

**January 9, 2023**

The Alexandria Borough Council met at the Alexandria Volunteer Fire Hall at Alexandria, PA 16611. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by President Judy Scott. President Scott led council in the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer.

Council members present were President Judy Scott, Mike Peters, Rachele Hopsicker, Jane Pilch, Tori Wilt and Joel Pheasant. Solicitor Greg Jackson, Treasurer Leslie Jackson. Also present: Ken Patterson, Jess Amerman, Sam Miller, Matt Oher, Jeff Hensor, Kim Diggins, Sam Isenburg, Brian Hetrick, Tom Weyer

- Motion to approve minutes from December 12<sup>th</sup> made by Mike Peters. Seconded Rachele Hopsicker. All in favor. Motion carried.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT AND AUTHORIZATION OF BILLS**

President Scott asked for questions.

Jane Pilch asked on the balance sheet why liabilities and equities are in the same category and what is suspense and why the numbers are lining up the way they did, it's confusing?

Leslie explained, payroll liabilities are liability – so that's what that is. Equities are the monies you have. Suspense came to Leslie as is and it was just thrown in the report. Jane asked if that's problematic and Leslie said said, "No."

**Mike Peters made a motion to approve the financial report and authorization of bills. Tori Wilt seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Matt Oher on behalf of the water authority shared** he is part of the consulting. We have a bigger project going on, 5 projects – all 5 are proceeding. Judy has come to progress meeting and had questions and unless there are any major questions about the project I won't bore you all with the details. The water line is the largest project of course – contract is still on Patton Twp on Loop Road. They will likely be within the area within the month or so – water meters are being replaced, we have about a quarter of them done. This is one of the larger projects most have likely seen for quite some time. There was an appointment that had come up and I was here tonight to see if there are questions. Of course the chair is looking to be reappointed, there's also a vacant chair.

Mike Peters said he thought we appointed someone for Wayne's seat – he asked if they only have a 4 member board. Sam and Jess said it should be a 5 member board. Mike thought they appointed someone when Wayne Mitchell passed. President Scott didn't recall who they replaced him with if they did.

President Scott said that the people are here from Water Authority to answer any questions.

Mike Peters had one concern and that was that the rest of the Water Authority is aware of the concerns the Sewer Authority had. We were informed after talking with Sam that they are aware and that the Water Authority is following what they feel is the law.

Jess Ammeron shared that she is the vice chair of the water board and she has been on that board for 25 plus years, the board we have is excellent, we care about our community, all the bells and whistles I didn't understand 25 years ago, now I do. I live out on Loop Road and that pipe out there is a goal that we need fixed it's over a hundred years old. I just want to reiterate that my major goal is that we care about the community and we appreciate being here. Thank you.

## **SOLICITOR REPORT**

### **Greg said...**

- At request of the council I had reached out to the solicitors of both the Sewer and Water Authority for a list of the authorities
- Mike, Mark, and Jerry Park are the current Sewer Authorities – they don't have a term indicated – you may have to serve for life
- In looking at the list that you have from the Water Authority – it looks like you have two vacancies to fill the unexpired term of Mr. Mitchell a period of 3 years and the one held by Ken Bost which would be for a full term of 6 years.
- Jane Pilch asked if he wants to be reappointed – council said yes he does

## **REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

- **Representatives from Ken Patterson**
  - Drain work
- **Code Enforcement Officer and Permit Officer – Not present**
- **Water Authority**
  - **Mike Peters made a motion to reappoint Ken Bost. Rachelle Hopsicker seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**
  - Matt asked does someone come to council and say I would like to serve or how does a new appointment work? Can the water authority come to you with someone's name? President Scott and council said they would be happy to take suggestions. Matt said we can start that conversation if someone is willing to give their time to the community.
  - President Scott reiterated that as a small community the Sewer and Water Authority entities need to work on communicating together. All agreed.
- **Sewer Authority**
  - Mike Peters said trying to work out a time about the water shut off and set a plan to get the process rolling
  - Mike Peters said I think a lot of folks will probably pay up when they get a letter, we're hoping that some of these will turn into non-events when they get a letter that the water is getting shut off. We've really gotten the debt down the past couple of years and this step will be a big one.

