

Borough of Somerset Council Meeting July 23, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Meeting was called to order by President Ruby Miller, opening with recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call:

Council Members Present: Ruby Miller; Fred Rosemeyer; Judy Pyle; Sue Opp; Steve Shaulis and Gary Thomas. Mayor Scott Walker also present.

Absent was Council Member Pam Ream.

Junior Council Member Maria Weimer was also present.

Also present were the following: Borough Manager, Michele Enos; Director of Finance, Brett Peters; Solicitor James Cascio; Chief of Police, Randy Cox and Consulting Engineers, Tom Reilly and Jake Bolby.

Announcements:

(a) None

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

(a) June 11th, 2018 – Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Rosemeyer seconded to approve the June 11th, 2018 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(b) June 25th, 2018 – Borough Council Meeting Minutes

Motion

Mr. Thomas moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to approve June 25th, 2018 Borough Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

Award of Bids:

(a) 2018 Sewage Treatment Plant Project – Award bid to the lowest responsive bidder.

Ms. Enos stated that this bid encompasses the grit chamber at our Sewage Treatment Plant. It includes two rotating distributors for the bio-tower, replacing existing gas chlorination equipment with liquid chlorination, and improvements to the chlorine contact tank.

She mentioned that these projects were budgeted for, and approved by, Borough Council for 2018.

Ms. Enos brought out that there were three bidders that responded. The lowest responsive bidder, after engineering review, is J.P Environmental, LLC out of Shamokin, PA in the amount of \$267,000.00.

Motion

Mrs. Pyle moved, Mr. Shaulis seconded to award the Sewage Treatment Plant Project to J.P Environmental, LLC. in the amount of \$267,000.00.

Motion Unanimously Carried

General Public Comments:

(a) Lions Club of Somerset – To discuss the Union Street Playground.

Four individual members, representing the Lions Club of Somerset, were present. Sandy Upor, of the Lions Club, thanked Borough Council for including them in their Agenda so they could be heard. She stated that their main presence at the meeting was to speak about the Union Street Playground.

She stated that they actually had two concerns. The first, being the issue of security cameras at the playground. The second, being the concession stand.

Ms. Upor explained the long history, and involvement, of the Lions Club with the playground. She stated that they have always been involved with the Union Street Playground.

She mentioned that a few years ago, there was a “wish list” that was put out by the Borough Council for various items. She stated that one of those items was to have security cameras installed at the playground. She stated that the Lions Club took on that challenge and received a bid for the cameras. They also received grant money from the Lions Club Foundation. Money was also received from the Eagles.

Ms. Upor stated that, in the meantime, they have been trying to get the cameras installed in the Union Street Playground. She mentioned that they have encountered various problems in communication with the Borough, and as a result, sent the money back to their foundation just a few weeks ago.

She mentioned that the Lions Club, however, did not want to give up. They agreed to come and talk to Borough Council Members directly to explain what they were trying to do, and to also ask if Borough Council would still like the Lions Club to try to have the cameras installed or not.

Mr. Robert Thomas of the Lions Club explained, in more detail, of how six cameras placed in various parts of the playground, could be reviewed by the Police Department when accessing the cameras.

Mr. Robert Thomas stated that the Lions Club was going to fund the purchase of the equipment and installation. He stated that the maintenance, and charge of the internet, would be the Borough's responsibility. He thought it could be hooked into the current Wi-Fi of the Public Safety Building.

He stated that the issue was whether or not the Borough still feels it's a worthwhile thing to do. If it is, he said that the Lions Club was willing to work towards it. If Council feels it's something that is not needed at this time, then Mr. Thomas stated that the Lions Club will put their energies in another direction.

Solicitor Cascio stated that he and Mr. Robert Thomas spoke about these issues, and the Lions Club's interest in the Union Street Playground.

He said that the Borough's "wish list" was a good one at the time, but has since changed.

Solicitor Cascio expressed that time has been spent to discuss how the cameras could be integrated within the Borough's law enforcement operations, along with the connections, and who would monitor it. Solicitor Cascio stated that a plan is needed for how it would all be done. He mentioned that Chief Cox has taken an in-depth look at this.

