

The regular monthly meeting of the Ebensburg Borough Council was called to order on Monday, January 27, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. at the Ebensburg Municipal Building, 300 W. High Street, Ebensburg, by Council President Doug Tusing.

Present: Doug Tusing, President
Cecelia Houser, Vice-President
Theresa Jacoby
Jeffrey Ball
Dave Kuhar – via phone
Robert Miller
Mike Murphy
Roy Lian, Junior Councilor
Abe Remillard, Junior Councilor

Others: Kelly Cook, Borough Manager
Joe Loughran, Chief of Police
Tracy Strom, Clerk
Matt Gribler, Solicitor
Rebecca Williamson, Recreation Director
Josh Surkovich, Public Works Director
Luke Byrne, Inframark
Ray Clawson, The Mountaineer Herald
Matt Churella, The Altoona Mirror

Audience: 3

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. (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 correspondence received from Dauntless Fire Company.
4. Approve the minutes of the December 16, 2024 monthly meeting of Borough Council.
5. Approve the financial statement for December.
6. Approve payment of bills for January.

D. **Appointment to Address Council** – None.

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

F. **Mayor's Report** – None.

G. **Council President** – None.

H. Water/Wastewater Committee

1. Report from Inframark on Wastewater Plant Operations

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

2. Wastewater Project

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

3. Waterline Replacement Project

Council reported this project is proceeding well and on schedule. Guyer Brothers has installed approximately 98% of the main line and 95% of the service installations. The contractor continues to test lines and prepare for the installation of the vault on Ann Street and the main line on Cindy Street. However, due to the weather, the contractor has not been working since mid-January.

4. Stormwater Project

Council reported construction began on this project by A. Liberoni Construction on August 12, 2024. The contractor has completed approximately 65% of the installation. Substantial completion was scheduled for the end of this month, but that will not be met. The Municipal Authority has requested an update.

I. Recreation Committee – None.

J. Street Committee

1. Ordinance #673 - North Spruce Street

Council voted last month to begin the procedure necessary to designate North Spruce Street as one way headed south bound from West Crawford to High Street.

TranSystems, the Borough Engineer, is obtaining the permits necessary from PennDOT.

Mr. Murphy made a motion to grant tentative approval of Ordinance #673 designating North Spruce as a one-way street headed southbound from West Crawford to High Street, pending PennDOT approval. (Houser) Motion passed unanimously.

2. Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon

The Borough received a grant for \$52,747.00 for the installation of the RRFB at the corner of Julian and High Street (on the east side). The grant has been executed, and staff is preparing the specification documents to put it out for bid.

Ms. Houser made a motion to approve of putting the RRFB project out for bid. (Jacoby) Motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion Regarding Parking

Mr. Loughran discussed with Council the two main parking terminals (Penn-Eben lot and Courthouse lot) that are no longer operational. The estimated \$30,000 cost for the Borough to replace them is not financially practical given the amount of money that is generated. Staff investigated several companies regarding both lot and street parking. Most of these companies are not feasible for a Borough the size of Ebensburg. There is one company that would require a startup cost of approximately \$7,500, which entails software and the utilization of a mobile phone application by customers. Permits can still be used for those who want to utilize the lots as well. Council also discussed a maximum of two-hour parking instead of metered parking to keep the spaces rotating to allow new customers to come into town.

Ms. Houser made a motion to move toward two-hour free parking in the Borough. (Murphy) Motion passed unanimously. Staff was directed to develop specific plans with regard to implementation, as such a change would require amending the ordinance governing parking.

K. Administration Committee

1. Consider Part-time Police Wages

The current pay scale for a part time officer in the Borough is as follows:

1-4 Years Service	\$19.00
5-14 Years Service	\$20.00
15+ Years Service	\$21.00

Staff has determined that the surrounding municipalities have flat rates that range from \$16 to \$21/ hour. It is recommended that Ebensburg stays above that range to retain the quality of part-time officers we currently have and to obtain new officers as needed in the future. Furthermore, we are in the process of hiring an SRO which requires extra training. Staff recommends changing the pay scale as follows:

1-4 Years Service	\$25.00
5-14 Years Service	\$26.00
15+ Years Service	\$27.00

Ms. Houser made a motion to change the pay scale for the part-time police officers in the Borough. (Ball) Motion passed unanimously.

