 there was a comprehensive plan for public safety that was discussed with neighboring boroughs. She inquired if anything further has happened. Mr. O'Donnell replied that there have been some discussions that were more specific to police, but included options such as a merger. He noted that neighboring boroughs are dealing with many similar issues around public safety. Discussion ensued concerning this matter. Chief Ireland discussed some of the challenges of a merger and some of the current challenges faced by the department.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS: Mr. Sherman stated that Community Affairs did not meet. Mr. Zahorchak noted that there is a resolution on the agenda to apply for a transportation grant, through the Commonwealth Financing Authority. He noted that our engineer has specifically targeted the steps at Koenig Field for repair. The proposed project would add a bike ramp next to the stairway.

PENSION AND PERSONNEL: Mr. Zahorchak stated that the quarterly statement has not yet been received.

AD HOC COMMITTEES: No one had anything to report.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT: Mr. McDermott had nothing to report.

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT: Mr. Zahorchak reported that Public Works installed new target advisory signs on Coal St and W Swissvale, to help prevent accidents on those streets. They will be adding those to Race St and Greendale Ave as well. Mr. Zahorchak has a list of streets that need updated signage to comply with new visibility standards. The streets that were paved in the past few years will be completed first, and the remaining streets will be updated incrementally alongside the planned paving.

Maintenance is being done to the Borough Building, including gutter and roof repair, a new door on the fire garage, and new windows and a brand new A.C. unit for the Police Department. New LED flood lights will be installed on the fieldhouse at Koenig Field. Failing doors will be replaced as well with completion expected by Community Day. Work is starting on the retaining wall for the tennis courts. The notice to Liberoni just went out to accept their bid on the paving program.

Tomorrow from 6:30-8pm there will be a reception at Memorial Park as a recognition to everyone who helps maintain the park through the growing season. There will be snacks and cocktails, and everyone is welcome to stop by. On Friday at 9 we will be screening 'The Little Mermaid' at Koenig Field. On August 6, Nied's Funeral Home will be sponsoring a gun buy back event.

Mr. Zahorchak thanked Steve Haley, Sgt Livingston, the VFD and all those who helped with the benefit dinner for Officer Wyke. They raised approximately \$3300 for Officer Wyke and his family. He noted that he will send the donation link to Council for anyone who wants to contribute.

The Borough's consulting traffic engineer resubmitted an application for Automated Red-Light Enforcement. There are two applications; one is for signal modification from W Hutchinson to the Valero in Swissvale. That is a joint effort with the Borough of Swissvale to update internal features and add radar detection. The other is to replace the blinking school signal and do some potential line painting on the street to enhance the school zone on Maple Ave. Our application was declined before but we're hoping to be approved this time.

Mr. Zahorchak stated that he had a conversation with a representative from Giant Eagle. They are seeking approval from Council and the Planning Commission for a micro-distribution center in the former Scene 75 building.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Sherman inquired about the sidewalk permit rules and the submission for the new Square Café business. Mr. Zahorchak responded that the process was put in place at the end of 2019 for obtaining a sidewalk permit, which is good for one year from January to December; and explained additional details of the ordinance. He noted that the permit for Square Café has now been received and processed. Discussion ensued over the process for submissions and dealing with late submittals. It was noted that the Borough wishes to see businesses succeed in our neighborhood.

Dr. Epitropoulos asked about the start times for work at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. He received a complaint about work site noise in the morning. Mr. Zahorchak responded that per the developers agreement in place, heavy equipment work cannot start before 7am and that he has previously spoken to the job supervisor about this matter.

COMMITTEE ACTION

M-4 Mr. Sherman read Resolution 2022-19- Multimodal Transportation Fund grant. Second by Ms. Patel.

Resolution 2022-19

Be it RESOLVED, that the Borough of Edgewood, Allegheny County hereby requests a Multimodal Transportation Fund grant of \$335,580 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for Koenig Field Staircase Replacement and Runnel Project.

Be it FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Applicant does hereby designate Rob Zahorchak, Borough Manager and Dr. Justin Petrolla, Borough Council President as the official(s) to execute all documents and agreements between the Borough of Edgewood and the Commonwealth Financing Authority to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested grant.

DISCUSSION: None.

Upon roll call vote the following responded yes: Dr. Epitropoulos, Mr. Love, Ms. Patel, Mr. Sherman, and Dr. Petrolla. **Motion carried.**

M-5 It was moved by Ms. Patel and seconded by Mr. Sherman to adjourn at 8:38 pm.
The aye vote on the motion was unanimous. **Motion carried.**

An Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter was held at 8:38- 9:15pm with no action to be taken.



Rob Zahorchak, Borough Manager