- **Alexandria Volunteer Fire Company**

- President Scott asked if anyone has any questions regarding the Fire Service Agreement, it was the same as last year
- Leslie shared it is \$6,500
- Tom Weyer spoke... We discussed at our meeting that some time middle of last year they talked about a “qrs” service and we had dispatched on certain instances, the state has some regulations we have to try and meet. Our license runs out March 31<sup>st</sup> this – with us being under provisional license, it is only good for one year instead of 3 – Chris Fellman who was handling, he passed away. We have a hard time meeting man power issues – we aren’t going to renew our license, that means we won’t go on dispatch calls unless the ambulance requests us. We can’t meet the percentage the department of health is requiring us to meet. We can be dispatched on cardiac arrest. Our man power restrictions is too hard to meet the requirements the state puts on us. We can go assist the ambulance if they call us, but we won’t dispatch otherwise. It’s been a tough decision to come to, we didn’t want to do this, but with our manpower we can’t meet the 95% the state is requiring us to meet
- With our tanker we should be going down in June or July – once the body is built we will be going down to Louisiana for inspection then we should have it.
- Does anyone have any questions? Do you understand why we are doing what we’re doing? It’s hard to provide a service that we can’t provide the best of... volunteers are a dying breed. EMS and the county around us fire service is really struggling.
- Mike Peters confirmed its decision that can always be changed in regards to the QR licensing? They said yes
- The Department of Health tries to run everything as a paid service and that doesn’t work in our area... hearing through the grapevine there may be more that don’t renew their license for the same reason.
- **Rachelle Hopsicker made a motion to accept the Fire Service Agreement. Jane Pilch seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Jeff Hensor as Liaison**

- President Scott said with your appointment you are to come back to us with communication with council prior to moving forward – with all the things going on we want to have good communication – the park is owned by Alexandria Borough and Porter Twp and you as our liaison and when things get done or monies are utilized we have to go through a process of protocol or this is what we would like to see done, we’re asking you bring before council prior so we can pull our resources together and get stuff done
- VP Joel it seemed like there were some things that we were finding out about after the fact, some funding they wanted or etc and we want to know about that prior
- Jeff Hensor said so you’re talking about the grant and stuff, I talked to Curt and I assumed that he was speaking for everyone? I accept that as my fault

- President Scott reiterated to come to council to present what they are looking for – that’s all – Jeff is to keep everyone loop in on discussions especially before any decisions are made
- Jeff Hensor said, fair enough and gave an update: part of the plan is within the near future from the school side of things we would like to use that field for some junior high practices and games and potentially junior varsity – that is what we’d like to do, do I ask for approval for that now – does the district need to make a formal request and President Scott said that the school board would need to make that request – Jeff asked the process, President Scott said goes to school board first, then us, then Porter
- **Greg Jackson advised - If the school district wants to host events at that public facility there has to be a written agreement between the school and the two solicitors for the municipalities for liability.**
- Jeff Hensor said his first step tomorrow will be to tell the athletic director and he will go to school board
- VP Joel said if Jeff hears of other things they are looking to do at the park or if they need help or improvement and volunteers, please let us know. We may not have a lot of funds to throw at it, but we can always round up volunteers and help
- Mr. Hensor feels better about his role and it’s clearer; he said to be sure if Curt from Porter Twp and I talk who exactly should I reach out to. President Scott said for he to email the secretary and the secretary (Leighton) will forward out to council.
- VP Pheasant asked if Porter is keeping Jeff Hensor in the loop and Mr. Hensor said no, not really, and VP Pheasant asked if he was interested in being more looped in.
- **Brewhouse Lane Extension Survey**
  - **Approved EEDS (?) corporation for their survey**
- **Tree Walk Thru**
  - Sam Monkern would like to schedule his tree trimming, budgeted \$2,000 for that
  - Jane Pilch shared that Sam was delightful. We walked through town and looked at every tree that appeared to belong to the borough. Jane expressed trees that were historic and we don’t want them loped down, but he reassured that he’d be trimming them. He explained that as we trim they may introduce a scraggly-ness, but as they mature again they will look nicer. She liked that he has a proactive maintenance of the trees, preserve the trees, cable here and there, but not much concern on that. He believes to use native species as best we can – he also talked about some shrubbery in some place that might attract butterflies and bees and be good for the so-called ecological system.
  - President Scott do we have a motion for him to trim this month? Jane Pilch said yes, he was so good to work with... Mike Peters asked if considering what Ron Grove said a couple weeks ago – would we want to have this guy look at the trees in front of the Medical Center too? President Scott said we could ask Porter Twp before we’d ask him to do that... she said good idea, that’d be a separate motion
  - **Jane Pilch motions that we schedule for Sam to trim/maintenance the trees. Rachelle Hopsicker seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.**
- **Traffic Calming Discussion**

