

The regular monthly meeting of the Ebensburg Borough Council was called to order on Monday, October 28, 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  
Mike Murphy  
Jeff Ball  
Theresa Jacoby  
Robert Miller  
Abe Remillard, Junior Councilor

Others: Kelly Cook, Borough Manager  
Danea Koss, Community Development Director  
Rebecca Williamson, Recreation Director  
Luke Byrne, Inframark  
Dwayne Lowry, 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** – Mr. Bill Link, N. Spruce Street, expressed his thoughts on item 8B, North Spruce Street. His opinion is that it should be made into a one-way street from W. High Street to E. Sample.
- C. **Administration of Oath** – Mr. Abe Remillard was sworn in for a second term as Junior Councilor by Mayor Randy Datsko.
- D. **Consent Agenda**  
Ms. Houser made a motion to approve the consent agenda containing the following items. (Kuhar)  
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 23, 2024, regular monthly meeting.
  4. Approve the financial statement for September and quarterly transfers.
  5. Approve payment of bills for October.
- E. **Appointments to Address Council** – None.
- F. **Consideration of Any Motion(s) to Amend Agenda** – None.
- G. **Mayor's Report** – Mayor Datsko reminded residents to be sure to rake their leaves to the curb and not out into the street. He suggested that the public works come up with a schedule for running leave

vacuum so that residents know when to put them out. He also noted that, as part of the water line replacement project, eight new water hydrants were installed for a total of 26.

H. **Council President Comments** – Mr. Tusing addressed the inconvenience of multiple projects happening at the same time. He explained that they are necessary improvements and that the borough was very fortunate to get grant funds and low interest loans to help offset the costs. He added that we now have a full complement of public works employees, and these projects are winding down, though the stormwater project will continue through spring with paving to follow. Lastly, he encouraged resident to get out and vote and reminded everyone that we are Americans first and we should all remain civil throughout the process.

I. **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. **Wastewater Replacement Project**

Mr. Miller reported that this project is proceeding well and on schedule. Guyer Brothers has installed approximately 93% of the mainline and 60% of service installation.

4. **Stormwater Project**

Mr. Miller reported that construction began by A. Liberoni Construction on August 12, 2024. The 60" pipe has been installed and currently the contractor is working on North Beech Street toward Highland Avenue. This project will take approximately seven months to complete.

J. **Recreation Committee** – None.

K. **Street Committee**

1. **Ordinance 672: Loading Zone of Municipal Streets**

Ms. Houser reported that the borough's current ordinance does not include a procedure to allow for loading zones to be designated. Staff recommends modifying the ordinance to allow for the placement of loading zone signs where and when warranted, at Council's discretion. The procedure would equal that to the handicap spaces in that it is reviewed and approved by the manager and police chief.

Ms. Houser made a motion to grant tentative approval for Ordinance 672 which allows for the designation of loading zones where and when warranted, at Council's discretion. (Jacoby)  
Motion passed unanimously.

2. **North Spruce Street**

Ms. Houser reported that at last month’s meeting there was a question about the process for changing North Spruce Street from High to Crawford to one way. After staff review, it was determined that the State Motor Vehicle Code requires that Council consider statistics for the subject street regarding previous accidents, injuries and property damage. The borough Police Department is not aware of any reports of accidents, incidents or property damage that has occurred in that area of North Spruce Street since the street was converted to two-way traffic (believed to be in 2015). There being no data or evidence to support a change, staff recommended keeping North Spruce as a two-way street.

The consensus of Council was to look into the history of when and why it was changed from one-way to two-way and get some specific measurements on the width of that section of street.

Mayor Datsko asked if a study was done when it was changed in what was believed to be 2015.

**3. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB)**

Ms. Houser shared that the borough applied for a grant through the Local Share Account for \$52,000 to erect a RRFB at the intersection of Julian and High Street. The borough was awarded this grant to improve pedestrian safety. As soon as the paperwork is received and finalized, staff will prepare to place the project out for the bidding process.

**L. Administration Committee**

- 2025 Annual Budget** - Ms. Cook reported that the administrative committee has compiled a tentative 2025 budget for Council’s review. The 2025 Operating Budget calls for revenues of \$7,436,845 and expenditures of \$7,436,845. The general fund budget is balanced without an increase in real estate taxes.