Solicitor Cascio stated that the Borough has to be aware of the cost of things, and that enhancements do not have a negative millage effect on what was already budgeted for. He stated that the Borough wants the playground to continue to be a good facility for families, young kids and everyone else.

Solicitor Cascio also expressed that the Borough wants to keep it in line with the Lions Club long time support.

Chief Cox stated that after their previous discussion about the playground cameras, he determined the feasibility of linking any camera system in the playground to the existing surveillance system in and around the Safety Building.

Chief Cox stated that he discovered 2 problems. One, was that the most efficient way for the cameras to communicate with the Public Safety Building's system would be through the internet. He explained that the problem is that their system was installed in

2008, and it cannot handle that IP internet protocol-type camera. The second problem is, is that the distance to run hard wire from the playground into the building would be covering quite a distance. He stated that the signal depth is very limited because of the mortar construction of the Safety Building. Chief Cox stated that this would result in having to install an independent system for the playground cameras.

Chief Cox disclosed that the incidents of vandalism and criminal mischief in the playground has decreased over the years. He said that in the early 2000's, there was a very high number of incidents of this at the playground. Since that time, there has not been many incidents. Chief Cox said that getting cameras installed in the playground, at that time, was driven by what we were experiencing at the time.

He also disclosed that they would not be able to monitor the playground in "real time" with a camera system.

Chief Cox suggested that, currently, he feels that a greater deterrent at the playground would be more lighting. He expressed that he doesn't want to discourage the Lions Club's enthusiasm, graciousness and willingness to contribute to the Borough's well-being. But he stated that, at this point and time, in considering that the incidents of criminal mischief at the playground has dropped, he feels that the Lions Club could find better use of their money they were willing to contribute to the Union Street Playground.

Solicitor Cascio suggested that their money could be spent more meaningfully, perhaps in lighting at the playground, as Chief Cox suggested.

He expressed that Borough Council may want to consider some process, through Ms. Enos, to identify current needs.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that they would take the information back to the other members of the Lions Club, and get back to Council, on the feasibility for lighting in the Union Street Playground.

Ms. Upor then mentioned the other issue that the Lions Club wanted to discuss relating to the Union Street Playgrounds concession stand. She stated that Mr. Chad Reichhold of "My Girls" Restaurant was the individual who opened up the concession stand this summer.

Mr. Reichhold stated that the playground has issues in the bathroom, with the water and the water fountain.

He said that they were keeping an eye on things, and doing more than selling hot dogs to the kids. Mr. Reichhold stated that they are trying to clean up the playground by picking up trash, as well, to help the community.

Going forward, Mr. Reichhold stated that he was asking Council for a commitment, for next year, to open things up in the playground a little sooner, so the kids can enjoy themselves. He was also hoping the playground could be brought back to the way it was, so the community can have a better summer season there.

Ms. Enos stated that Mr. Snyder, from the Lions Club, reached out to her about having concessions there this year at the playground. She stated that she didn't know they were on board with concessions until a few weeks into the season, which she stated is fine, and they appreciate it very much. She stated that next year, she would like to have better communications with the Lions Club so that this would help her to understand what their expectations are for the Borough.

Ms. Enos disclosed that Borough Council had to make a tough decision during budgeting season last year when they realized that they had a budget deficit they had to work on making up. Council did not want to raise taxes, so one of the things that was eliminated was the full-time staffing at the playground that we had during the summer.

Ms. Enos stated that it was planned for the playground to stay open and use existing employees to staff the wading pool, when they were able. She stated that these employees had their Act 34 Clearances, but with the recent amendment, their clearances had expired.

Ms. Enos suggested meeting with someone from the Lions Club, prior to next year's summer months. She explained that this would help her understand what the Lions Club expectations are for the Borough, and their expectations for the concession stand at the playground. Ms. Enos stated that, this way, she would be better prepared to meeting the deadlines.

Solicitor Cascio suggested that the Lion's Club have open communication with Ms. Enos before the budget process starts, so that the needs of the playground could be built into the budget. He stated that this would make this process work better, and Council can make decisions on the playground.

