

The regular monthly meeting of the Ebensburg Borough Council was called to order on Monday, December 16, 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  
Theresa Jacoby  
Dave Kuhar, via phone  
Robert Miller  
Mike Murphy  
Roy Lian, Junior Councilor  
Abe Remillard, Junior Councilor  
Absent: Jeffrey Ball  
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  
Luke Byrne, Inframark  
Julie Pittman, Mainline Newspapers

Audience: 6

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. (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. Designate First National Bank, First Commonwealth Bank, AmeriServ Financial Bank, 1<sup>st</sup> Summit Bank and PLGIT as depositories.
4. Approve the minutes of the November 25, 2024, regular monthly meeting of Borough Council and the November 29, 2024 Special Meeting of Borough Council.
5. Approve the financial statement for November.
6. Approve payment of bills for December.

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 shared that this year will mark the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the incorporation of Ebensburg Borough and that planning has begun for ways to celebrate and honor this historic milestone.

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 on schedule. Guyer Brothers has installed approximately 98% of the mainline and 85% of the service installation. Additionally, in the last month the contractor has tested lines and prepared for the installation of the vault on Ann Street.

4. **Stormwater Project**

Mr. Miller reported that construction began by A. Liberoni Construction on August 12, 2024. The 60” pipe has been installed and the majority of the work on North Beech was completed and work on Highland Avenue was suspended until the spring. The crew is installing pipes and inlets on North Julian toward Randolph. This project will take approximately seven months to complete.

I. **Recreation Committee** – None.

J. **Street Committee**

1. **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. The matter was tabled at the November meeting pending receipt of a review and report by TranSystems, the Borough Engineer. Staff reported that they had received a written report from TranSystems that recommends making it one-way.

Mr. Miller made a motion to follow the recommendation of TranSystems and make the 100 and 200 blocks of North Spruce Street one-way going from north to south. (Murphy) Motion passed unanimously. Staff will work with PennDOT if/as needed and will then draft an ordinance to formalize the decision.

K. **Administration Committee**

1. **2025 Wage Resolution #2024-14**

Ms. Jacoby reported that a Resolution is adopted each year to establish the wages to be paid to borough employees. AFSCME and FOP wages are adjusted in accordance with labor contracts.

Historically, non-union employees receive the same adjustment as negotiated with AFSCME, which is the case this year, with the exception of a small additional increase for the Community Development Director.

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-14 establishing wages for 2025. (Houser) Motion passed unanimously.

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

**M. General Business**

**1. Tax Collector Proposal for Increase in Compensation for the Year 2026**

Ms. Cook reported that the compensation for the Tax Collector can only be changed prior to the election year (becoming effective the year following the election) to allow all candidates an opportunity to run based on the expected compensation to be received. 2025 is an election year and the current Tax Collector is proposing an increase to the amount paid per parcel. That rate is currently at \$0.75 per parcel and it is proposed to increase it to \$2.50 per parcel.

This proposal would increase the total compensation paid by the Borough from approximately \$7,950 to \$10,500 or \$2,550, representing a total increase of 23 percent. Since the compensation has not been changed in sixteen years, this amounts to an increase of less than 1.5 percent per year.

Additionally, the fee charged by the Tax Collector for tax certifications is currently set at \$15.00, with a proposed increase to \$20.00. The higher amount more accurately reflects the time and effort involved in preparing the certifications which are required at the time a property is sold or transferred. The proposal amounts to an annual fee increase of \$500, which is paid for by the seller of the property through closing companies.

As an aside, the Tax Collector is also seeking increased compensation from the County and the School District with regard to their portion of the taxes being collected.

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to approve an increase in compensation for the year 2026 for the incoming tax collector for both the per-parcel rate and the tax certification fee. (Houser). Motion passed unanimously.

**2. 2025 Fee Resolution #2024-15**

Ms. Cook reported that a Resolution is required each year to establish fees to be changed for various services for the coming year. The fees for the water meters and laborer have been adjusted to reflect current costs. Equipment, other than a tractor and a weed eater are seldom utilized, but in order to have a rate that can be assessed as needed, the Borough will adopt the current FEMA Schedule of Equipment Rates.