L. Human Relations & Diversity Committee – None.

M. General Business

1. Congressman John Joyce

The borough was contacted by Congressman Joyce's office to utilize a space in the borough building on an as-needed basis. The office would potentially be used once or twice a month as a meeting place for the Congressman or a representative of his office for pre-arranged appointments with constituents. This activity is not expected to involve any significant time by

staff or other resources, aside from granting access to visitors who have appointments. Depending on how the first few visits go, the Borough reserves the right to change or modify this plan.

2. **An Ordinance discussing the feeding of stray/feral cats in Ebensburg**

Several residents have complained regarding feral and/or stray cats in the Borough. Rather than providing a temporary fix to abate the problem through capture and spaying/neutering, staff suggests a legislative solution to prevent the problem from re-occurring. Other municipalities have instituted regulations to discourage residents from feeding stray or feral cats. For example, the City of Altoona has an ordinance that states, “No person shall feed any stray or feral cats, where such feeding causes a nuisance to neighbors or creates a condition contrary to the health, safety and welfare of the community. Any person who chooses to feed stray or feral cats shall from such point forward be responsible for the care of said animal and shall be required to have it vaccinated for rabies and spayed or neutered.” Council may consider a similar ordinance.

It was the consensus of Council that Ms. Cook draft an ordinance similar to that enacted by the City of Altoona for presentation at the February meeting.

3. **SRO Agreement between the Borough and Holy Name School**

The borough has been considering an Agreement with Holy Name School regarding the implementation of a School Resource Officer. A draft Agreement was provided to Council. The Agreement has been reviewed and verbally accepted by the school.

Ms. Houser made a motion to approve the SRO Agreement between the Borough and Holy Name School. (Miller) Motion passed unanimously.

N. **Department Reports**

1. **Police Department** – Chief Loughran reported on last month’s activities including Annual Inservice Mandatory Training, winter weather parking, and sidewalk shoveling.
2. **Public Works Department** – Mr. Surkovich reported salt use for the Borough in November, December & January was 125,000 - 150,000 tons. Public works has been fixing leaks and cleaned snow from the sidewalks downtown.
3. **Community Development Department**
Community Development Director Dana Koss submitted a written report on the Community Development Department’s activities during the month.
4. **Recreation Department** – Ms. Williamson reported on last month’s activities including summer staffing of lifeguards and a pool manager, two new treadmills purchases to be delivered in mid-February, a total of 46 teams registered for Basketball League, 136 people for Bingo and the swearing in of Amber Mesoras to serve on the Recreation Board. The tennis center has three local colleges using the facility: Saint Francis University, IUP & Mount Aloysius College.

5. Codes Enforcement

A monthly codes enforcement report was forwarded to Council.

6. Ebensburg Municipal Authority

A copy of the minutes of the last municipal authority meeting is included in Council's packet.

7. Ebensburg Planning Commission-Oyaski Subdivision

At their regularly scheduled meeting on January 2, 2025, the Planning Commission recommended for approval the Oyaski subdivision. The subdivision affects two parcels at 522 and 512 West Sample Street. The proposed subdivision will subdivide one parcel (512), and one of the subdivided pieces will be added to the other parcel (522).

Ms. Jacoby made a motion to approve the Oyaski Subdivision Plan contingent on lot size. (Ball) Motion passed unanimously.

O. Media Comments/Questions

Mr. Matt Churella from The Altoona Mirror asked questions about the mobile app considered for parking and the means of enforcement of 2-hour parking in the Borough.

P. Public Comments – None.

Q. Executive Session

Council entered the executive session at 7:40 p.m. to discuss legal matters.

Council exited executive session at 7:42 p.m. No formal action was taken as a result of the executive session.

There being no further business Ms. Jacoby made a motion to adjourn. (Houser) Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:42 PM

Minutes Recorded by: Tracy A Strom/Clerk