

Alexandria Borough Meeting
Monday, April 6, 2024

Pledge & Prayer

Roll Call

Jane Pilch, Vice President Mike Peters, President Judy Scott, Lucas Parkes, President Judy Scott, Dain Davis, Jeffrey Stover,

Make motion to approve the minutes from March 11th, 2024, Jane Pilch, VP Mike Peters seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. (minutes reviewed at start of meeting)

The treasurer Leslie McDermott called as directed to be present at the meeting. Jane Pilch asked if we are in the red? Leslie explained at this time of year it shows due to way Liquid Fuels is paid out. But in the General Fund We are fine, Mike asked "we have been paid our Liquid Fuels for the year now? Leslie responded "Yes, are Liquid Fuels monies have been paid."

Motion to approve the financial report and authorization of the bills made by Jane Pilch, VP Mike Peters seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

President Scott stated before leaving finance, she asked Leslie to share her insight regarding the borough's ability to pay a PENNVEST Loan at our current income sources. President Scott stated, this was for Council to have an idea of what we are looking at. She stated this had been discussed prior to the meeting. They need to know from a mathematical perspective.

Leslie stated, "I ran an amortization schedule on \$700k, and applied the interest for 20 years and the payment would be approximately \$3200 per month. I do not think we can support a payment like that. "I do not know where other monies could come from, but based on our current sources, the borough cannot sustain that payment." Jane asked for a repeat of the figures, President Scott stated, these were hypotheticals to give an idea what council is looking at, since they did not receive additional Multimodal funding. Preliminary steps were taken with PENNVEST in May of 2023. However, tonight's information is to help with the thought process for future decisions.

Mike Peters asked Leslie "What is with this SLFRF?" President Scott stated that is the State Treasury for our liquid fuels. Leslie confirmed that it was liquid fuel funds and had been taken care of.

NO PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no Representative reports. President Scott used the time to address an addition of the Revitalization Committee.

President Scott also mentioned the Borough had been nominated for the Destination Excellence Award, Event of the Year. This award will be presented at the 2024 Tourism Summit on April 23, 2024. The nomination was made because of the Holly Jolly Christmas Trail, and the events held at Christmas within the community. What a nice surprise to be nominated stated President Scott.

President Scott stated,

In regard to the Revitalization Committee, in August of 2021 the Council began the kickoff for the Alexandria Revitalization Plan. Steps of the plan and its projects have been put in motion.

Terri Reinhart Schleiden and Don Deitz agreed to serve the Borough of Alexandria in this very positive manner. Would anyone like to make that motion to accept their willingness to serve on this committee for the borough? Jane Pilch made the motion to accept, Mike Peters seconded the motion, all in favor motion carried.

Jane was very excited to hear this team on board for the community, very good news.

Pillar Bridge maintenance needs to be handled President Scott stated. The artwork needs to be waxed and covered twice a year. Cody was going to this however things have changed, we need to honor and preserve this piece of artwork. Do we want to have a separate committee to maintain the Pillar Bridge, or do we place it under the Revitalization Committee? President Scott said perhaps we reach out to the family and see if they and others would like to take ownership of the maintenance with Council oversight, or vice versa?

President Scott went on to say that the Pillar Bridge is such a statement of hope and faith for this community, it needs to be protected. "The way that God planned it out and laid it out, is a miracle when you know the whole story. And the artist who did the welding died in a motorcycle accident. This artwork needs to be protected. He was an artist, welder, teacher and greatly loved and respected. Cody has a young family that needs to know we here on council are taking the steps needed to preserve this bridge now and for the future.

Jane asked, well how do we pay for it. President Scott explained that the bridge maintenance is a part of the budget currently.

With that being said, we must have this done in a manner to protect the legacy of the bridge and the borough as well. Does that make sense?

Jane Pilch made a motion to establish a Pillar Bridge Committee, for the oversight of the maintenance and preservation of the bridge. For the reasons as stated in the discussion. Mike Peters seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Dain Davis stated that this is a concept for the details to be developed.

