

The regular monthly meeting of the Ebensburg Borough Council was called to order on Monday, October 23, 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  
Mike Owatt  
Bob Miller  
Isaac Bradley, Junior Councilor  
Absent: Dave Kuhar, Abraham Remillard, Junior Councilor  
Others: Kelly Cook, Borough Manager  
Randy Datsko, Mayor  
Joseph Loughran, Chief of Police  
Danea Koss, Community Development Director  
Dirk Johnson, Recreation Director  
Josh Surkovich, Public Works Director  
Matt Gribler, Solicitor  
Luke Byrne, Inframark  
Dwayne Lowry, Inframark  
Art Martynuska, Cambria County Emergency Management Association  
Breanne Berkebile, The Mountaineer Journal

Audience: 5

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. (Owatt)  
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 September 25, 2023, regular monthly meeting.
4. Approve the financial statement for September and quarterly transfers.
5. Approve payment of bills for October.

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

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

F. **Mayor's Report** – None.

G. **Council President Comments** – Mr. Tusing encouraged everyone to get out and vote in the upcoming elections. He added that we have four incumbents running as well as a two other candidates.

**I. Water/Wastewater Committee**

**1. Report from Inframark on Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations**

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

**2. Report from Inframark on Water Treatment Plant Operations**

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

**3. Operating Agreement between the Borough and Municipal Authority**

Ms. Cook reported that agreement exists between the two parties that set compensation for the Authority to pay the Borough for administrative support. The agreement allows for the adjustment of the compensation through a resolution by both parties. The current cost is \$201,000/ year and Staff recommends an increase of 10% to \$221,100 annually. The rate has not changed since 2017 but due to increased costs and expenditures, an adjustment is necessary and appropriate.

Ms. Cook recommended that this item be tabled to next month as the Municipal Authority discussed and were in favor of the idea but did not vote on it.

Mr. Miller made a motion to table this item until next month. (Houser) Motion passed unanimously.

**J. Recreation Committee**

**1. Resolution #2023-11**

Ms. Cook reported that a Resolution is needed authorizing the submission of a grant through the Statewide Local Share Account Grant for the procurement of playground equipment at the Memorial Field Playground.

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to approve Resolution #2023-11 authorizing the application of a \$120,000 through the Statewide Local Share Account Grant, and further authorizing Borough officers to execute any and all documents required to secure the grant. (Owatt) Motion passed unanimously.

**K. Street Committee**

**1. Sidewalk and Curbing Project**

Mr. Owatt reported that bids were awarded in February to CH & D Construction in the amount of \$136,827.88. The tentative start date for this is September 28, 2023, but has changed to October 30, 2023, with an expected completion of November 10, 2023, well before the December 1, 2023, deadline.

**2. Pedestrian Crosswalk Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) for Julian and High Street**

Mr. Owatt reported that the Borough continues to pursue obtaining RRFBs for West High Street at the intersection of Julian. Application to the State requires a notarized application and a formal financial commitment from the Borough. This commitment is for the total funds for the construction (less any grants received) and the ongoing operation and maintenance of the signal. The state will draft the plans for the Borough to be submitted for review. The estimated cost of construction is \$50,000.

Mr. Owatt made a motion to approve the application and the letter of commitment for the construction of an RRFB on both sides of W. High Street at the intersection of Julian Street. (Houser) Roll call was taken:

Houser	Yes	Tusing	Yes	Jacoby	Yes	
Miller	Yes	Ball	No	Owatt	Yes	Motion carried 5-1.

- Resolution #2023-12:** A Resolution authorizing the submission of a grant through the Statewide Local Share Account Grant for the installation of RRFB's.

Mr. Owatt reported that the Borough will apply for a grant for the installation of two RRFBs at the intersection of West High and Julain Streets.

Mr. Owatt made a motion to approve Resolution #2023-12 authorizing the application of a \$50,000 grant through the Statewide Local Share Account Grant, and further authorizing Borough officers to execute any and all documents required to secure the grant. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

**L. Administration Committee**

**1. 2024 Budget**

Ms. Jacoby reported that the administrative committee has reviewed a tentative 2024 budget compiled by staff for Council's review. The 2024 Operating Budget calls for revenues of \$6,947,390 and expenditures of \$6,947,390. The general fund budget is balanced without an increase in taxes.

