

Approved minutes – Regular Meeting 1/9/2024

Approved minutes – Special Meeting _____

Approved minutes – Special/Workshop Meeting _____

Regular Meeting
January 9, 2024
7:00 P.M.

The regular monthly meeting of the Meyersdale Borough Council was called to order by President Irwin, January 9, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

Mr. Ackerman, Mr. Baer, Mrs. Gnagey, Mr. Irwin, Mrs. Knieriem, Mr. Smith and Mayor Smith were present. Solicitor Valentine was present via telephone. Mr. Baker was absent. Brion Reiber, Street Foreman was absent. There was no representative from the Police Department.

MINUTES:

Mr. Ackerman made the motion to accept the minutes of the January 2, 2024, Reorganization Meeting as presented. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed.

FINANCIAL REPORT/ BILLS:

Mr. Baer made the motion to accept the financial report and pay the bills as presented. Mrs. Knieriem seconded. Motion passed. The Financial Report was presented by the Borough Secretary in the absence of Mr. Baker, Finance Chairman.

GUESTS:

- A.) Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Mathias were present with regard to the vacating of a portion of Alaska Street and a portion of 7th. Ave. After some discussion, Mrs. Gnagey made the motion to grant ½ of said portions of streets vacated to abutting landowners, Mrs. & Mrs. Wayne Mathias and Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Shaulis. Mrs. Knieriem seconded. Motion passed. Solicitor Valentine reported that proposed ordinances #443 and #444 will need to be re-advertised and formally adopted at the February 13, 2024 meeting of Council and that Appalachian Engineering will need to resurvey the area. Mr. Mathias also had a concern regarding Bottom Street. It was reported that Solicitor Valentine would need to research if this street was properly vacated.
- B.) Dr. Tracie Karlie, Superintendent and Mr. Ron Donaldson, School Board Member were present regarding the Community Center. A recommendation from the School districts legal counsel was to transfer the building to the Borough removing the current stipulation that the lands and buildings would revert to the Meyersdale Area School District if and when they are no longer being used for municipal or authority purposes and to add a restriction that the building could not be used for any type of home school, charter school or cyber school. Mrs. Gnagey pointed out that the Borough would need to do a lot of homework in order to accept the building, because the building has a huge amount of wasted space and is expensive to maintain. It was noted that the Meyersdale Municipal Authority will be moving their office from the Community Center to the MMA maintenance shop in the near future. It was her thought that Council should consider building or renting space elsewhere. A poll was taken of the Council members and Mr. Ackerman and President Irwin were the only members in favor of staying in the Community Center. It was suggested that an Engineering survey of the building be completed. Mrs. Martha Albright, a local realtor suggested that a commercial inspection be completed. She estimated that this type of inspection could cost between \$3,000.00 - \$5,000.00 and she can provide a list of referrals. It was reported that Appalachian Engineering is working on a survey of the land in

which the Vietnam/Korean Memorial is erected. The land will be subdivided and transferred to the Vietnam/Korean Memorial Committee.

Mrs. Gnagey requested that three years of utility bills for the building be provided to Council for review.

The Community Center topic is to remain on the Agenda for the February meeting.

C.) Mr. Thomas Deetz was present to report that the flags, poles and brackets have arrived. He will provide Brion Reiber with a list of dates that the flags should be displayed.

Mr. Deetz announced that the kick off date for the 150th Anniversary celebration will be February 19, 2024 at which time all the churches will ring their bells. The American Legion Auxiliary spearheaded a banner project for the celebration. The banners will be up by February 19, 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Irwin thanked the voters for electing him for a four year term and thanked Council for appointing him as President of Council.

Current vacancies on the zoning hearing board as alternates were discussed. Mr. Irwin reported that Mr. Jeffrey Brenneman is willing to serve as an alternate. Solicitor Valentine recommended that the vacancies be advertised. Mr. Baer made the motion to advertise for two alternate positions on the Zoning Hearing Board now and then to advertise for the position that will become vacant in July 2024 closer to the term expiration. Mr. Ackerman seconded. Motion passed.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

No report was given.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR:

No report was given.

ENGINEERS REPORT:

No report was given.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Solicitor Valentine reported on the following:

- The structuring of the Parks and Recreation Board should be discussed at a committee meeting.
- A draft copy of the Electric Scooter Ordinance will be distributed to Council for review.
- A letter from Michael Rhoten was read by President Irwin. Solicitor Valentine was asked to reach out to Mr. Rhoten regarding his concerns.

CODE ENFORCEMENT:

No report was given.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Municipal Authority

President Irwin asked Mr. Brian Witherite, Board member if the Meyersdale Municipal Authority could provide the Borough with an account of their current debt.

Street Foreman

No report was given.

Meyersdale Area Merchants Association

Mrs. Denise Gehringer reported that there was no update. A meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2024 at the Elks.

Public Library

No report was given.

Parks & Recreation

No report was given.

Meyersdale Renaissance

No report was given.

COUNCIL MEMBERS – STANDING COMMITTEES

In lieu of going through the committee reports, each member of Council was given the opportunity to provide a report or comments.

Mr. Baer – Would like to get together with Police Committee regarding interviews for Police Chief.

Mrs. Knieriem – Nothing to report.

Mr. Smith – Asked Mr. Brian Witherite, MMA for assistance with pressure testing on the closing of a house.