Mike Peters volunteered to head up the committee and Dain will help me.

Utility shed is now gone, the next step is to contact Penelec for a pole light to be installed, stated President Scott. Jane Pilch says "No!". Scott says it is needed due to the increased vandalism and it has cost the borough way too much already. The failure of others not accepting responsibility on protecting the park is not an option.

Jane asked, "where is the pole going to be placed?"

Scott said, "Where the shed was."

Jane asked, "What kind of light?" She has concerns of the brightness of the light.

Dain Davis said "Penelec would be able to position the pole at a manner that would be acceptable."

Jane felt this was all new information. Jane stated clearly that she is against those types of lights, she asked "why can't we start with something small and then maybe do something else?"

President Scott stated, "it is a safety issue!"

Lucas Parkes shared that there are many types of options available. Penelec is a cost saving way to have this installed.

President Scott assured Jane, you just approved Don Deitz and Terri Reinhart for the Revitalization Committee. They can help in these selections.

Jane stated she does trust Don and Terri. She spoke with Don about the concerns of the dislike of the neon sign being installed on the library.

Lucas and Dain shared that the cemetery has sensitive effective lights that work well for illuminating the area. Penelec can help with that., solar, dusk to dawn, etc.

Jane was very clear she wanted to pay someone other than Penelec to install a pole light. She stated she feels very strongly about light pollution, and she was not in favor of doing something now. She stated that she wishes to explore ideas.

President Scott shared that the time has come to do something, not talk about it.

Lucas shared Penelec will work with you.

Jane made the council aware she placed lights on her own property but that did not work.

Mike stated we did not authorize lights yet, but we have talked about doing things and that is where we are at now., He asked Jane about her lights, so she did try something.

President Scott mentioned that "We need to make these choices, because we are wanting to apply for the Act 13 Marcella Shale Grant that is due next week.

Canal Park is on the agenda, because of equipment needing to be replaced and mulch needing to be done, as well as the much needed security measures. Jane we can't moved forward if we can not get past a pole light. The work that will be done, will be done in a manner tasteful to the town, stated Scott.

Jane did not think the whole slide should be replaced. Scott shared you must maintain your equipment; it is a safety issue.

Lucas spoke up and clarified that it is the fiberglass slide portion that is being replaced not the entire framework of the slide. Jane said "Okay."

With Marcella Shale Grant would help cover it added Lucas Parkes.

Jane shared she would be happy to pay for a motion light out of her own pocket, that she would get. Mike Peters shared his concerns that "I would be concerned that anyone who is causing the damage now would also destroy what Jane was suggesting. That would be my argument for a pole light, so that others would not be able to reach it.

Dain suggested to Jane to go to the park in Hollidaysburg and look at what they had helped have installed, she may feel more at ease about the choices. She agreed.

Next Lucas shared with council about the site visit on March 28th, with Michele Ivory, with Senator Judy Ward's, Matthew Bjorkman , with Southern Alleghenies, Lindsay Baer, with DCNR , Dain Davis, myself, Judy and Terri Reinhart Schleiden met and did a walkthrough of the Canal Street Park and the Nature Conservation area where the non-motorized boat launch will be located.

In that the discussion of the best way to find funding sources for the community was talked about. The Marcella Shale Act 13 Grant is one of those avenues. Each year the county commissioners are allocated funds through the program to assist communities on projects in their area.

We are planning to apply by Friday for the funding to give the Canal Street Park a facelift. Mike Peters asked what company would be bringing the mulch. Lucas stated we don't know yet, and we may need to also do some volunteering to complete the work. Mike said we did that a long time ago and all just pitched in to get it done. We will be reaching out to get it done.