	Revenues	Expenditures	Surplus/Deficit
General Fund Budget	\$2,529,760	\$2,529,760	\$0
Water Fund Budget	\$2,181,600	\$2,181,600	\$0
Wastewater Fund Budget	\$2,005,530	\$2,005,530	\$0
Stormwater Fund Budget	<u>\$ 230,500</u>	<u>\$ 230,500</u>	<u>\$0</u>
Total Operating Fund	\$6,947,390	\$6,947,390	\$0

The General Fund Budget reflects an increase of 9.1% over last year. This increase is primarily due to overall inflation in supplies and services, as well as the implementation of a new five-year garbage/recycling contract and the hiring of an additional full-time police officer.

The Water and Wastewater Fund Budgets have a minimal increase, despite a new five-year contract with Inframark for operations of the systems that includes the regular monitoring of pumping stations throughout the system

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to grant tentative approval to the 2024 annual budget and advertise for public inspection. (Houser) Motion passed unanimously.

M. **Diversity Committee** – None.

N. **General Business**

1. **Ebensburg Municipal Airport**

Ms. Cook reported 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.

After July's meeting, Council sought a second opinion from a structural engineer who believes the hangar can be rehabilitated. A meeting is scheduled next week to discuss temporary measures to secure the structure in preparation for potential long-term repairs in 2024. Prior to these repairs, the building will not be utilized. Further evaluation will be made concerning the current location and ongoing use of the fuel pumps.

Mr. Gribler recommended that this item be discussed in an executive session.

2. Ms. Houser reported that the borough advertised for the sale of a surplus police car, specifically a 2015 Ford Explorer. Two bids were received and opened prior to the meeting. They are as follows:

Forest Hills Ambulance	\$5,025.25
Ringwood Motors	\$1,880.00

Ms. Houser made a motion to award the sale of the 2015 Ford Explorer to Forest Hills Ambulance. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

3. Mr. Tusing reported that the Borough and Cambria County have a lease for the former Babcock Property. The term of the existing lease is until August 31, 2035, but the County has requested an extension of the lease until August 31, 2055. The County wants to add insulation and heat and wishes to connect water to their existing building. They do not want to make the expenditures without the assurance of an extended lease.

Mr. Tusing recommended tabling this item for discussion in an executive session as a real estate matter, which was the consensus of Council.

4. Ms. Cook reported that the Borough was notified by a letter from Marcus & Mack that Ms. Paula Teeter intends to commence a cause of action against the Borough for an accident that allegedly occurred on July 19, 2023, at or near the intersection of High and Center Streets. Ms. Cook shared that she had learned prior to the meeting the accident was due to a pothole at the intersection of High and Center, which is a state road, and it would fall under the state's jurisdiction. The insurance carrier has been notified.

**O. Department Report**

1. **Police Department** – Chief Loughran reiterated that the monthly report was again showing an uptick in incidents, but that was due to the new reporting measures in place. He added that all went very well at PotatoFest with only one vehicle needing to be towed. He also shared that there had just been a rash of vehicle thefts in the Borough due to residents leaving items in their cars unlocked and asked for the public to reach out if they had any information.
2. **Public Works Department** – Public Works Director Mr. Josh Surkovich reported on a significant leak that had recently been fixed on Pine Street as well as a smaller leak on Caroline Street. He added that the leaf vacuum would be back in service soon after various repairs.
4. **Community Development** – Ms. Danae Koss reported on recent events including the upcoming Halloween window painting, Small Business Saturday, Trick or Treat and Dickens of a Christmas. She also reported that PotatoFest attendance was 37,200 people based on data from a company (Placer) who did a demonstration of their software by pulling stats for the event by anonymously pinging cellphones within the perimeter of the event.
5. **Recreation Department** – Mr. Dirk Johnson reported the YPCC will host a Halloween Carnival on Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup> from 3 to 5 pm.
6. **Ebensburg Planning Commission** – Ms. Cook reported that, at their October 5, 2023 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Springer lot joiner for the property located at 618 Margaret Street from property obtained from 614 Margaret Street.

Ms. Houser made a motion to approve the Springer lot joiner at 618 Margaret Street. (Miller)  
Motion passed unanimously.

**P. Media Comments/Questions** – None

**Q. Public Comments**

1. Mr. Tom Bortel, E. Sample Street, asked if Council is planning to spend \$50,000 on the flashing crosswalk beacons if the grant that they are applying for is not approved. He also asked the status of the old prison jail property.

**R. Executive Session** – Council entered into Executive Session at 7:01 PM to discuss real estate and personnel matters and exited at 7:25 PM.

- S. **Adjournment** – There being no further business, Ms. Jacoby made a motion to adjourn. (Houser)  
Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned 7:26 PM

Minutes Recorded by: Danae Koss, Community Development Director