Mr. Ackerman – Nothing to report.

President Irwin – Nothing to report.

Mrs. Gnagey – Nothing to report.

Mayor Smith – Nothing to report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A.) Patrolman police agreement/handbook

The document has not been signed.

B.) Ambulance meeting

Mrs. Gnagey reported that she has obtained information for all of the municipalities. Mrs. Gnagey was asked to coordinate the next meeting.

C.) Website update

Mr. Brian Witherite, MMA Board Member reported that the Meyersdale Municipal Authority would like to partner with the Borough on setting up a website. A few members of Council were not sure that a website was necessary, but the majority of Council Members and audience attendees disagreed. It was reported that several phases must be completed with the website designers before any information can be

uploaded. After some discussion, Mrs. Gnagey and Mrs. Knieriem were appointed to complete the mockup phase (Step #1) with the web designers and report back at the February meeting.

D.) Proposals for investments – Discussion

The Secretary was asked to contact Somerset Trust Company, Ameriserv Bank, First National Bank and First Peoples Bank to obtain interest rates on a money market account ranging from \$125,000.00 to \$150,000.00.

E.) Ordinance #443 & #444

Mrs. Knieriem made the motion to re-advertise Ordinance #443 and #444 for adoption at the February 13, 2024 meeting. Mrs. Gnagey seconded. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

A.) Announcements

There were no announcements.

B.) Police coverage in Borough & Summit Township

No report was given.

C.) Executive Session Requirements

President Irwin reminded Council of the proper procedures and allowable reasons to hold an executive session. (See attached)

D.) Somerset County Redevelopment Authority Assistance with blighted properties

Mrs. Gnagey reported that the Somerset County Redevelopment Authority has \$300,000.00 available for for demolition of blighted properties. She would like to get a list of blighted properties and asked if the Borough could advertise on facebook asking citizens to report blight. Solicitor Valentine reported that the Borough has to be very careful on soliciting the public for complaints and that facebook is not the appropriate outlet. The public may make complaints on their own and the complaints must be followed up by PA Municipal Code Alliance to begin the process.

E.) Trash removal from 7 Chestnut St.

It was reported that the trash was removed, but subsequently has reappeared. It was suggested that the alley be blocked with a barricade and clearly marked No Dumping.

F.) Plan for replacement of barricades

Mr. Ackerman made the motion to purchase 10 barricades from ULINE at a cost of approximately \$230.00 each. Mr. Baer seconded. Motion passed.

G.) Somerset County Boroughs Association

Mrs. Gnagey reported that she has taken an officer position with the Somerset County Borough Association and that she is not permitted to obtain mail at her home or at a post office box. All SCBA mail must come to the Meyersdale Borough address. Council granted permission for a mail receptacle be placed in the Community Center for SCBA mail.

H.) Parking issue on Center St. in front of Mishler's building – update
The Streets Committee recommended leaving the parking as is.

I.) Open Public Comment Policy

Upon a recommendation by President, Mr. Baer made the motion to update the Open Public Comment Policy to reduce the time limit from 10 minutes to 5 minutes. The Secretary was asked to draft an updated version for presentation at the February meeting. If Council is in agreement with the updated policy, it will be advertised and officially passed at the March meeting.

GOALS FOR 2024

Ordinance Review

No report given.

Zoning Review

No report given.

New Building

No report given.

Emergency Access Road Meyers Ave.

No report given.

Control Spending

No report given.

Flood Control rip rap

No report given.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

There were no additional items to be discussed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Solicitor Valentine called for an executive session to discuss attorney client privileged matters including potential litigation (Police employee litigation matter)

Mr. Ackerman made the motion to enter into executive session at 8:20 P.M. Mrs. Gnagey seconded. Motion passed. The Secretary was asked to attend the executive session.

Mr. Ackerman made the motion to return to regular session at 8:45 P.M. Mr. Smith seconded. Motion passed.

Discussion/motions:

Mrs. Gnagey made the motion to authorize Solicitor Valentine to take the necessary action as discussed in executive session. Mrs. Knieriem seconded. Motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Gnagey made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 PM. Mr. Ackerman seconded. Motion passed.



Patricia C. Ackerman
Borough Secretary

Allowable Reasons for Executive Sessions:

- Personnel matters (hiring, firing, discipline)
- Discussing labor negotiations
- Considering purchasing, leasing or selling property
- Consulting with counsel about litigation
- Avoiding violating privilege or confidentiality
- Discussing university admission standards
- Discuss emergency preparedness

Taken from Basics of the Sunshine Act Webinar as of 1/2021

MEYERSDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regular Meeting 1/9/2024 Special Meeting _____

GUEST SIGN IN

PLEASE PRINT

	NAME	ADDRESS	TOPIC
1	Jeff Chrissler	209 North St	
2	Tom Deetz	334 Olipger St	Play Report
3	Jason Ackerman	342 Meyers Ave	
4	Brian Witmark	230 Sherman St.	Signs + Parking
5	Ron Donaldson	1750 Berlin St Carlett	
6	Domin Gehring	106 Meyers	
7	Mark Albrige	124 Willow	
8	Tracey Karlie	309 Industrial Park	Borough Building
9	Ruth-Eugene Mishke		
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GUESTS MUST STAND WHILE SPEAKING