

The regular monthly meeting of the Ebensburg Borough Council was called to order on Monday, February 26, 2024, 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
Dave Kuhar
Robert Miller
Mike Murphy
Isaac Bradley, Junior Councilor
Kelly Cook, Borough Manager

Absent: Randy Datsko, Mayor
Abraham Remillard, Junior Councilor

Others: Joseph Loughran, Chief of Police
Dirk Johnson, Recreation Director
Danea Koss, Community Development Director
Josh Surkovich, Public Works Director
Luke Byrne, Inframark
Matt Gribler, Solicitor
Meghan Freidhof, Wessel & Company
Matt Churella, The Altoona Mirror
Julie Pittman, Mainline Newspapers

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. (Ball)
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 January 22, 2024 regular monthly meeting and January 2, 2024 reorganization meeting of Borough Council.
4. Approve the financial statement for January.
5. Approve payment of bills for February.

D. **Appointments to Address Council**

Ms. Meghan Freidhof, of Wessel & Company, was present and gave an overview of the 2023 Borough audit, which yielded a favorable opinion. She provided copies of financial statements and an executive summary report.

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

F. **Mayor's Report** – None.

G. **Council President Comments** - None.

H. **Water/Wastewater Committee**

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

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**

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

H. **Recreation Committee** – None.

I. **Street Committee** – None.

J. **Administration Committee**

1. **Ebensburg Police Labor Agreement**

Mr. Kuhar reported that the administrative committee has reached a tentative agreement with the Ebensburg Borough Police Department. The current Collective Bargaining Agreement expired at the end of 2023. The terms of the proposed agreement include:

- a. Wage increases of 5%, 3%, 3% over the four years.
- b. Life insurance increasing from \$25,000 to \$50,000.
- c. Health insurance contribution by the Police will increase in 2027 by 1%.
- d. Sick time buy out will increase from \$7.50 an hour to \$20 an hour until March 31, 2024 when it reverts back to \$7.50.
- e. There were multiple changes in the language of the agreement concerning sick time. The provisions still exist but clarification was necessary to stipulate documentation required when utilized.

Mr. Kuhar made a motion to approve the Ebensburg Police Department Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2024-2027, with updated wages to be paid retroactively from January 1, 2024. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

K. **Human Relations & Diversity Committee** – None.

L. **General Business**

1. **Ebensburg Municipal Airport**

Ms. Cook shared that staff received a report from the structural engineer regarding repairs to the hangar, but the engineer cannot offer a guarantee on the length of time the repair would extend

its life. Therefore, RACRA's funding sources are limited. Staff met with RACRA this week regarding the recommended work while RACRA continues to investigate the cost and longevity of repairs.

2. **Ordinance #669: Garbage Ordinance**

Ms. Cook shared that an ordinance which amends the current ordinance by allowing for a larger garbage receptacle, requiring the use of lids for all garbage receptacles and allowing a maximum time prior to the pick-up day (24 hours) that garbage can be taken to the curb for collection, with the same amount of time for the removal of the receptacle after pick-up day.

Ms. Houser made a motion to grant final approval for Ordinance #669 amending provisions of the garbage ordinance. (Kuhar) Motion passed unanimously.

The consensus of Council was that certain exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for vacations, disabilities, etc.

3. **Resolution #2024-01**

Ms. Houser reported that the annual Wage Resolution for 2024 was adopted by Council in December of last year. At the time, negotiations were still underway with the FOP for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement. Now that the new CBA is being finalized, the previous resolution requires updating with new wage amounts for the police force.

Ms. Houser made a motion to adopt Resolution #2024-01 establishing wages for 2024. (Ball) Motion passed unanimously.

4. **Office Staff Salaries**

Mr. Tusing stated that when the original 2024 Wage Resolution was passed in December, the Administrative Committee had requested that wages for office staff positions be reviewed in the new year. Council will enter into Executive Session to further discuss this matter.

M. **Department Report**

1. **Police Department** – Chief Loughran reported on a recent rash of thefts from unlocked vehicles in town and how they were able to make an arrest due to the help of residents reporting suspicious activity and providing doorbell camera footage. He added that the department and the borough office had recently received donated office furniture from the Pennsylvania State Police Ebensburg Barracks.
2. **Public Works Department** – Public Works Director Josh Surkovich reported that the public works department would be coordinating with utility companies on upcoming projects where the roads will need to be dug up. He shared that we may want to consider revising our ordinance to require curb to curb repaving rather than just repaving the ditch line.
3. **Community Development** – Ms. Danae Koss gave updates on a recent visit from the Lt. Governor Davis and the award of a \$50k grant for façade improvement projects, recent

WinterFest activities and an upcoming networking event to be held on April 4th at the Ebensburg Country Club. She added that the Borough would be hosting the Spring 2024 Cambria County Borough's Association dinner on April 16th and an invite to Council would be forthcoming.

4. **Recreation Department** – Mr. Dirk Johnson gave updates on lighting at the Dog Park, and a Bubble event happening at the YPCC. He also mentioned that the swimming pool project back had been sent back out for bid.

N. **Media Comments/Questions**

1. Mr. Matt Churella, The Altoona Mirror, asked if he get a quote from each Council person on what they like about Ebensburg for an upcoming Community Spotlight article he is working on.

O. **Public Comments**

1. Mr. Bill Link, N. Spruce Street, asked a question regarding the terms of the 4-year police agreement.
2. Mr. Tom Bortel, E. Sample Street, asked for clarification of the new the garbage ordinance, and commented that many residents are permanently storing trash and recycle bins in front of their homes.
3. Mr. Gerry McMullen, W. Lloyd Street, added that he feels that the Borough should require that repaving of roads after construction work be done curb to curb.

- P. **Executive Session** – Council entered into Executive Session at 7:14 pm and exited at 7:50 p.m to discuss personnel and legal matters.

Upon exiting Executive Session, Mr. Kuhar made a motion to increase the office staff hourly wage to \$22.82/hour, effective March 1st. (Ball) Roll call was taken:

Jacoby	No	Tusing	No	Ball	Yes
Miller	No	Murphy	Yes	Houser	Yes
Kuhar	Yes				

Motion passed 4-3.

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

Meeting Adjourned 7:52 PM

Minutes Recorded by: Danae Koss, Community Development Director