- President Scott said the evening of New Year's Eve three more automobiles were totaled due to a crash – shared it was a very elevated situation and props to the volunteer fire company for their swift response and the calming they provided, we truly appreciate what you do, so thank you.
- Tom Weyer – speeding was a factor given the damage of the vehicle and the pole they hit, our issue for the fire department are the bystanders – 3 or 4 people running around taking pictures, screaming profanities, it's hard for us to do our job – trying to get answers – the guy in the middle of Main Street did end up moving with engine, when it's in town here – not much happens in our borough, but that really brought out and the chaos of the bystanders. The driver was being quote unquote detained – the vehicle was on fire, he was out on the ground
- Tom asked if there is a public service announcement to put out that when accidents happen to keep the phones at bay, stay back in an emergency, keep the chaos limited, the personnel are coming to help... etc. Please put on the Facebook and Website as a reminder. Know also that they will block off section of road -
- President Scott asked if the fire company offers training for situations of that nature where residents could safely keep people back, he said not really, that would start a whole situation of liability
- There are issues with speeding in town –
- President Scott that we will certainly put out a word of encouragement and a public service announcement for residents
- Tom said that while he was trying to get information the people screaming made things difficult
- **Tori Wilt said about a once a month service announcement... VP Pheasant asked if they had something specific to say? Tom said that he will write something up for us to post. VP Pheasant suggested Tori also turn off comments on that post. He said once every couple months – Tom will type something up and send it to the secretary then she will disperse**
- President Scott said that evening residents asked about a petition being circulated – a school bus driver also made her aware of things happening –
- Tori Wilt asked what is the petition for?
- President Scott shared about the 6 vehicles totaled on Main Street over that past year and she reached out to elected officials that evening.
- President Scott said we want a petition regarding traffic calming and we need additional measures to get traffic calming and everything is waiting and waiting and waiting – when you see the traffic issues every day, it's escalating. With a petition we can show that we want something done now and then send it to all our officials.
- Council continued to ask for clarification on what the petition is...
- VP Pheasant said that the email is not the petition – this is a point of information the email to the officials. He read the email President Scott sent to the officials. They are looking for preventative measure to be taken immediately.
- We've requested assistance here President Scott said – is creating a petition better on the individual aspect or as council...
- Solicitor Greg Jackson said that the only thing that will result in immediate reduction in speeding is a greater State Police presence.

