

MINUTES KOPPEL BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
June 20, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.
Koppel Fire Hall

PRESENT

Barbara Gioffre, President
 Athena Pangikas-Miller, Mayor
 Tom Sobona, Vice President
 Suzanne Broge
 Jeff Dengler
 Frank Pisano
 Chuck Bevington
 Carrie Clerici
 Police Chief Justin Warren
 Officer Erie Squicquero
 Joe Budicak - Solicitor

GUESTS PRESENT

Anna Marie and Dave Plavecsky, Brett Plavecsky, Josh Konacheck, Tim Brewer, Denise Green, Susan and Jimmy Krawchyk, Michael Peters, Matthew Cesare, Dana Rowles, Carol Ferrigno, Carol Shirilla, Joann Smith, Donna Policaro, Delia Pisani, Mike Romigh, David Alters, Nancy Smith, Karen Cananzi, Frank Gioffre, Officer Darrell Holmes, Devon Price, Morgan Price, Damian Gajewski, Adam Contin, A. Parker, Lisa Hackett, Bud Hackett, Sarah Sharpe, Vicki Bryant, Cliff Bryant, Russell Broge, Karl Florie, Frank Bathgate, Samantha Hildman, James Loomis, Ryan Bertolo, Kristine VanKirk, Karen Zito, Angelo Rosati, Officer Josh Armstrong, John Tudor, Henry Tjernlund

MOTIONS

- A motion was made to accept the minutes from the May 16th meeting. All in favor and all approved.
- A motion was made to accept the minutes from the May 30th special meeting. All in favor and all approved.
- A motion was made to approve the payment of bills from the General Fund. All in favor and all approved.
- A motion was made to approve the bills for the Fire Department. All in favor and all approved.
- A motion was made to acquire the services of Richardson Inspection. All in favor and all approved.
- A motion was made to adopt the new Traffic Ordinance. Chuck Bevington voted NO. All other members were in favor and approved.
- A motion was made to purchase a new Police cruiser to replace the one that burned in a chase. All in favor and all approved.
- A motion was made to purchase a new bullet-proof vest and a magazine for Officer Armstrong. All in favor and all approved.
- A motion was made to have Solicitor Joe Budicak represent the Borough in the union negotiations, both uniform and non-uniform. All in favor and all approved.
- A motion was made to re-open the agenda due to Chief Warren asking to have an executive session after the meeting. All in favor and all approved.

POLICE REPORT

- Police report was handed out but there were no questions asked about it.
- Chief Warren found a used police cruiser costing \$10,000. After seeing the segment on WPXI Pittsburgh, the department received a check from an anonymous donor for \$12,000 to pay for the new cruiser.
- Chief Warren asked for an executive session about a personnel issue regarding a Police officer and a Borough council member.

ZONING REPORT

- Officer Eric Squicquero stated there were some issues with a vehicle on 1st Avenue but now that vehicle has been removed.
- Contacted Richardson Inspection Services about a property on 3rd Ave and we are waiting to hear back about actions taken.
- Contacted the property management company and bank about the house on 2340 2nd Ave. They had issues as to who is responsible for taking care of the property and who would pay for it. I told them they had until June 23 to figure it out. The property is being worked on today.
- Had a couple of residents ask about high grass along all of the railroad tracks. Barb said Koppel maintenance has always maintained that from Richard to Ida Street. Barb said residents can cut it themselves.
- Area around State Route 351 and Arthur St – there is confusion over who is responsible for cutting the grass. Can't send letters if it is not clear who is responsible for what. Looked it up, but some areas are a grey area. Our ordinance does not specify that it is the home owners' responsibility. Maybe an amendment can be made to the ordinance. Barb stated that historically people have always taken care of it if it is near their property.
- Jeff Dengler asked if the word "curb strip" is in the ordinance...Eric says he doesn't think so. The word curb strip covers the strip near the house. This can be addressed at a later meeting.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

No Report

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Joseph Budicak had nothing to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT

After speaking to multiple elected officials, the mayor read a two-page letter about what was happening in the Borough. The condensed version is:

- Concern about providing proper police protection
- Text messages among council members, deliberately excluding the mayor
- Council member verbally accosting the Police Chief while on duty
- Text messages by council alluded to the possibility that another police car would not be purchased due to the unionization of the police department
- The mayor submitted a Right-to-Know request and is asking for all texts and email communications by council from May 23rd to the present date
- The mayor has obtained independent council.
- As supervisor of the police, the mayor expects full transparency from the council
- Public safety must be a priority
- Mayor's intention is not to cause divisiveness – wants the best for the community and the police department

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Richardson Inspection was recommended to Koppel by Ellwood City Code Enforcement and was hired for inspection of a property that was deteriorated and in danger of collapse. His service was prompt, efficient and without problem. A motion was made to acquire Richardson Inspection Services for property maintenance, rental inspections and addressing non-compliance issues.

GUESTS

- Denise Green – wants to clear up any misinformation - she is not against basketball hoops. She just believes they should be in the yard and not on the street.
- Donna Policaro – concerned about the water running from the alley into her Mother's yard and what can be done about it.
- Nancy Smith – wants to thank the police for the great job they did in helping her Mom when she fell and broke her neck. She also stated how important it is to have our own local police department.
- Rich Serge sent a message and Chief Warren read it – (condensed) ..police protection is vitally important for our community. Your thoughts about doing away with the department is totally wrong. Often Northern Beaver County is forgotten. Also, the police should be able to unionize. They are one of the only police departments in the area that are not in a union.
- Vicky Bryant – don't understand reasoning for not purchasing a 2nd police car. When away on a cruise, someone ran into her house. Spoke with all the officers during that time....this couldn't have happened if it were Beaver Falls Police. Concerned about dis-banning the police department.

- Solicitor Joe Budicak stated he has been to every meeting and dis-banning the police was never discussed. The mayor stated that in the private texts between council that the subject was discussed.
- Jim Loomis – wanted to thank the police department - they have helped him out a lot as he lives across from the Italian Club. Also feels police have a right to unionize.
- Mike Romigh – 1st Ave and Mount Street – concerned that there is more traffic on the road and they are driving faster. He is asking that a stop sign be placed in the area.
- Anna Marie Plavecsky – stated that before you take an official vote, according to the Sunshine Act, you are supposed to ask for public opinion.
- Tim Brewer – stated that this was the best meeting he has attended for years

TENARIS

Josh Konacheck spoke about an exciting update from Tenaris. They are in the process of constructing a new state-of-the-art bag house and getting rid of the old one. It should be completed about this time next year. The bag house is the emissions control unit which flushes out the particles in the air due to the burning process.

NEW TRAFFIC ORDINANCE

A motion was made to adopt the new traffic ordinance which was recently advertised in the Beaver County Times. The ordinance incorporates all previously adopted ordinances pertaining to traffic and adds missing elements to the ordinance specific to present need for vehicles and the use of public right-of-way, roads, and alleys.

After guests were given the opportunity to ask questions, and the subject of the new Traffic Ordinance came up, many guests spoke up and had concerns and issues with the ordinance. The mayor asked for a show of hands of who approves and who does not approve this ordinance. The majority did not approve. It was decided to table the ordinance for further discussion with residents.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

At this time, council moved into another room for two executive sessions. The first session was pertaining to Chief Warren's request and the second session was a request from Solicitor Budicak to discuss the unionization of the police.

After the executive sessions, the mayor stated that they all have reached an amicable agreement. They decided that it is in the best interest for the community to all work together. The president said differences were resolved, all are on the same page, and they just want to move forward to make Koppel a better and nicer place to live.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:15 PM