

The regular monthly meeting of the Ebensburg Borough Council was called to order on Monday, July 24, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Room of the Ebensburg Municipal Building by President, Doug Tusing.

Present: Doug Tusing, President
Cecilia Houser, Vice President
Jeff Ball
Theresa Jacoby
Bob Miller
Mike Owatt

Others: Kelly Cook, Borough Manager
Randy Datsko, Mayor
Robert Sapp, Acting Chief of Police
Matt Gribler, Solicitor
Luke Byrne, Inframark
Gerry Schupe, Inframark
Breanne Berkebile, The Mountaineer Journal
Katie Smolen, The Tribune Democrat

Audience: 4

A. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

B. **Public Comments** – None.

C. **Consent Agenda**

Ms. Houser made a motion to approve the consent agenda containing the following items. (Jacoby)
Motion passed unanimously.

1. Approve report of Inframark for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations.
2. Approve report of Inframark for the Water Treatment Plant Operations.
3. Approve the minutes of the June 26, 2023, regular monthly meeting and July 10, 2023 Special Meeting of Borough Council.
4. Approve the financial statement for June and 2nd quarter transfers.
5. Approve payment of bills for July.

D. **Appointments to Address Council** – None.

E. **Consideration of Any Motion(s) to Amend Agenda** – None.

F. **Mayor's Report** – Mayor Datsko reported that Jim Bogus has started as a new part-time officer. He added that Council may want to consider not allowing garbage to be put out more than 12 hours prior to pick-up.

G. **Council President Comments** - Mr. Tusing shared that the topic of speeding enforcement in the borough has come up time and again. He and Acting Chief Sapp shared that the use of radar by municipalities in Pennsylvania is not permitted by law, and as such, enforcement of speed limits is cumbersome at best.

H. Water/Wastewater Committee

1. Agreement With Inframark

Mr. Miller shared that Borough Staff continues to negotiate a new contract with Inframark for the operation of the Borough's Water and Wastewater facilities.

2. Report from Inframark on Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations

Mr. Miller shared that Inframark's written report was submitted regarding operations, projects, and activities at the wastewater plant for Council review.

3. Report from Inframark on Water Treatment Plant Operations

Mr. Miller reminded that Inframark's written report was submitted regarding operations, projects and activities at the water plant for Council review.

I. Recreation Committee

1. Dog Park Project

Ms. Jacoby reported that the dog park is nearing completion. Currently, there are only a few items on a punch list that need attention. The Rotary is planning a grand opening in the near future. The project was completed on budget, with the exception of an overage for unforeseen soil removal and replacement, which was covered by the Rotary.

J. Street Committee

1. 2023 Street Paving Project

Ms. Houser reported that bids were awarded to New Enterprise Corporation in the amount of \$175,572.30 on May 22, 2023 and that the tentative start date for the paving is August 28, 2023.

2. Municipal Parking Lot

Mr. Owatt reported that a letter was received requesting the monthly rent of the parking lot to increase from \$1,100 to \$2,000 a month. After negotiations, the owners have agreed to a rate of \$1,300 a month for one year. This would take the cost to \$15,600 a year, which exceeds the revenue taken in from this lot. Revenues received from this lot in the past three years are as follows:

2020 - \$8,553.59 (affected by Covid business shutdowns)
2021 - \$7,524.97 (partially affected by Covid)
2022 - \$8,023.77

As in the past, taxpayer money will be required to subsidize payment of the lease. However, Staff recommended that the Borough retain parking in support of local businesses for the time being. The current lease is due to expire on August 31, 2023.

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to approve a one-year extension of the lease for the Municipal Parking lot at a rate of \$1,300 per month. (Ball). Roll call was taken:

Tusing Yes Owatt No Ball Yes

Houser Yes Miller No Jacoby Yes
Motion passed, 4-2.

K. Administration Committee

1. Police Chief

Ms. Houser reported that following the vote at the July 10, 2023 Special Meeting of Council, the Borough has given a conditional offer of employment to Joseph Loughran with an initial annual salary of \$80,000. Background investigations are being performed and if all goes well, it is anticipated the new Chief of Police will commence work by mid-August.

Mr. Loughran has requested a modification to the standard benefits package which would require Council's formal approval. Council discussed the issue in executive session.

2. Police Officer Recruitment

Ms. Houser reported that the position for a full-time officer was posted for receipt of applications but at this time, Council needs to address one outstanding item for the hiring process. Applications are due on August 7th. The agility test, written test and oral interviews are scheduled for August 19th and August 24th.

Staff recommends that medical testing be conducted by Dr. Magley at the rate of \$75.00 per applicant.

Ms. Houser made a motion to approve Dr. Magley to administer the medical testing at a rate of \$75.00 per applicant. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

L. Diversity Committee – None.

M. General Business

1. Ebensburg Municipal Airport

Mr. Gribler shared that RACRA requested the Borough engineer to look at the existing hangar, which is owned by the Borough, to determine the feasibility of rehabilitation of the hangar. After this review, the structural engineer determined the hangar could not be rehabilitated. Based upon the findings, RACRA requested a meeting with borough staff, which Mr. Gribler also attended.

During the meeting, RACRA stated they request a solution to this situation and suggested that the Borough raze or shore up the building as soon as possible to ensure their ability to continue to supply fuel and erect a new hangar. The cost of a new hangar is yet to be determined as the prices range from \$250,000 to \$650,000. RACRA has requested that the borough provide the necessary funds to construct the new hangar while they seek federal funds for the reimbursement. It is the understanding of Borough staff that this money is not guaranteed.

Borough staff met with RACRA this past week to discuss their options for going forward with the airport. It is Staff's recommendation to consult with a structural engineer regarding the hangar and the gasoline pumps.

2. Ebensburg Municipal Airport

Mr. Gribler shared that RACRA expressed their intent to exercise the five-year optional extension to the lease. The RACRA Board has an upcoming meeting to take official action. Staff recommended granting RACRA a sixty-day extension to exercise their option to extend the lease for an additional five years. Discussion of the matter was deferred to an executive session, this being a real estate matter.

N. Department Report

1. **Police Department** – Acting Chief Sapp has submitted a written report on the police department’s activities during the month.
2. **Public Works Department** – Public Works Director Josh Surkovich has submitted a written report on the public works department’s activities during the month.
3. **Community Development** – Ms. Danae Koss reported on recent events including Wheels & Wings, July 4th Symphony event and Movies in the Park. She shared updates on upcoming events including the Downtown Shutdown and Homecoming as well as Concerts in the Park.
4. **Recreation Department** – Mr. Dirk Johnson reported on recent activities including the addition of e-bike rentals now available through the YPCC and added that the cameras at the ballfield are up and running.

O. Media Comments/Questions – None

P. Public Comments – None

Q. Executive Session – Council entered into executive session at 6:52 PM to discuss personnel and real estate matters and exited at 7:18 PM. After reopening the meeting to the public:

1. A motion was made by Theresa Jacoby to add a week of paid vacation to Joe Loughran’s benefits in lieu of health insurance (Owatt). Motion passed unanimously.
2. A motion was made by Houser to table the request from RACRA to extend the period in which they had the right to exercise their 5-year extension option in the lease. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

R. Adjournment – There being no further business, Ms. Houser made a motion to adjourn. (Ball) Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned 7:20 PM

Minutes Recorded by: Danae Koss, Community Development Director