

The regular monthly meeting of the Ebensburg Borough Council was called to order on Monday, November 25, 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, via phone  
Mike Murphy  
Jeff Ball  
Theresa Jacoby  
Abe Remillard, Junior Councilor  
Roy Lian, Junior Councilor  
Absent: Robert Miller  
Others: Kelly Cook, Borough Manager  
Randy Datsko, Mayor  
Joe Loughran, Chief of Police  
Danea Koss, Community Development Director  
Rebecca Williamson, Recreation Director  
Matt Gribler, Solicitor  
Greg Neugebauer, District Attorney  
Aaron Leyo, Ebensburg Borough Police Officer  
Anthony Cavazza, Ebensburg Borough Police Officer  
Barry Blake, Ebensburg Area EMS  
Matt Churella, The Altoona Mirror  
Julie Pittman, Mainline Newspapers

Audience: 11

A. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**B. Public Comments**

1. Mr. Greg Neugebauer, 345 Emerald Drive, expressed his personal and professional support for the hiring of a School Resource Officer for Holy Name School.
2. Mr. Ben Clauto, 604 W. Sample Street, expressed his support for changing the 100 and 200 block of N. Spruce Street back to a one-way street, citing safety concerns.
3. Mr. Brian Dumm, 169 Hillcrest Drive, expressed his support for changing the 100 and 200 block of N. Spruce Street back to a one-way street, citing safety concerns.
4. Ms. Kelli Mara, 520 W. Crawford Street, expressed her support for changing the 100 and 200 block of N. Spruce Street back to a one-way street, citing safety concerns.
5. Mr. George Smith, 517 W. Sample Street, expressed his support for changing the 100 and 200 block of N. Spruce Street back to a one-way street, citing safety concerns.
6. Ms. Annalisa McCann, 600 W. Crawford Street, expressed her support for changing the 100 and 200 block of N. Spruce Street back to a one-way street, citing safety concerns. She also expressed her support for the hiring of a School Resource Officer at Holy Name School.

7. Ms. Chris Dumm, 523 W. Sample Street, expressed her support for changing the 100 and 200 block of N. Spruce Street back to a one-way street, citing safety concerns. She also questioned Council on why it was changed a number of years ago.

C. **Administration of Oath** – Mr. Roy Lian was sworn in as Junior Councilor by Mayor Randy Datsko.

D. **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. It is a matter of record that Garrett James was hired as a part-time employee at the YPCC at a rate of \$8.00 per hour.
4. Approve the minutes of the October 28, 2024, regular monthly meeting.
5. Approve the financial statement for October.
6. Approve payment of bills for November.

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

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

G. **Mayor's Report** – Mayor Datsko reminded residents December 1<sup>st</sup> will start winter parking regulations. He added a reminder that garbage cans cannot be placed in the street and must be removed from the curb within 24 hours of picking up. He noted that starting December 1<sup>st</sup> they will begin enforcement.

H. **Council President Comments** – Mr. Tusing discussed a letter from Dauntless Fire Company providing information on their recent successful financial audit. He commended them on being a well-run volunteer organization and added that he appreciated them keeping borough officials apprised of key activities.

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. **Waterline Replacement Project**

Mr. Murphy reported that this project is proceeding well and on schedule. Guyer Brothers has installed approximately 98% of the mainline and 85% of the service installation. Mr. Tusing

asked if they were done, and Ms. Cook shared that they are still working but will likely not be finished until Spring.

**4. Stormwater Project**

Mr. Murphy 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.

**I. Recreation Committee**

**1. Agreement between the Borough and Ebensburg Youth Softball Association**

Ms. Jacoby reported that an agreement is proposed that allows use of certain portions of Memorial Field so the League can have programs. The proposed fee is \$2,200.00 per year.

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to approve the agreement between the Borough and Ebensburg Youth Softball Association. (Ball) Motion passed unanimously.

**K. Street Committee**

**1. Ordinance 672: Loading Zone on 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. The procedure would equal that of the handicap spaces in that it is reviewed and approved by the manager and police chief.

Ms. Houser made a motion to grant final approval for Ordinance 672 which allows for the designation of loading zones where and when warranted. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

**2. North Spruce Street**

Ms. Houser reported that Council has been discussing the process for changing North Spruce Street from High to Crawford to one way. Council requested staff to investigate the curbing and what could be done. Currently TranSystems, the Borough engineer is reviewing and will issue a report based on today’s standards.