	Revenues	Expenditures	Surplus
General Fund Budget	\$2,561,445.00	\$2,561,445.00	\$0.00
Water Fund Budget	\$2,588,600.00	\$2,588,600.00	\$0.00
Wastewater Fund Budget	\$2,058,000.00	\$2,058,000.00	\$0.00
Stormwater Fund Budget	<u>\$228,800.00</u>	<u>\$228,800.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
<b>Total Operating Fund</b>	<b>\$7,436,845.00</b>	<b>\$7,436,845.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

The General Fund Budget reflects a decrease of 0.48% over last year. Revenues are slightly down due to the assessed value of the real estate, the transfer tax and interest earnings decreasing. The decrease in expenditure is primarily due to the purchase of a parking lot in 2024 from the capital budget and therefore, the borough is not paying rent. Furthermore, the sidewalk loan was paid in full in 2024. This in turn allowed any inflationary expenditure increases to be offset. The Water Fund Budget has a 5.37% increase, which is due to an increase in revenues and

expenditures due to a large infrastructure project to replace a third of the borough's antiquated waterlines. The Borough has a rich history but unfortunately, the waterlines are a product of this history, and many have not been updated. Fortunately, the Borough's Municipal Authority was able to secure a substantial grant that covers a little over forty percent of a water main replacement project, but the rest will have to be paid for by the users. The Authority received funding to help cover the cost of a Phase I Stormwater Project. The Stormwater Fund has an adequate revenue stream to fund the debt service for this project and enough in reserve for the design fees needed for future projects.

Mr. Kuhar expressed concerns that the borough spent a significant amount of capital funds that were not specifically included in the 2024 budget and suggested consideration of a 1 mill tax increase to replenish reserves.

Mr. Miller shared his opinion that a one mill increase should be put in place to cover the nearly \$500,000.00 in unbudgeted expenses that were made this year.

Mr. Tusing responded that every year, the borough sets aside a significant amount of revenue to ensure that funds for capital projects are available, and that despite that higher than usual spending in 2024, there are ample reserve funds in place.

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to grant tentative approval to the 2025 annual budget and advertise for public inspection. (Houser)

Roll call was taken:

Jacoby	Yes	Tusing	Yes	Houser	Yes
Murphy	No	Kuhar	No		
Ball	Yes	Miller	No		Motion passed 4 to 3

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

N. **General Business**

1. **Garbage Collection** - Ms. Cook reported that, over the past several weeks, the Borough has received a few complaints regarding noise associated with trash pickup during early morning hours. Staff has spoken with Pro Disposal, the Borough's trash hauler, and has received assurances that residential pickup should not be occurring before 6am (as per our bid specifications). Commercial pickups may still occur at various overnight times, but Pro Disposal is willing to pursue the use of plastic vs. metal dumpsters, which produce much less noise. As discussed at last month's meeting, trash collection activities are exempt from the Borough's noise ordinance, as they are considered to be an "essential service". Any changes to that part of the ordinance could create issues with the safe and timely removal of garbage and debris from Borough homes and businesses. The consensus of Council is to reaffirm with Pro Disposal that no pick-ups should be taking place before 6:00 am.

**2. Lease Agreement with Goodwill of the Southern Alleghenies**

Ms. Cook reported that Ebensburg Borough and Goodwill of the Southern Alleghenies negotiated a lease agreement for one year, ending on September 30, 2025, but allowing for two one-year extensions at a new lease rate of \$1,285.00 per month (a 10% increase over the previous rent).

Mr. Miller made a motion to ratify the lease agreement with Goodwill. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

**3. Lease Agreement with Cambria County Child Development Corporation**

Ms. Cook reported that Ebensburg Borough and Cambria County Child Development Corporation entered into a lease agreement October 1, 2021, for three years, ending on September 30, 2024, at the lease rate of \$1,117.38 per month. The tenant has requested to renew the lease with the Borough for three years at the current rate of \$1,666.94. Staff continues to negotiate a new rate with the tenant.

**O. Department Report**

**1. Police Department** – Chief Loughran provided a written report to Council but was not able to attend the meeting. Ms. Cook reported that there were no issues during the Halloween Parade and Trick or Treat and part-time Officer Colby Jones has been sworn in.

**2. Public Works Department** – Public Works Director Josh Surkovich provided a written report on department activity for the month. He was not able to attend the meeting due to a water leak that he was attending to. Staff is aware of issues with the streetlights and are working with Dodson Electric to resolve the issue.

**3. Community Development** – Community Development Director Danae Koss reported on recent activities including the PotatoFest, Fall Foliage Ride, Halloween Parade and Trick-or-Treat, Small Business Saturday and Dickens of a Christmas. She also thanked the Cambria Elementary students and staff that painted the downtown storefront windows for Halloween.

**4. Recreation Department** – Recreation Director Rebecca Williamson gave an update on the recent activity for the month including an update on the swimming pool project and winterization of the pool, the recent Halloween party, winter basketball league and swim team. She added that the recreation board meeting date has been moved to the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm.

**5. Ebensburg Planning Commission** – None.

**6. Ebensburg Zoning Hearing Board** – None.

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

**Q. Public Comments** – None.

R. **Executive Session** – None.

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

Meeting Adjourned 7:26 PM  
Minutes Recorded by:

Danea Koss, Community Development Director