Ms. Houser made a motion to adopt Resolution #2024-15 establishing the fees to be charged in 2025 for various purposes. (Miller) Motion passed unanimously.

**3. Appointments to Boards and Commissions**

- a. Reappoint Eric Rummel to a 5- year term on the Ebensburg Municipal Authority, expires 12/2029.
- b. Appoint Susan Barber to fulfill the unexpired term of Randy Seymour, expires 12/2026.
- c. Reappoint Rich Barber to a 4-year term on the Ebensburg Planning Commission, expires 12/2028.
- d. Reappoint Jessica Lieb to a 4-year term on the Ebensburg Planning Commission, expires 12/2028.
- e. Reappoint Greg Illig to a 4-year term on the Ebensburg Planning Commission, expires 12/2028.
- f. Reappoint Barry Templeton to a 3-year term on the Zoning Hearing Board, expires 12/27.
- g. Reappoint Samantha Kemock to a 5-year term on the Ebensburg Recreation Board, expires 12/2029.
- h. Appoint Amber Mesoras to fulfill the unexpired term of Kristen Roberts to the Recreation Board, expires 12/2025.
- i. Reappoint Tim Myers as alternate on the Ebensburg Civil Service Commission, expires 12/2025.
- j. Reappoint Charlie Moyer as Chairman of the Ebensburg Vacancy Board, expires 12/2025.
- k. Appoint John Hawksworth and Chief Mike Sheehan to 1-year terms on the Central Cambria Emergency Management Council, expires 12/2025.
- l. Appoint Borough Manager as delegate to the Cambria/Somerset Council of Governments.
- m. Appoint Borough Manager as delegate to the Cambria County Tax Collection Committee.
- n. Appoint CCSD Business Manager as alternate to the Cambria County Tax Collection Committee.
- o. Appoint Borough Manager as delegate to the Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency.
- p. Appoint Danae Koss as alternate to the Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency.

Ms. Houser made a motion to adopt the listed appointments to Boards, Commissions and Authorities. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Tusing stated that he was grateful for the volunteers who agreed to serve.

**4. 2025 Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Miller made a motion to schedule the 2025 Council meetings for the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at 6:30 pm, with the exception of May and December, which will be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

**5. Ambulance Association LSA Grant Application**

It is a matter of record that during a Special Meeting held on Friday, November 29, Borough Council approved Resolution #2024-13 supporting and applying for, on behalf of the Ebensburg Area Ambulance Association, a \$274,341.95 grant, and further authorizing Borough officers to execute any and all documents required to secure the grant.

N. **Department Report**

1. **Police Department** – Chief Loughran shared that the department and borough staff would participate in the “Shop with a Cop” program on, December 17<sup>th</sup> at the Ebensburg Walmart. He also reported that the department was awarded a \$40k grant in October to update their reporting software. The kick-off meeting for the grant is scheduled for January 21<sup>st</sup>.
2. **Public Works Department** – Public Works Director Josh Surkovich provided a written report on department activity for the month but was not present.
3. **Community Development** – Community Development Director Danae Koss reported on recent activities including an update on the Small Business Saturday contest results, Dickens of a Christmas wrap-up and free metered-parking for the month of December.
4. **Recreation Department** – Recreation Director Rebecca Williamson gave an update on the recent activity for the month including a total of 46 teams signing up for the winter basketball league, monthly bingo, tiny tots and an update on happenings at the Tennis Center. She added that she is working to get several pieces of cardio equipment repaired and will have a better idea of the status of those repairs at the next meeting.
5. **Ebensburg Planning Commission** – None.
6. **Ebensburg Zoning Hearing Board** – None.

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

P. **Public Comments** – Mr. George Smith, 517 W. Sample Street, shared that he agreed with Council’s decision to make N. Spruce Street one-way going north to south.

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

Meeting Adjourned 7:00 PM

Minutes Recorded by:

Danea Koss, Community Development Director