

CATAWISSA BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2009 6:30 PM

Catawissa Borough's power supply agent AMP conducted a presentation regarding the usage of the Borough and the contract with AMP. A copy of the presentation is available at the Borough Office. The presentation was followed by a question and answer.

Council President George Romania announced to the public and council that in accordance to Roberts Rules discussions will be held to 5 minutes because of the volume of business on the agenda.

CALL TO ORDER:

- The meeting was called to order by Council President George Romania
- The pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL:

- Present were: George Romania, Dottie Linn, Barb Reese, Forest McClintock, Linda Kashner, Gary Steinruck, Scott Keefer, Mayor Steve Atherton, Atty. Anthony McDonald. Absent was Borough Manager Jane Graham.

READING OF THE MINUTES:

- Dottie Linn made the motion to dispense with the reading of and approve the minutes of the previous months meeting. Forest McClintock seconded the motion. All aye, none opposed.

GUESTS TO BE HEARD:

- Barb Savage: Barb asked councilperson Linda Kashner why she called Mike Lindenmuth to ask him what Barb was talking to him about for an hour and half.
- Linda answered she called Mike to apologize for walking out during a meeting Linda did not want him to think that she was slighting him.
- Gail Hummer: Questioned the Borough Manager resignation. She also asked the solicitor how much the borough will be paying him to show up for her Public Nuisance hearing. \$85 per hour.
- Jeff Achy asked if a decision has been made regarding the alley beside his house. George Romania replied that he will look into the situation.
- Pat Hess stated that the agenda was confusing. In one part you are talking about hiring a part time police officer, in another area you are discussing layoffs, still in another section you are discussing donating money to the fire company, and in another part you are to discuss the poor financial situation of the borough. Forest McClintock explained regarding the hire of a part-time police officer. Linda Kashner asked how much it costs to suit up a police officer. Chief Hardin

answered that it depended on how much of the equipment already on hand the average is about \$1,500.

- Christine Yohey asked if the Borough had to buy health care from Benecon and how long is the contract for? George Romania answered we are contracted with Benecon Insurance until August 2010. Ms. Yohey has a quote from GHP for the same policy at a lower cost.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT:

- Code and Zoning Enforcement Officer James Haney reported that he issued 13 permits in the month of July and investigated 37 complaints. The curb line at the Union Cemetery was routed by the State not the Borough.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- There was no correspondence at meeting time.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

- Jane was not available to give the manager's report so Council President George Romania read the written manager's report submitted by Borough Manager Jane Graham.
- The Girl Scouts bridging ceremony will be held at Eyer Park Wednesday, August 19th at 6:30 pm if anyone would like to attend.
- PennDot engineers were here regarding the bridge repair at Catawissa Creek. The project will begin sometime in the spring of 2010. A red light system will be installed at the north and south directions of the bridge and also at the Mountain Rd. intersection. Creek Rd. will be closed during the project.
- The Boy Scouts will be painting the Senior Center and doing minor repairs for an Eagle Scout project. The gazebo was too costly.
- Jim Haney and Anthony McDonald will be meeting on Tuesday, August 11th to discuss the outdoor furnace ordinance and other legal issues. Atty. McDonald apologized to Barb Reese and the rest of council for not being able to have this ready for this meeting. Schedules were hard to meet.
- A thank you will go into Clair Kingston and Jonathan Traugh's personnel files for the extra work they did for the concert series and the painting.
- The sewer plant is waiting for an insurance issue to be dealt with from the contractor in order to begin the belt press repair.
- The electric department Harry Young has been working on the new pole barn and Bill Toomey has been numbering the meters in town. Also a temerary service was installed for the fireman's carnival and the concert sign was taken down from the opera house.
- SEDA-COG needs a letter of support to continue with the Main St. project.
- Financial concerns are great at this time. The electric rate increase is not enough to keep us out of the red.

- Lay-offs are something the personnel committee is considering. Jane does not recommend this avenue.

WATER:

- Water Authority Superintendent Cindy Bachman was not at the meeting.