There also will be a request for security cameras to be placed on the poles in addition to two rocking toys. A resource to reach out to is Smiles for Miles, will be contacted in the future for possible assistance. With Solar Lighting Fixtures and Power. Overall \$12k to \$15K to complete the refreshing at the park. The borough will need to have out of pocket funds also to complete the project.

Jane said, "we did not decide on a security camera is needed, correct?" Pres. Scott said, "That is correct, it needs to be decided tonight, because we need to be able to include it in the grant application."

President Scott stated "It is a safety issue, that we need to settle on, Mike" Mike Peters said, "Yeah, we talk but have not decided yet."

Jane spoke up stating "I believe it to be an invasion of privacy matter." This is just too much, I would rather start smaller, if we have a need for security camera, I'd rather start with that and not a security camera. If we have a need for a security camera well, we come back."

Mike Peters injected, "I think we have already found we do have a need for a security camera!" President Scott requested a motion for the Marcella Shale Grant Application to be submitted as Lucas Parkes has described.

Mike Peters asked to pursue it and detail the request, Lucas Parkes concurred. Yes. We need to specify what and why we are requesting the funds. Lucas explained that if we are awarded and we put things out for costs and the budget does not allow for certain items, well then, we will cross that bridge when we come to it.

Mike Peters said that makes sense. Mike made a motion to apply for the \$10K Marcella Shale Grant for the Canal Street Park Playground area. Judy seconded. Jane said No. Mike and Judy voted Yes. Motion carried.

Hometown Hero's we have 5 new applicants for this year.

Due to the Marcella Shale Grant application and the financial needs of the Canal Street Park, we decided not to apply for the DCNR Grant to the Nature Park due on April 3rd. We will be applying for the mini grant for May 31st as previously authorized by the council.

Lucas Parkes explained with the May 31st mini grant we are submitting for our plan and design of this Phase of the Nature Park. This is as per our discussion of the March 28th site visit. This is the most effect way of proceeding for future applications of funding sources with this project.

President Scott shared with council how, those present for the site visit were very pleased at how Lucas explained the plans of what we would like to see accomplish and the manner on how to achieve that goal. Everyone concurred that what Lucas presented was a smart approach, in order to accomplish the borough's needs. They stated that was the right way.

Permit applications. In March a fence permit was submitted, that is by Jerry Park residence. They submitted it to us for approval. The applications are subject on an individual basis. They need to create a breakaway to allow water to flow through. Also, Joel Pheasant.

Is there a motion to accept. Mike made a motion to accept, Jane seconded, motion approved.

Arborist was expected to be present at tonight's meeting, however he is not in attendance.

President Scott shared with council another Arborist is willing to assist the borough on the upkeep and preservation of the trees within the community. She had been contacted regarding the health of the trees, which is valid.

Since our arborist is not here, I will be extending an invitation for the other arborist to also attend May's meeting. Perhaps we will have two arborists at May's meeting.

Jane said, "You did not think that was necessary to tell me another arborist might be coming?"

President Scott said, "But I just did."

This is a point of information Sam was expected to be here and is not.

Secretary position, in March we hired Melissa Davis. Melissa Davis has resigned from the position and here is her letter of resignation. I am requesting you to advertise. Mike Peters suggested reaching out to the other applicants we really like and seeing if they are still interested, before seeking further applicants.

Mike Peters made the motion to accept Melissa resignation, Jane accepted, all in favor motion carried.

Mike made a motion to reach out to the other applicants and see if they were still interested.

President Scott asked would like me to reach out to her. All agreed.

Permit and Ordinance Officer, President Scott stated she would like to ask our solicitor if we can still fill for these items without a person holding the position. When the Mayor a few years ago would not do certain duties, council broke the responsibilities down to be covered by an individual.

Can the borough file violations with the District Magistrate? Jeff Stover stated "Yes" the person needs to be on file at Harrisburg. President Scott said, "we did do that with Brandon, yes?" Jeff agreed, we did list Brandon.

Jeff suggested you will need to get someone to fill that role. Until then we can still file at the office.

