

**Borough of Northumberland**  
**221 Second Street, Northumberland, PA 17857**  
**Northumberland Borough Council Meeting**  
March 1, 2011

Borough Council President Gregory Carl called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and Mayor Gretchen H. Brosius offered an Invocation.

**Roll Call**

Council members present were Gregory Carl, Judith Groninger, James Orner, Stephen Reed, Jonathan Rees, and Frank Wetzel. Others present were Mayor Brosius, Ryan Tira, Borough Solicitor; Timothy Fink; Police Chief; Thomas Slodysko, Street Supervisor; Paul Ruane, Code Enforcement Officer; and Janice Bowman, Borough Secretary. Council member Robert Long was absent. The six visitors present introduced themselves.

**Public Comment**

Paul Ruane, the Commander at the American Legion Post 44, informed the council that the American Legion is planning a pig roast and motorcycle ride to benefit Cpl. David Noblit, a Marine from Herndon, who was wounded in Afghanistan. The event is scheduled for April 16, beginning at 11:00. The route for the bike ride is planned to start at the Northumberland Legion and travel to Selinsgrove to New Berlin to Danville, and back to the Northumberland Legion. The fire police will assist with traffic control. Mr. Tira advised Mr. Ruane that PennDOT be contacted with the plans.

Mr. Steve Cimino commented that it is nice to see that the media is present.

**Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2011**

Upon motion by Mr. Reed, seconded by Mr. Rees, the minutes of February 1, 2011 were approved unanimously.

**Mayor's Report**

- Mayor Brosius noted that there have been numerous car burglaries. Chief Fink added that the information was sent to the radio.
- The police had their annual update training last month.
- Mayor Brosius stated that the Revitalization Committee met last evening and received a request from Julia Marano to participate in the Pennsylvania Clean-up on April 16, 2011. Anyone willing to volunteer should contact Ann Roll. A rain date is set for April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Red Cross Bloodmobile is scheduled for March 10 from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.
- The Joseph Priestley House is holding an Open House on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Street Supervisor's Report**

- Mr. Tom Slodysko reported that Todd Snyder, a regular employee, is back to work following an injury.

- Mr. Slodysko has tried to develop a list of street names for signs and has discovered that some names are spelled differently on various maps. He is researching the correct spellings. Mr. Reed asked about the type of signs and about several that have faded.
- A problem with the spouting at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street offices is creating icy conditions on the sidewalk. The crew will see what must be done to correct the problem.
- Mr. Reed asked why the water company was working at the water tank on Prince Street. It is thought that there may be a leak.
- Mayor Brosius asked if there is a list of potholes. Mr. Slodysko stated that he knows where the main ones are and that the crew will start in the downtown area and canvas the town.
- Mayor Brosius said that an access road from Route 11 to the Old Danville Highway is in bad condition.
- Manhole covers are lifting above the street surface and causing damage to the plow. The crew is repairing them.
- Four loads of salt have been used this winter. Aggregate was mixed with the salt.
- Mr. Reed stated that he received a call from Len Zboray that a plow caused damage at the top of the cemetery driveway off of Vista Avenue. Mr. Reed and Mr. Slodysko will meet with representatives of the Cemetery Board.

#### **Code Enforcement Officer's Report**

Mr. Ruane reported that on February 22<sup>nd</sup> a zoning hearing was held for a property on Duke Street. A veterinarian requested permission to establish an office on the first floor and will live on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

#### **Northumberland Sewer Authority Report**

Mr. Jim Orner reported that the authority met on Monday, February 28. Steve Slayton, an attorney for the Sewer Authority, reported that the IRS has forgiven \$30,000 in penalties and is considering forgiving an additional \$45,000 in penalties. The new clerk has completed her probationary period and the board has increased her pay by \$1.00 per hour. The authority will be hiring an additional employee. Cindy Lark's pension fund was turned over to the authority. Documented evidence of cleaning grease traps has not been reported by the local restaurants. The next meeting will be at 4:30 p.m. on March 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Emergency Services Board Report**

The Board submitted a letter to the council for their consideration. The letter would be sent to residents who have had a fire at their property and requests payment to replace materials that were used. The residents would be asked to submit the bill to their insurance company. If the insurance policy does not have a provision to reimburse the fire company for materials, the residents would not be asked to pay. Commercial properties would also be asked to submit the bill to their insurance company. Vehicle accidents and rescue work are not included in this proposal. The next meeting of the Emergency Services Board will be on March 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Tira recommended that the letter be authorized by council and adopted as part of the Fire Department ordinance so it is clear and not ambiguous as to when it applies, etc.

The Emergency Services Board bank account has gone dormant. One signer is no longer on the Board so it is necessary for the Board to appoint a second signer to the account and have the account active.

## **Fire Chief's Report**

Chief Jim Troup stated the county is changing to a new radio system in 2012. New high-band radios will be required for the system. He requested that council consider how the radios may be funded.

Chief Troup noted that NIMS classes are required for firefighters, police and council members.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Community Development**

Mr. Carl stated that he and his son completed the wiring in the Savidge Room at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Community Center. The entire project of renovating the room will be completed in a few months.

Mr. Carl informed the council that quotes were received for the fan hood and installation at the pool. Only one company, SMI, met all requirements for the bid. Mr. Carl moved and Mrs. Groninger seconded a motion to award the quote to SMI for a price of \$6,951. Mr. Carl stated that Susquehanna Fire will install the fire suppression. The total cost of the project is approximately \$9,500. Motion passed unanimously.