POLICE:

- Police Chief Mark Hardin had nothing to report that was not in the report filed in the minutes.

POLICE & EMERGENCY RESPONSE CHAIRMAN:

- Committee Chairman Forest McClintock that the police responded to 180 calls during the month of July.
- Also new part-time officer Brandon Beck is being trained
- Officer Weisman was hurt in the line of duty on July 28th.

MAYOR:

- New Mayor Steve Atherton is learning as he goes. He did attend a presentation regarding providing electric to businesses. He gave Jane the packet from that meeting.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT, ACTIVITY CENTERS & RECREATION CHAIRMAN:

- Committee Chairperson Barb Reese announced that the Summer Breeze Concert Series ended on August 4th. Joe Gaughan and Charlie Mausteller did a wonderful job organizing and running the series.
- Heritage Day will be Saturday, September 12th at the Quaker Meeting House from 10 am – 2 pm. There will be talks and tours beginning at 11:00 am lead by Wayne Petro. All the churches will be participating in this event. The rain date will be September 19th.

PROPERTY, SUPPLY & BUILDING MAINTENANCE CHAIRMAN:

- Forest McClintock updated council until new committee chairman Gary Steinruck and be brought up to date.
- Harry is working very hard to get the building ready to move the offices.
- The sidewalk was replaced at the First Columbia Bank.
- Council President George Romania announced that Gary Steinruck, Dottie Linn, and Scott Keefer are now on this committee replacing the council members that have resigned. If any new members would like to be on any other committees please let George know and he will assess the situation.

PERSONNEL CHAIRMAN:

- Committee Chairman George Romania had nothing new to report at meeting time.

FINANCE CHAIRMAN:

- Committee Chairperson Linda Kashner read a memo she wrote to council regarding the dire financial condition of the Borough.
- The committee had a meeting last week and some recommendations are:

Suspend temporarily all schools, seminars, conferences unless they are necessary for certification.

Cancel dumpster day.

Temporarily cancel recycling.

Turn out every other street light unless required by the State. (Street lights cost approximately \$17,000 pr/yr.)

Suggesting a lay-off (ask for volunteers first)

Discuss possible rate increase at the next meeting.

Look at property tax increase next year.

Maybe a street light tax.

No overtime unless it is an emergency.

The extra charges on the electric bill are part of the reason for the financial problem. They have increased tremendously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Dottie Linn made the motion to make Banker's Alley between Baker's Cove and PNC bank a one way street from Klien Ave. to Main St. going south. Linda Kashner seconded the motion. After some clarification all aye, none opposed.
- Forest McClintock abstained due to owning property at the intersection.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Forest McClintock made the motion to accept rescinding of Jane's resignation. Linda Kashner seconded the motion. Questions were asked about the hiring policy and the cost.
- Forest McClintock withdrew his motion. Linda Kashner withdrew her second.
- Forest McClintock made the motion for a resolution to allow a full time employee to become part-time as long as they have been with the Borough for a smooth transition. Barb Reese seconded the motion. Linda Kashner suggested this be a trial position until the end of the year. The treasurer will also help in the office. Jane will not receive pension, health care, or life insurance. She will receive 24 hours of personal time 40 hours of vacation and some sick time. She will fill in

