

FLEETWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES

BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

BOROUGH COUNCIL WORKSHOP

**Date: October 10, 2023 – In-person meeting, held in Café
Council meeting is recorded and posted on website after meeting**

Roll Call:

Suzanne Pittella Touch
 Pete Merkel
 Jim Meals
 Mark Watkins
 Ralph Touch - virtual
 Colin Boyer
 John Rothenberger

Tammy Gore, Mayor
 Chris Young, Borough Manager
 Doreen O'Neil, Recording Secretary
 Julia Adams, Esq.
 Dale Ulshafer, Police Chief
 Craig Conrad, Public Works Director
 Other

Also Present:

John Manmiller, Fleetwood Fire Company Chief
 Barry Isett & Associates

The borough council meeting was held at 110 West Arch Street, in the cafeteria. President Suzanne Touch called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

Recording of Borough Meeting

A public notice sign was posted at the cafeteria entrance to notify attendees that the Fleetwood Borough Council meeting was being recorded.

Police Department

Chief Ulshafer reviewed the police report for September 2023 that was distributed to Council prior to meeting.

The new Ford Explorer is being outfitted and expects to have back in a week or two. This vehicle replaces the flooded police car.

Mark Watkins inquired if possible for Chief to provide list of closed items that were solved by the criminal investigator. Chief will compile listing of resolved cases and outcomes. Chief is also working on an end-of-year report to present to Council.

Barry Isett & Associates (BIA)

BIA Report

BIA report was emailed to Council prior to meeting.

Entech

Entech Report

Entech report was emailed to Council prior to meeting.

Guests: See attached list.

Legal – Andy George, Esq.

Lawsuit Status

Andy George, Esq. provided status of Harrigan lawsuit of guide wire that fell from Met-Ed pole. The case was settled with The Lofts. The Fleetwood Borough did not contribute. There was an affidavit stating the borough's non-involvement which was signed by Borough Manager, Chris Young. Andy George, Esq. noted that his office had reviewed and prepared the affidavit.

Motion to ratify the authorization of having the Borough Manager, Chris Young sign the affidavit.

Made by: Ralph Touch

Seconded by: Pete Merkel

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Solar Status

Andy George, Esq. stated that the zoning appear was filed. Richmond Township is not participating, but the Richmond Township Zoning Solicitor filed exhibits to courts. The case is with the courts. The next step is for the courts to get involved.

LSA (Local Share Assessment) Statewide Grant

Andy George, Esq. mentioned that a resolution is needed to apply for the LSA grant for the Tribute Park along Fleetwood Avenue. The Tribute Park cost is not to exceed \$349,773. It was mentioned that any number of grants can be applied for; then see what amount of grant funds are awarded.

Motion to sign resolution for the LSA grant to be used toward the Tribute Park.

Resolution: 2023-10-10-01

Made by: John Rothenberger

Seconded by: Mark Watkins

 X **Motion Carried**

 Motion Failed

General

Discussion that the utility company is responsible for damaged utility poles. There is a damaged pole on West Main Street from an accident. An emergency order was submitted to the utility company regarding the damaged pole. A hole was dug, but new pole was not installed yet. Suzanne Touch requested that Chris Young send a certified letter to Med-Ed stating the safety concern of this damaged pole not being replaced.

Finance – John Rothenberger

2024 Proposed Budget

Review of the 2024 general budget graph by department, 2024 budget increases by department, and the 2024 budget worksheet line items. Proposed budget shows a \$306,736.58 increase since 2023. To meet this increase will result in a ½ mil tax increase for 2024.

Police department has the biggest increase resulting from labor, pension, and healthcare costs.

Chris Young and Chief Ulshafer spoke with Richmond Township regarding police contract. Their 2024 contract is up \$60,000 (a 9% increase). Richmond is not committing to the increase right now, they will be discussing.

Chris and Chief spoke with Topton and Ruscombmanor Township regarding their police contracts with the Fleetwood borough. These 2024 contracts are 7% increase for each municipality. Topton and Ruscombmanor Township are discussing their contracts.

If Richmond, Topton, and/or Ruscombmanor decide to drop police coverage through Fleetwood Police department, they must give a one year notice and based on contract, pay x% amount.

Ralph mentioned that the pension increase impacts the budget. It takes 3 years of history and the number of officers. Since lower interest rate, it requires a higher MMO (Minimum Municipal Obligation) contribution.

Mark Watkins questioned the increase in expense for chlorine for 2024 vs 2023. Craig Conrad, said the cost of this chemical has high cost and account for this increase for 2024.

Mark questioned highway and bridges. Craig added line item to have funding for handicap ramps on borough pavements. The ramps are outdated, and not up to code in some areas. Each handicap ramp is approximately \$5,000 to replace.

There was inquiry of how the pool did for the 2023 season. There were more family passes sold in 2023 than 2022. Season tickets had a budget of \$75,000, and brought in \$113,000.

Colin Boyer questioned what occurs when there is a surplus in the budget; where does it go? The surplus is transferred to general account and can only be used toward Capital expenses or emergency expenses. Ralph Touch stated the 2024 budget must be balanced without accounting for surplus funds. The amounts in the 2024 proposed budget are to account for increases in 2024 costs. If the borough would go in the red, the borough is penalized.

