

**December 5, 2023**

A Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Minersville was held December 5, 2023. Chairman Ian Mahal opened the meeting with The Pledge of Allegiance.

**Attendance:**

The following Council members attended the December 5, 2023 meeting: Mr. Mike Firestine, Mr. Joseph Slovick. Mrs. Katielynn Pothering, Mr. Terry Raffety, Mayor Palmer, Solicitor Evans, Kyle Crouse, Police Chief Combs, Junior Council Member Kurtek and Borough Manager Bob Mahalchick.

Mr. Mahal thanked Mr. Firestine and Mrs. Pothering, who will both be leaving office, for their service on council.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Mrs. Pothering made a motion, second by Mr. Firestine to approve the minutes from November 2023. The motion passed as presented.

**Approval of Bills:**

Mrs. Pothering made a motion to approve the bills to be paid. Mr. Firestine seconded the motion. The motion passed as presented.

**Approval of Officers' Report:**

Mr. Firestine made a motion to approve the officers' reports. Mrs. Pothering seconded the motion. The motion passed as presented.

**Communications:**

A letter from Mrs. Pothering resigning her seat on council due to relocating to Branch Township was read. Mrs. Pothering commented on her experiences on Council and asked council to consider Mike Firestine to fill her vacancy. Mrs. Pothering stated his wealth of knowledge as a former Street Department employee as well as his years of service on council. Mr. Firestine made a motion to accept with regret Mrs. Pothering's resignation as of her date of relocation, December 15. Mr. Raffety seconded the motion. The motion passed as presented. Mr. Mahal stated the vacancy would be publicly advertised following December 15.

**New Business:**

Mrs. Pothering made a motion to approve the meeting dates for 2024 as presented. Mr. Firestine seconded the motion. The motion passed as presented.

The second reading of the 2024 budget was completed. Mr. Mahal stated the 2024 budget reflects a tax increase due to increases in costs to sanitation, health care and police salaries. Mr. Mahal stated a police regionalization study needs to be on the forefront for 2024 as communities should not be dependent on coverage from Minersville. Mr. Kuehn stated we knew this was coming with the previously approved police salary increases. Mr. Firestine stated we still do not have 24/7 coverage. Chief Combs stated there are only a few times when there is no coverage from 3am to 7am. or less. He is having trouble finding part time officers. On a roll call vote, the budget was passed by majority vote.

Mr. Raffety reluctantly made a motion to approve the Ordinance establishing the mileage at 23.50, which reflects a 2-½-mill increase, for 2024. The motion passed on a roll call vote by majority. Mr. Mahal stated that not all mills are equal in all municipalities.

Mr. Mahalchick stated that recycling is expensive. Mr. Kuehn stated the state mandates recycling. Mr. Mahalchick stated most towns now contract with County Waste. The borough must provide a collection process. Following discussion, Mr. Slovick made a motion to pass a resolution approving the rate increases by \$10 a quarter for all customers. Mr. Terry seconded the motion. On a roll call vote the motion was passed by a majority vote.

Mr. Raffety made a motion authorizing Ed Barket to move forward with the appraisal of 610 Sunbury Street. Mrs. Pothering seconded the motion. On the question, Mr. Mahal said it would be a priority. The motion passed as presented.

A motion was made by Mrs. Pothering, second by Mr. Raffety to approve Application for payment #7 in the amount of \$19,227.72 to Heim Construction for the Sunbury Street Project. The motion passed as presented.

Mr. Raffety made a motion to approve Change Order # 3 which includes conduit repair. The motion passed with one opposed.

Mr. Raffety made a motion to approve Change Order #5 which includes quantities installed during construction and a no cost time extension. Mrs. Pothering seconded the motion. The motion passed as presented.

Mr. Mahal stated that following the change orders there is \$83,881 available to use on the streetscape project. Mr. Mahal stated that the Verizon and PP&L issue with the pole should be resolved by December 20.

**Old Business:**

The River Street Wall is ongoing.

Mr. Crouse reported he is waiting for an update on the County for the demolition of 28-30 South Street using CBGD funds.

The rental ordinance for short-term rentals is in progress.

The Zoning Commission review is in progress.

**Community Updates-**

Santa Comes to Town November 26. Parade at 5:30, meet with Santa immediately after on Fourth Street.

The Mayor reported that a tree was donated to the Lions for their display on Sunbury Street. Several hundred toys and around \$4000 were given to Mrs. Joann Murphy who is in charge of toy distribution at Minersville School District. Mrs. Murphy reported that with so many donations grades Kindergarten thru grade 5 would receive toys.

**Committee Reports**

**Streets-** Mr. Firestine stated the curbing on the Fourth Street Island needs to be replaced.

Mr. Firestine reported that the new Street Department employee approved last month is awaiting medical clearances.

**Police-** Mr. Slovick questioned what happened to drug money seized within the borough. Chief Combs explained that if the Federal government prosecutes, 80% of the money is returned to the borough. Locally when \$103,000 was seized the County returned \$5,000 to the borough. The Mayor explained that drug money seized partially funds an ADA's salary and one drug task force salary. The Mayor has spoken to DA O'Paek. The Mayor would like a private meeting with the Schuylkill County Commissioners.

Mr. Firestine stated it was an honor to serve on council and he learned a lot and thinks everyone should do it.

Mrs. Pothering made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Slovick seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Capik, Secretary