It should also be noted that four residents that live on Spruce Street called the borough within the past month to express their support for changing the 100 and 200 blocks of N. Spruce St back to one way. They all said while there have not been accidents, there have been near misses and incidents that required a driver to back up or pull onto someone’s lawn to allow the other vehicle to get through.

The consensus of Council was to wait until the engineering has been completed before making a decision.

**L. Administration Committee**

1. **2025 Annual Budget** - Ms. Jacoby reported that 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.

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to grant final 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

Motion passed 4 to 2

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

N. **General Business**

1. **RACRA Lease**

Ms. Cook reported that the lease agreement between Ebensburg Borough and RACRA is due to expire on December 31 of this year. The current lease allows for a one-year extension, and

RACRA has requested that the lease be extended. Staff recommends that the lease between the Borough and RACRA be extended for a period of one year, to expire on December 31, 2025. During the course of 2025, the possibility of a longer-term extension will be examined.

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to approve an extension to the Lease Agreement between the Borough and RACRA for a period of one year. (Murphy). Motion passed unanimously.

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

Ms. Cook reported that Ebensburg Borough and Cambria County Child Development Corporation negotiated a three-year lease, ending October 31, 2017, at a new rate to increase every year by 5%. This is essentially equivalent to the flat 10% increase we were seeking.

Ms. Houser made a motion to ratify the lease agreement with the Cambria County child Development Corporation. (Murphy) Motion passed unanimously.

**3. Resolution #2024-10**

Ms. Cook reported that a resolution was proposed to fix the tax rate for the year 2025 at 36.75 mills on each dollar of assessed valuation for land, 11.75 mills on each dollar of assessed valuation for buildings and 2.5 mills on each dollar of assessed valuation of land for stormwater management.

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to Resolution #2024-10 to establish 2025 tax rates. (Houser). Motion passed unanimously.

**4. School Resource Officer**

Ms. Cook reported the borough received a request from Holy Name Church School to provide a School Resource Officer to enhance overall safety of students, faculty and staff. The school expressed a willingness to cover the cost of the SRO. Police Chief Joe Loughran provided additional information to Council regarding the pros and cons of such an endeavor.

Loughran also shared that in early October he learned that Holy Name School was without a School Security Officer. He approached Holy Name administration about having the borough police take over the vacant position with a school Resource Officer or SRO. He detailed how such an agreement could work and expressed that a contract would be drawn up that would be agreeable to both parties.

The consensus of Council was that they were not in a position to make a decision yet, but agreed that the Chief should further advance discussions with the School to develop the outline of a possible agreement. Mr. Kuhar also noted that he had questions relating to liability, what the officer would do in the summer months, and whether a new police cruiser would need to be purchased.

**O. Department Report**

1. **Police Department** – Chief Loughran shared that the department would be participating in Shop with a Cop again this year. He also thanked Rebecca Williamson and Pat Pileski who were able to identify a missing teen at the YPCC. Officers then responded and reunited the youth with their family.
2. **Public Works Department** – Public Works Director Josh Surkovich provided a written report on department activity for the month but was not present. Ms. Cook shared that the crew has been working on water/sewer line fixes and looking for leaks.
3. **Community Development** – Community Development Director Danae Koss reported on recent activities including Small Business Saturday, Dickens of a Christmas the Turkey Trot and the January Newsletter preparations.
4. **Recreation Department** – Recreation Director Rebecca Williamson gave an update on the recent activity for the month including the pool improvement project, basketball league sign-ups and an update on the Tennis Center activities.
5. **Ebensburg Planning Commission** – None.
6. **Ebensburg Zoning Hearing Board** – None.

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

Q. **Public Comments**

1. Mr. Ben Clauto, 604 W. Sample Street, expressed his agreement with Chief Loughran on bringing on a School Resource Officer. He shared that schools are considered “soft targets” and that no school is overpoliced.
2. Mr. Barry Blake, Ebensburg Area EMS Director, shared that Ebensburg EMS would like to submit an LSA grant application to the state for funding for a new ambulance and asked if the borough would serve as the applicant. He added that applications are due at the end of the month. Since the topic had not been included in the meeting agenda, in accordance with requirements of the Sunshine Act, Council discussed the fact that a Special Meeting would be needed to approve the grant application and agreed to meet on Friday, November 29<sup>th</sup>.

R. **Executive Session** – Council entered into an executive session to discuss a personnel matter at 7:34 pm and exited at 7:55 pm. No action was taken as a result of the session.

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

Meeting Adjourned 7:55 PM

Minutes Recorded by:

Danea Koss, Community Development Director