Ms. Enos also disclosed that there were leaks and plumbing issues at the playground when the water was turned on at the beginning of the summer. Mass flooding in the Borough also delayed the playground from getting the water issues resolved.

Mr. Shaulis stated that the Eagles would also be happy to help financially where they can along with the Lions Club.

All Lions Club members present thanked Borough Council for giving them the time to speak about their concerns with the playground.

Borough Council thanked the Lions Club Members for coming to the meeting.

Administrative Business:

(a) Communications (none)

(b) Payment of Bills -

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Shaulis seconded, to approve the payment of bills numbered 31444 – 31588 totaling \$ 434,032.46.

Motion Unanimously Carried

Policy Agenda:

Old Business:

(a) There is no old business.

New Business:

(a) There is no new business.

Mr. Rosemeyer stated that speaking for the Board of Directors of Laurel Arts, they wanted to thank Chief Cox, his Officers, the Emergency Staff, Fire Police and Borough Employees for their help during Somerfest Event this past weekend.

He stated that it was a safe weekend with no major problems. Mr. Rosemeyer brought out that it was one of the most financially rewarding weekends that we've had. He disclosed that \$18,000.00 was lost last year during the Somerfest Event. He stated that it was a very, very nice event and was very successful this year.

Chief Cox expressed that the Public Works Staff were very much appreciated. He said that there were fewer of them than other traffic control personnel we've had in the past, but they were so much more efficient.

Chief Cox asked Borough Council if he should take the traditional \$500.00 discount off the bill when he prepared the billing for the event. All agreed to it.

Motion

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mr. Opp seconded to take the traditional \$500.00 discount off the bill when he prepared the billing for the event.

Motion Unanimously Carried

Junior Council Member Maria Weimer stated that she will be leaving for Prep School for the Naval Academy next month, so this would be her last Council Meeting.

She thanked all of Council for the opportunity she had to serve as a Junior Council Member.

Ms. Weimer expressed that she thought it was wonderful to see how all of the Council Members cared so much about the community. She said it seems like there's more complaints than compliments, but she stated that they really do a fantastic job.

Ms. Weimer mentioned that she learned a great deal being able to serve as a Junior Council Member.

Mrs. Pyle mentioned that Somerset Inc. is having their next meeting at Hemminger House, and will be going through that building on Thursday July 26th. She invited all that were interested in joining them to come along.

Mrs. Pyle disclosed that 16 Historic Plaques have been completed. She stated that they will be unveiled, and recognized, at the Antique Fair.

Mrs. Pyle also stated that Trinity Lutheran Church had one dinner at Trinity Park and is planning on having another one there soon.

She stated that Trinity Park is really nice the way it is, although they have one more piece to finish before the Park is complete. Planters were painted, planted and placed there. She said it is just very pleasant there. Mrs. Pyle mentioned that a grant is coming in December, and this should help finish the rest of Trinity Park.

Mrs. Pyle mentioned that "Shooters Showdown" will be coming up on August 11, 2018. She stated that they are always looking for teams for this event.

Mrs. Pyle mentioned that the "911 Ride" will be coming through Somerset again, and they are looking to place a sign up stating "Welcome to America's County." She disclosed that there will be approximately 700 riders. Somerset Inc. is discussing getting a band to put in the park for the riders. She mentioned that Ruby Tuesday is closed to the general public that day, and will only be serving the riders.

She brought out that 5 school districts entered the "Holiday Design Scholarship" contest. Participating school districts will be making Christmas decorations. Afterward, the decorations will be given back to the school district that made it.

Mrs. Pyle also mentioned how the young people running Somerset Inc. and Laurel Arts are trying to expand their vision, and look at all the things that are available within a 10-mile radius.

She mentioned that Laurel Hill State Park has free canoes, and they will escort you around the edge of the water, and convey information about the birds and surroundings. She stated that she didn't know this was available there, and stated that people do not realize how much we have to offer in Somerset, especially for city people. Mrs. Pyle mentioned that they really appreciate those things we sometimes forget about.

Executive Session – None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Opp moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Thomas.

Motion Unanimously Carried
7:45 p.m.

Michele A. Enos, Borough Manager/Secretary