The Water and Sewer budgets will be available for review in November.

Discussion that tonight can do a tentative approval of the 2024 proposed budget, and then advertise for formal vote in November. No formal vote can be made until have answers regarding police coverage in the 3 other jurisdictions. This may push the formal vote to December depending on timing.

Finance – John Rothenberger - Continued

2024 Proposed Budget

Colin Boyer expressed concern that he only received paperwork an hour ago, with no time to review. It was stated that the next step is to accept this proposed/working budget for 2024. This gives a month for further review of paperwork and to ask other questions prior to November meeting. Chris will discuss with Alicia (Andy George, Esq. group), regarding advertising the budget for public adoption at the November borough council meeting. The 2024 budget needs to be posted 10 days prior to advertising it in local newspaper.

Colin asked that 2024 preliminary budget be posted on website, to be transparent to public. Chris will post the 500-line item budget as the working budget since some numbers still need to come in and need decision on other police coverage contracts.

Motion to accept the 2024 proposed preliminary (working budget) that was compiled so far.

Made by: John Rothenberger

Seconded by: Ralph Touch

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Borough Managers Report – Chris Young

Money Market Accounts

Chris discussed that the current MM accounts are receiving .02 % interest. If Council chooses, these accounts can be moved to Flex accounts to receive 4.75% interest rate with no restrictions.

Motion to move money market accounts to Flex accounts for better interest rates.

Made by: John Rothenberger

Seconded by: Mark Watkins

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Mayor’s Report – Mayor Tammy Gore

Mayor Gore announced that the borough will be awarded the 'Smart Growth Alliance' award on October 17th at 5:30pm at Albright College if anyone is interested in attending. This award is from Berks County who recognized Fleetwood for improvements with high density housing and growth of downtown development.

Public Works Report – Craig Conrad

Craig Conrad provided Council with the Public Works report prior to meeting

Ratify Paving Payment

Craig stated payment from Liquid Fuels was made to Ronnie Folk Paving, Inc. in the amount of \$160,345.95 for various paving jobs within the borough.

Motion to ratify payment of \$160,345.95 from the Liquid Fuels account.

Made by: Ralph Touch

Seconded by: John Rothenberger

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Headworks program at Sewer Plant/ARP Berks Grant

Craig mentioned they had applied for the ARP grant when it was thought that the Sewer plant needed to be expanded. After further review of the plant, it was found that the Sewer plant did not require expansion, only changes with headwork screens.

Craig spoke with the county and explained change in scope. The county still wants to fund the project to help pay for changes. The headwork screen project costs are approximately \$1,000,000 and the County ARP grant will cover about \$260,073. Craig noted this is free money for the project.

SCADA Upgrade Approval

Craig mentioned that SCADA is the brains of the treatment plant. The current system is from 1990 and does not send emails, alerts, is no longer supported, and does not track data. The current system on the water side expires the end of 2024. The SCADA upgrade will send emails, text alerts, and track data. Craig asked for approval of \$37,650 (from water capital). The upgrade is done by Professional Services and does not require a bid. It could take up to 8 months to get the new system running.

Motion to approve project to upgrade SCADA for the water system at cost of \$37,650

Made by: Ralph Touch

Seconded by: John Rothenberger

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Public Works Report – Continued

MS4

Craig mentioned there was an issue, had call on discharge and were able to follow back to the source. DEP was contacted and the offenders covered all of the cost for clean up.

Parks - Ralph

Reservoir

Ralph Touch mentioned that with Pete Merkel's dedication, work and efforts to keep trails clean at the Reservoir, he would like to see the trail be named after Pete.

Motion to name and dedicate the Reservoir trail as Pete Merkel Trail.

Made by: **Ralph Touch**

Seconded by: **Mark Watkins**

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Reservoir Grant

Pete Merkel mentioned he, Craig Conrad and Larry (Berks Nature) will meet on October 24th to receive a grant in the amount of \$275,00 to restore the Reservoir.

General – Council Comments

Grants

Mayor Gore inquired if a report showing how much money the borough received in grants for the 2023 year. Chris Young will contact Barry Isett (BIA) to have a summary compiled of the grants received.

Fleetwood Forum

Discussion that for the next Fleetwood Forum issue, it would be nice to have a list to summarize the various borough growths in different areas.

Plaques

Suzanne Touch mentioned idea of creating a plaque listing the names of those who served on Council and years, and plaque listing the names of past Mayors, and years.

Bills

Current Month – October 10th

Motion to pay the current month – October 10, 2023 bills.

Made by: **John Rothenberger**

Seconded by: **Ralph Touch**

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Ratify Bills Paid September 25th

Motion to ratify the bills paid on September 25, 2023.

Made by: **John Rothenberger**

Seconded by: **Ralph Touch**

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Minutes

Motion to approve the September 11, 2023 borough Council meeting minutes.

Made by: **Mark Watkins**

Seconded by: **Ralph Touch**

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn meeting at 8:09pm.

Made by: **John Rothenberger**

Seconded by: **Mark Watkins**

Motion Carried

Motion Failed

Submitted by:

Doreen O'Neil, Borough Recording Secretary