- The only way you are going to receive that is if the members of the general assembly who control the funding for the State Police is if they put pressure on the State Police – I think you could speak to Sergeant Brumbaugh and plead with him to get a greater presence. You can have a greater host of changes to respect to the traffic calming. You’ve tried to get a greater police presence. So, if you need the help of Senator Ward and Rich Irvin you need their help – you are going to have to rely on the State Police and get the patrols increased because that is the only thing that you’ll see a change in motorists.
    - Solicitor recommended daily patrols be requested – the realities of the State Police are that within 2 hours there are two police cars in the county it’s an hour to get here. So if you want to see an immediate effect would be to form your own municipal police department and get it enforced.
  - Jane Pilch said years ago she thought we had that, Mike Peters said they knew when it went
  - You could make a regional police force and that would give you more direct response to curb the situation, request funding for regional police force
  - Tori Wilt asked what happened to the idea of speed humps. Jane said I’m concerned they’d go to Shelton. Rachelle said they do. More speed humps.
  - Greg said unless there is someone with authority you can decorate your town
  - Tori Wilt said if I see speed humps I would slow down
  - Ken said I think when we had the last police force the municipalities were going broke
  - Mike Peters said Petersburg managed the entire thing and then one year things went wrong, then they billed us and they mishandled the money for a long time and weren’t coordinated with us as they should have and then they shut it down within 2 weeks.
  - Solicitor Greg Jackson said the thing that makes it very difficult to per speeding violations is that Pennsylvania does not permit municipal police departments to run radar, they have an aversion to set speed enforcement because they have to set speed traps. If you’re asking members of the general assembly for help is to ask...
  - President Scott said in our state that if you run something and other states have cameras and you run something you get cameras and you get a ticket in the mail... that may be able to help with traffic calming
  - President Scott will reach out with what we discussed this evening. Are you all comfortable if I pursue this?
  - Solicitor said you’re looking to get signatures from your borough residents so then council would pass a resolution that would go along with petition to the officials.
  - **Greg suggested that you get your signatures on your petition then prepare a resolution. President Scott said the resolution would just be a motion you would pass at your meeting.**
  - **President Scott will come back to February with the petition that wants immediate action and a unified approach – the verbiage of the resolution council will specify, but the petition can move forward however**
- **Property Maintenance Ordinance**
  - Tori Wilt said she knows the residence deserve an answer on this

- Mike Peters asked what is the first sticking point for those who needed time?
- VP Pheasant said if I remember correctly people wanted to review it and come back, so?
- No response...
- President Scott asked if VP Pheasant would like to read down through the property maintenance ordinance so they can get through it...
- Tori Wilt said we had discussed 3 feet be changed to between the two properties
- President Scott is concerned that we could cause property owners to be at odds with one another
- Greg said if you add a provision that would allow the home owners that would allow them to have a fence within that setback then that agreement would be binding to future home owners. For example, Jane and I agree on a fence within the setback, and Jane moves, whoever buys that house is set to the original agreement. If the fence came down then that's different. VP Pheasant asked if whoever wants to buy the house from Jane wants to take the fence down then is that acceptable. Greg said yes, they could take the fence down. I can't stop someone from taking a fence down on their property, but if they take it down and put a new one up I could keep it from getting put up in the same spot. If it's a boundary fence it has to be agreed upon between both owners. If Jane and Greg agree on the boundary fence, then it's co-ownership and the only way it comes down is if both parties agree. If Jane has a fence on her property strictly then it's completely at the sole discretion of the owner.
- President Scott asked if someone has to digress it back to let's say 2 feet then the property owner would need their neighbors signature on a form that would allow the issuance of permit.
- Jane Pilch feels the fence portion of this ordinance should be carved out, on the flood plain there is already agreement on how the fences should be, she said it's a kettle of worms in this ordinance, have you ever heard a complaint about a fence.
- Rachele Hopsicker said there needs to be rules in case someone is having a fence issue
- Jane Pilch said weeds, junk vehicles, etc.
- VP Pheasant said we currently have a fence ordinance we aren't adding one we are actually loosening the ordinance
- Jane Pilch said with the 3 foot on either side, you have a potential walkway between 2 fences that get littered, etc.
- Rachele Hopsicker said that is why we gave space is so people can maintain it, VP Pheasant said that the 3 foot was there so that it was enough to get your mower through
- Tori Wilt said there's some space between her fence and although some of it is the neighbor's yard we do it for aesthetic purposes and because they are older, her other neighbors have also offered to mow, you have to see what your neighbors do... it is different for every neighbor.
- VP Pheasant said the change we need to make is on the agreement for the buffer yard area.
- Greg Jackson said... Add a sentence at the end of section 3... "With the exception that a fence may be constructed closer to the boundary line..." Mr. Jackson will circulate changes once motion is passed tonight
- *VP Pheasant resumed reading...*

