

The regular monthly meeting of the Ebensburg Borough Council was called to order on Monday, July 22, 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
Dave Kuhar
Robert Miller
Mike Murphy
Jeff Ball
Theresa Jacoby
Isaac Bradley, Junior Councilor
Absent: Abraham Remillard, Junior Councilor
Others: Kelly Cook, Borough Manager
Randy Datsko, Mayor
Joseph Loughran, Chief of Police
Dirk Johnson, Recreation Director
Rebecca Williamson, Incoming Recreation Director
Josh Surkovich, Public Works Director
Luke Byrne, Inframark
Matt Gribler, Solicitor
Matt Churella, The Altoona Mirror
Julie Pittman, Mainline Newspapers

Audience: 2

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 June 24, 2024 regular monthly meeting.
4. Approve the financial statement for June.
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 the police department had been posting updates on their Facebook page reminding folks that they cannot park the wrong direction on borough streets, they can't leave garbage cans out next to the street more than 24 hours before or after the designated pick up day. Also, bicycles are not permitted to be ridden on the sidewalk in the business district.

G. **Council President Comments** – Mr. Tusing reported that there is a lot of construction currently happening in the borough and a stormwater project is about to begin.

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.

3. **Waterline Replacement Project**

Mr. Miller reported that this project is proceeding well and is on schedule. Guyer Brothers has installed approximately 48% of the mainline. Service installation began in mid-June and a second crew has started on this project as well.

4. **Stormwater Project**

Mr. Miller reported that this project consists of the installation of approximately 5,515 feet of 60", 30", 24", 18" and 15" storm sewer piping, inlets, manholes, headwalls and all necessary appurtenances. Work is to take place on West Highland Avenue, between N. West Street and N. Julian Street; N. Julian, N. Beech, N. Marian and N. Spruce Streets, north of West Highland Avenue; Randolph Street, Elderwood Drive and a portion of the Fairgrounds area. The loan closed with Pennvest on July 11th and a notice to proceed should be issued soon. A pre-construction meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 24th with the contractor. The project should take approximately seven months to complete.

I. **Recreation Committee**

1. **Tennis Center** – Ms. Jacoby reported that the tennis center is experiencing moisture problems that are getting worse. Last month the Borough awarded a bid to Sports Interiors in the amount of \$114,751.00 for the ceiling membrane. The work is to commence the second week of August.

2. **Recreation Director**

Ms. Jacoby reported the Recreational Director committee has completed its review of applications for the position and candidates were interviewed. A conditional offer of employment has been made to Rebecca Williamson, pending all pre-employment clearances. The start date for the new Recreation Director is August 12th. The annual salary is \$50,000.

J. **Street Committee** – None.

K. **Administration Committee**

Billing Department: Ms. Houser reported that a long-term employee is anticipating retirement within a year. The administrative committee will meet to discuss succession planning.

L. Human Relations & Diversity Committee – None.

M. General Business

1. Ebensburg Municipal Airport

Mr. Tusing reported that RACRA had planned to initiate remedial work to shore up the hangar building which is in need of structural repairs. Prior to the start of work, they sought clarification from the engineering firm that designed the repairs, Diviney & Associates, to determine if the remedial work would be enough to allow the building to be occupied. Diviney stated that “Given the level of deterioration in the roof purlins, we can’t be sure when an isolated failure may occur. It would be best to have them replaced or sistered” (prior to occupying the building).

No action is needed currently. Staff is waiting for RACRA to determine their course of action.

2. Municipal Parking Lot

Ms. Cook reported that after receipt of an independent appraisal and as a result of the Special Meeting held by Borough Council on July 1, 2024, a formal offer of \$250,000 was made by the Borough and accepted by the owner. The offer was for the appraised value of \$250,000 plus \$2,500 towards closing costs. The purchase will use available cash from the General Reserve Fund.

Council made it a matter of record that the Borough closed on the purchase of the “Municipal Parking Lot” on Friday, July 19, 2024.

3. Parking within the Borough

Ms. Cook reported that the Borough owns several parking lots within the Borough and the lots have different meters, and methods of parking. Staff has started a comprehensive review of all paid parking within the Borough, including on-street parking and lot parking. The fees and rules for the monthly passes will also be evaluated.

4. Parking behind the Borough Building

Ms. Cook reported that the Borough has been experiencing increased use of the lot behind the Municipal Building both during the day and during early evening when parking is still needed for Borough business, public meetings, etc. In general, the lot is only to be used by authorized personnel for Borough purposes. That said, until a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon is installed at the crosswalk on West High and Julian, Council has temporarily agreed to allow public parking in non-employee designated spaces only during non-business hours (from 6 pm until 6 am weekdays). During business hours (6 am to 6 pm weekdays), any vehicles, unless involved in borough business, will be ticketed unless they display a valid Parking Pass as issued by the Borough.

Lastly, the public is prohibited from parking anywhere in the lot during Borough or Mainstreet Partnership events, including those on evenings and weekends.

5. Sidewalk Loan

Ms. Cook reported that the Borough took out a loan for the sidewalk project in 2021 for \$550,000. Due to the reserve directed to cover that cost and the amount collected from the residents, the loan was expected to have been paid off in five years. However, adequate money currently exists in the Sidewalk Reserve fund to pay off the loan balance of approximately \$230,000. The interest rate due on the loan and the interest currently earned on the money differs by only one tenth of one percent. Currently, there are no plans for curb or sidewalk work within the next year. After paying off the loan, the remaining money can then be transferred to a PLIGIT account where the interest yield is greater. Also, any future payments received from residents/property owners for the project will be deposited into the Sidewalk Reserve.

Mr. Kuhar made a motion to approve payoff of the existing Sidewalk Project loan and transfer remaining funds to an account with PLIGIT. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

N. Department Report

1. **Police Department** – Chief Loughran reported that the department activity for the month. He noted that there were no issues at Wheels & Wings and that they are prepared for the upcoming Downtown Shutdown and Homecoming events.
2. **Public Works Department** – Public Works Director Josh Surkovich provided a written report on department activity for the month.
3. **Community Development** – Community Development Director Danae Koss reported on the success of Wheels & Wings, Movies in the Park and the start of the Concert series and Farmer’s Markets. She also gave an update on the upcoming Downtown Shutdown, Homecoming and PotatoFest events.
4. **Recreation Department** – Recreation Director Dirk Johnson gave an update on the recent activity for the month including a donation to the Ebensburg Youth League from the Ebensburg Main Street Partnership that will be put towards a new scoreboard at the Lake Field. He also added that the next Bingo night would be held August 16th.
5. **Ebensburg Planning Commission** – None.
6. **Ebensburg Zoning Hearing Board** – None.

O. **Media Comments/Questions** – Mr. Matt Churella, Altoona Mirror, with regard to the purchase of the parking lot, noted that he’d seen a recent purchase of the parking lot and asked if the borough had tried to purchase it when it first went up for sale. He also asked Ms. Cook what the parking issues are that prompted the need for a comprehensive review of all parking areas within the borough.

P. **Public Comments** – Councilman Dave Kuhar thanked everyone for the well wishes he received over the past few months.

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

Meeting Adjourned 7:15 PM

Minutes Recorded by:
Danea Koss, Community Development Director