President Scott stated it is Council's responsibility to see that ordinance are followed.

Another thing that needs to be considered is the fines imposed with the violations. Currently they are not anything that is a deterrent for anyone.

Jeff shared that you want to update and codify your ordinances; it is a lot of work and there is costs involved. Scott agreed, and encouraged the council to do this something that needs to be taken seriously.

Mike Peters stated that we paid Brandon a flat figure per month for his work. It was a salary position.

Council positions, because we are a municipality we need to have Mayor. Harrisburg says we are required to have these roles filled. I have spoken with members of the community, and we have good people living here, but we cannot make people participate in their civic responsibilities. Everyone has various things going on in their lives to attend to as well. But they are not going to shut us down, stated Scott.

Jeff Stover said you are making every good faith effort to fill the roles needing to be filled.

Lucas Parkes gave an update on the grants. We will be applying for those funds again in July of this year. The approach is to get the stormwater out to bid by next summer to be target for 2026 deadline. The PENNVEST loan was needed to complete then we would need to consider applying a stormwater tax to cover the cost. These are a variety of financial avenues to be explored.

President Scott the stormwater tax is a viable tax to be applied to residents in the state of Pennsylvania. Lucas stated mainly due to DEP regulations.

We are going to be working with John Buskirk, the sewer authority, on the project.

Also, we are very blessed that PENNDOT is covering the cost of the stormwater drain upgrading on the 200 block which is saving the borough a lot of money.

President Scott cautions council, to remember last year we did a 3mil increase to borough residents. This was something that had not occurred since 1997. No favors were done for the town by not keeping up with the rising costs. Requesting the increase was to help with the revenue needs of the town. At no means does it go to meeting the many aspects of repairing an aging infrastructure. By replacing the current system with an upgrade and size to assist with need of the community, this will help preserve and protect the towns future development. Cost associated with these projects for installation, but also on the long-term maintenance of the integrity of the projects into the future. We need to be responsible.

Mike Peters said , "It is a lot, on the sewer authority, we have raised the rates for the first time in a long time. The water authority rates have also increased. We need to keep in mind to help keep the Fire company in mind. Maybe we can just increase the fire tax to help them, I know you said about a ball, but we could just increase the tax for them. I appreciate the information and is things we need to be thinking about to get this stuff done.

President Scott "It is our reality."

Jane Pilch asked, "if we take the \$500K and do two new pipes down Main Street, isn't that the Main artery, are we getting any benefits to that?"

Lucas explains, yes, we are taking all this rain coming off the hillside quickly and the clog is on the lower part of town, and it can't get out, we have so much water that it is not able to go where it needs to be. That is why in Phase 1 we replace the artery and get the water away quickly, that will help some of the flooding that is occurring. Lucas assured the council we will still apply for further funding to complete the project.

Jane said Well good, instead of loans and taxing if we can do it without fees to residents.

President Scott mentioned, yes, however, as Dain and her could attest, project cost does not go down. They were a part of the School Districts renovation project in 2000's. At that time the district did a \$13 million project and at that time could have created an entirely new gymnasium for \$1 million. The district is not looking at that cost now.

For our stormwater project, that is why we are pursuing it all. If we are able. Cost does not go down; corroded pipes is not something you want to be going into your new pipes.

Scott proceeded to explain the guideline requirements for applying for grants and a low interest PENNVEST loan. The council needs to be certain to follow these requirements as not to disqualify the borough for future applications.

Jane asked about public meetings., Scott stated yes there will be public meetings to make everyone aware of exactly what is occurring with their community.

Jane asked on some matters we could place it on the ballot for a referendum, Scott agreed that could be done if we chose to do so. We have done our due diligence, knowing that the best possible outcome has been sought after to proceed.

Jane said she gets it, it is all about preventative maintenance.

Stopping going into executive session.

Left executive session President Scott made a request is there a motion for adjournment. Motion was made to adjourn, all in favor motion carried