- Greg said the borough doesn't get to assign the fine, you give them a warning, 72 hours later they don't claim, that point in time whoever you appointed can file at the magistrates office, and then the magistrate can issue fines and determines the dollar amount – President Scott said the code enforcement officer does not need council approval to take that to the magistrate? Greg confirmed they do not need council's approval, they can take it straight to the magistrate.
- VP Pheasant said that our enforcement officer can decide to give adequate opportunity if certain circumstances – the enforcement officer is giving them at least 3 days to address an issue
- Greg said, Jane you need to mow your lawn – you have three days to do so, when I come back if it is unchanged I can file an issue at the magistrate's office. Jane said what if you get a real jerk – then we can fire him and rehire
- *Greg Jackson took role of reading the ordinance per Rachele Hopsicker request, onward reading*
- Tori Wilt asked about jail, that's so punitive – is it standard?
- Greg Jackson said it's a quasi-criminal statute – if you didn't include any number of 10 days jail time then the minimal is 90 days – this actually benefits the residents Tori asked? Greg said, yes.
- President Scott asked if ever resident is required to have a contract with a trash hauler, how do we know that? If you see excessive garbage is that when you find out if they have one or not?
- Greg Jackson said if they do have a hauler a resident would present to the magistrate they paid a trash hauler and they didn't get their trash so it'd be their fault. The only other thing you could do is that you would keep a data base of who everybody's trash hauler is.
- President Scott asked we have a couple folks violating trash they were to have letters mailed – are we reaching out to them prior to the code enforcement officer – Greg said this ordinance if passed, you'll have to advertise it, then vote on it and then you'll have gotten rid of your previous ordinance and then your code enforcement officer will be empowered under this ordinance
- Tori Wilt said that particular individual threatened Brandon Foster when trying to enforce the code and we could have further conversation on that particular instance President Scott was mentioning because it is pertinent
- Rachele Hopsicker asked if we can put the letter request on the agenda to discuss at a later time and President Scott said yes
- *Reading resumed...*
- VP Pheasant is asking there's a section that mentions appliances in junk – I've had a small refrigerator on my porch, it's functioning and store beverages in it for the summer. Your magistrate determines what is junk and not junk Greg Jackson replied. Arguably you'd have photographs of what is there and a magistrate will say that's junk and that's not junk... in your situation there are references to appliances, I would think any reasonable magistrate saw a picture of a small refrigerator would not presume that to be junk
- *Reading resumed...*
- In regards to winter maintenance... Rachele Hopsicker said some people on Shelton Ave don't have sidewalks? Mike Peters said some other areas don't either. Greg said if an area doesn't have a sidewalk, the next section may help address that by requiring residents to build a sidewalk. Greg said residents likely wouldn't be able to get out of snow clearing simply because concrete isn't down.

- In regards to sidewalks... Tori Wilt said that previously we talked about changing that 10 days to 30 days to repair a sidewalk.
- *Reading resumed...*
- Last section acts to separate portions of the ordinance if ever any of the components are deemed unconstitutional
- Greg noted 3 changes to make...
  - Set back of fencing
  - Fixing type junk waste and rubbish section
  - Extending sidewalk 10 – 30 days
- **Tori Wilt made a motion to advertise the Property Maintenance Ordinance. Rachelle Hopsicker seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**
- President Scott asked about Greg Jackson sending a letter, he said he's not the person authorized by the legislative act from the borough to file with the magistrate. So the code enforcement officer needs to do that.
- Greg Jackson will make the changes then send to The Daily Newspaper and send to use to send
- Rachelle Hopsicker said this will help get us on the right path
- **President Scott asked for the following to be posted...Tori will get on Facebook asap and website**
  - **Hometown Heroes Banners**
    - **Anyone interested can reach out to President Scott using the borough number, February 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline**
  - **Leaves for the Pillars Bridge**
    - **1<sup>st</sup> of May deadline, \$250 per leaf**

**Meeting Adjourned: 9:21 pm**

**Mike Peters motioned to adjourn. Rachelle Hopsicker seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.**