- when necessary. Roll call vote: George Romania-yes, Gary Steinruck-no, Dottie Linn-yes, Barb Reese-yes, Scott Keefer-no, Forest McClintock-yes, Linda Kashner-yes. Vote carried.
- Forest McClintock made the motion to hire Jane Graham as part-time Borough Manager. Linda Kashner seconded the motion. Roll call vote: George Romania-yes, Gary Steinruck-no, Dottie Linn-yes, Barb Reese-yes, Scott Keefer-no, Forest McClintock-yes, Linda Kashner-yes. Motion carried.
 - Forest McClintock made the motion to hire a part-time police officer. The motion was seconded by Dottie Linn. After discussion all aye, none opposed.
 - Forest McClintock made the motion to move the scheduled September 7th meeting to September 14th due to the Memorial Day holiday. The motion was seconded by Barb Reese. The change will be advertised in the Press Enterprise. All aye, none opposed.
 - Barb Reese made the motion to put out for bid the slate that was removed from the Union Cemetery wall after the Central Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Group has a chance to go through the slate and pick some for a memorial walkway and possibly some slate benches. The advertisement will be placed in the newspaper in September. The motion was seconded by Dottie Linn. All aye, none opposed. 60-100 tons of slate
 - Barb Reese made the motion to construct a letter of support for the SEDA-COG River town project. There is no cost at this time. The motion was seconded by Forest McClintock. Stuart Hartman stated that they would also take like services such as meeting places and volunteers. Forest McClintock suggested a council person be part of this project with Dr. Hartman. All aye, none opposed.
 - Forest McClintock made the motion to paint a no parking box at the corner of North and Second Street. Cars park too close to the corner making turns impossible. Chief Hardin also recommends the no parking box. The motion was seconded by Dottie Linn. Council, Police and Borough workers will recommend other areas that need attention. All aye, none opposed.
 - Linda Kashner made the motion to begin a regionalization study conducted by DCED at no cost to the Borough or the Townships interested in participating. Barb Reese seconded the motion. Catawissa Township and Franklin Township are interested in participating in the 2 year study. Forest mentioned that there is a bill in the House of Representatives regarding charging towns and township that utilize the State Police instead of having their own police force. The Borough will need to file a letter of intent to DCED and inform the others interested that they will also have to vote to participate and send a letter of intent. All aye, none opposed.
 - Linda Kashner made a motion to have a dumpster day this year and split the cost with Catawissa Township. Barb Reese seconded the motion. All nay. There will not be a dumpster day this year.
 - Resident from Pfahler Street would like Council to re-address the removal of all trees that are jamming the creek by CARA Park. She is concerned with flooding. This would have to be a contracted job with cranes. Our employees and prisoners have already removed truckloads of trees and debris but the larger limbs and trees remain. The issue died for lack of a motion.

- Forest McClintock made the motion for the personnel committee to meet with the borough workers and ask for lay-off volunteers. If there are no volunteers the committee will follow the lay-off procedure outlined in the non-uniform union contract and will report to council at the September meeting with the recommendations. Linda Kashner seconded the motion. After discussion. All aye, none opposed.
- Forest McClintock made the motion to advertise the ordinance transfer of a paper alley to 474-472 Mill St. The property has already been surveyed. The motion was seconded by Dottie Linn.
- Forest rescinded his motion and asked to table until advertised and more information is available.
- Dottie Linn made the motion to donate \$2,000 to the fire company towards the cost of the fireman's carnival. Barb Reese seconded the motion. After discussion. Roll call vote: George Romania-yes, Gary Steinruck-no, Dottie Linn-yes, Barb Reese-yes, Scott Keefer-no, Forest McClintock-no, Linda Kashner-no. The motion was not passed.
- Forest McClintock made the motion to donate \$1,000 to the fire company for the carnival. Dottie Linn seconded the motion. After discussion. Roll call vote: Linda Kashner-no, Forest McClintock-yes, Scott Keefer-no, Barb Reese-yes, Dottie Linn-yes, Gary Steinruck-no, George Romania-yes. Motion carried.
- Forest McClintock made the motion to turn off every other street light in the Borough. The motion was seconded by Linda Kashner. Light Department Superintendent Harry Young made the suggestion instead of turning them off, take them down so residents don't call and complain that a streetlight is out. Another suggestion from Harry was to take all lights down except at major intersections. Chief Hardin suggested a council member look at the areas before you take down street lights.
- Forest McClintock withdrew his motion until the next meeting when Gary Steinruck can research the best solution.

FINANCE:

- Dottie Linn made the motion for the payment of the bills. The motion was seconded by Linda Kashner. All aye, none opposed.

ADJOURNMENT:

- Dottie Linn made the motion to adjourn. Forest McClintock seconded the motion. All aye, none opposed.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Submitted by:
Kimberly Rhoades
Secretary