The committee will meet on March 14, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Reed noted that he is still looking for vendors for the Farmer's Market and requested that if anyone knows of someone who may be interested to have them contact him or the office.

The electrical wiring in the police evidence lab has not been completed.

## **Finance**

Mr. Rees announced that the next committee meeting will be on April 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

## **Personnel**

Mrs. Groninger stated that one member of the Street Crew, Todd Snyder, has returned to work. Steve Carr, the other crew member, is still recuperating.

Personnel issues will be discussed in Executive Session.

## **Public Safety**

Mr. Wetzel stated that the committee would meet on March 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. The Crime Watch Committee may move their meetings to the Savoy, beginning in April.

## **Rules**

Mr. Tira revised the proposed ordinance that addresses outdoor wood-fired boilers. He provided copies for the council's review. The next committee meeting is set for March 22, at 6:00 p.m.

Chief Fink stated that he has received complaints from several residents on Elliott Drive about cars being parked on the street. The street is narrow and emergency vehicles and plows cannot navigate the street with the parked cars. The rules committee will review the current ordinance.

Mr. Klock asked who cites property owners who do not clear their sidewalks. The police cite those who violate the ordinance. Mr. Wetzel stated that the officers should patrol the town after a storm. Council discussed the difficulty in locating the owners for properties that have been foreclosed in order to issue citations.

### **Streets**

Upon motion by Mr. Reed, seconded by Mr. Wetzel, the council voted 5-1 to approve Larson Design's Proposal of \$5,885 for professional services for the stormwater project on Hanover Street. Mr. Wetzel cast the dissenting vote.

Mr. Reed announced that the Street Committee meeting scheduled for March 8 is cancelled.

### **Old Business**

Mrs. Groninger said that it was brought to the council's attention at the last meeting that the news media wasn't present when the council voted on the 2011 budget. At that meeting, Mr. Rees read a statement. Since a Daily Item reporter was present this evening, Mrs. Groninger read Mr. Rees's following statement:

"Over the past few years, council has worked hard to keep taxes down. This has not been easy as the total assessed valuation in the borough has been going down the past few years. Thus, in order to pass a balanced budget, we must either cut our expenses or raise taxes. While council has trimmed certain areas of the budget, there are some increases (such as insurance and utilities) that are largely out of our control. Some of the budgeted expense increases for 2011 are:

- the PMRS employer contribution - \$34,204 increase. This is offset some by an increase in state aid for the plan that is budgeted under income.
- Healthcare - \$27,183 increase. With insurance companies needing to cover more in 2011 as regulated by ObamaCare, as well as our group having a high usage, our rates have skyrocketed.
- Insurance - \$22,225 increase. Our insurance rates had a huge increase, especially our workman's comp.
- Police Department salary - \$17,277 increase. This is required per the police contract. All non-police employees have a salary freeze this year.

While these items alone entail an increase of over \$100,000, since other expenses have been cut, the deficit in order to balance the budget is just over \$78,000 or a 2.775 millage increase this year. As the median house in the Northumberland Borough has an assessed value of 12,250, the median household will see an increase of \$34. Including this years' increase, the total increase for the median household for the past five budgets is \$62, an average of \$12.40 a year for the past 5 years."

Mrs. Groninger noted that each year the council is asked for more from everybody and each year something else has to be cut. She does not feel that council can be faulted for this increase.

Mr. Ty Sees asked who is on the healthcare plan. Mr. Tira replied that individuals would not be discussed. Mr. Carl stated that Mr. Sees had received the information from the Borough Office. Mr. Adam Klock questioned whether a board member on the Sewer Authority may be on the

insurance plan. He was informed that Benecon had advised that board members may be included on the plan. The board member referred to pays his own premium, the Sewer Authority does not pay for his coverage. The Borough Secretary was asked to confirm his eligibility with Benecon.

### **New Business**

1. Mr. Rees moved to approve payment of the bills with the exception of the Workforce bills. Mr. Carl seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. The Workforce bill will be discussed in Executive Session. Roll call vote to approve was unanimous. Bills to be paid from the General Fund total 63,803.92; 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Community Center bills total \$481.49; and Liberty Splashland bills total \$88.66.
2. Mr. Rees made a motion to approve payment of bills due before the April 2011 council meeting. Mr. Wetzel seconded the motion. The motion was clarified to state bills for items that are included in the budget. Roll call vote to approve was unanimous.
3. Mrs. Groninger moved to transfer \$8,075.29 from the General Fund to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Community Center Fund. This amount was grant funding that should have been deposited in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Community Center Fund. Motion was unanimously approved.

### **Executive Session**

The council meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m. for an Executive Session to discuss personnel issues. Mr. Carl stated that the meeting may or may not be reconvened.

The council meeting was reconvened at 9:29 pm. It was announced that personnel issues were discussed in Executive Session.

Upon motion by Mr. Carl, seconded by Mr. Wetzel, the council voted unanimously to pay the Workforce bills, totaling \$4,052.96.

Upon motion by Mr. Carl, seconded by Mr. Wetzel, the council voted unanimously to hire Joseph Rudolf of the firm ReedSmith in accordance with his proposal.

Mr. Rees moved and Mr. Wetzel seconded a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice R. Bowman  
Borough Secretary