**BOROUGH OF ELIZABETH**

January 22, 2019

Regular Meeting of Council

**Members Present:** Paul Shaner, Chad Rager, Robin Payne-Main, Cynthia Morris and Andrew Miklos

**Absent:** Julius Brown and Gregory Huschak

**Also Attending:** Solicitor Krisha DiMascio and Mayor Barry Boucher

R**ecorded by:** Pamela Sharp, Secretary

**Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

The regular meeting of Council was called to order at 7:20-PM by Council President Paul Shaner. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. President Shaner stated that, prior to the Council meeting, Council members met in an executive session to discuss personnel matters. In addition, the meeting is being recorded for the purpose of minute-taking.

**VISITORS**

**Gabe Nowak** asked for the status of the updated zoning map. Solicitor DiMascio responded that Council authorized Mackin Engineering to update the zoning map based on the Planning Commission’s recommendations. Once this has been done, the zoning map changes will go to the County for a 30-day comment period. After the comment period, notices will go out to the surrounding community, and Council will need to advertise a public hearing concerning the proposed zoning map changes. Once the hearing has taken place, Council will vote on the zoning map changes. If all goes well, the zoning map changes could be officially updated at the end of March 2019.

**Gabe Nowak** stated that he spoke with the Building Inspector, Mark Reis, regarding his potential plans for the lot that he recently purchased, located at 312 Market Street, and he wanted to share this information with Council. He said that he was thinking about installing an antique kitchen rail car on the lot and opening up a take-out restaurant, similar to the Red Caboose. If Council is amenable to this, he will purchase the 9’ x 40’ rail car and completely refurbish it to create a unique and appealing take-out restaurant. Solicitor DiMascio said that he will need to make the rail car a permanent structure that is fixed to the ground, rather than a restaurant on wheels, in order to comply with the Borough’s zoning requirements. By doing so, the rail car will be subject to all building codes for new construction. She also recommended that he submit his plans to the Planning Commission so that issues such as parking and ingress/egress can be settled prior to construction. Mr. Nowak said that he will definitely do so.

**Jerry LaFrankie** said that he came to the August 2018 regular meeting of Council to complain about a property located at 511 5th Avenue, which is still in violation of the Borough’s property maintenance ordinance, along with several other properties in the neighborhood. Solicitor DiMascio asked whether Mr. LaFrankie had submitted a written complaint to the Borough Secretary about this property because court cases without written complaints from residents are not as successful as cases *with* written resident complaints. He said that he had not done so. A. Miklos said that he and Vice President Rager will drive out to that location to look at the property. He added that there are several other properties in the area that need some attention as well. The Borough cannot fix everything overnight, but it can slowly chip away at these problem properties - one at a time.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by C. Morris and seconded by A. Miklos to approve the Minutes of the December 18, 2018, regular meeting of Council. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

A. Miklos asked the Borough Secretary for an explanation of the monthly Comcast invoice in the amount of $124.85 for 1103 Hayden Blvd. She responded that this is an invoice for internet service to the police license plate cameras that are out on Hwy 51. He disputed this and said that the person at Comcast with whom he spoke told him that this invoice was for a camera that is attached to a pole on the Elizabeth Bridge as requested by somebody from Security Solutions. A discussion followed which yielded no consensus. A. Miklos said to go ahead and pay the bill since it is due, but he wants to continue to look into this. Solicitor DiMascio suggested that, since the Borough has a franchise agreement with Comcast, maybe he could persuade Comcast to provide the camera internet services at little or no cost to the Borough.

The Borough Secretary said that the 4th quarter donation to the Elizabeth Borough Volunteer Fire Company in the amount of $5,000 was inadvertently omitted from the list of payables. She asked Council to consider authorizing payment of this expense, in addition to the other items on the payables report. A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by C. Morris to approve the payments of the invoices on the Payables Report dated 01/18/19, including the 4th quarter donation to the Elizabeth Borough Volunteer Fire Company in the amount of $5,000. **Those in favor: R. Payne-Main, C. Morris, Vice President Rager, and President Shaner.** **Those opposed: None. Those abstaining: A. Miklos abstained because one of the expenses being authorized is a reimbursement to him for a Public Works expense that he paid. Motion passes 4:1.**

**REPORTS**

**Mayor Report**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **TOTAL CALLS 259** | | | | |
| Alarms | 3 |  | DUI | 1 |
| Animal complaint | 2 |  | Ordinance complaint | 1 |
| Assist other agencies | 12 |  | Motor vehicle crash | 16 |
| Assist EMS | 11 |  | PFA violations | 2 |
| Assist Fire | 2 |  | Property issues | 2 |
| Burglary | 0 |  | Suspicious persons | 7 |
| Criminal mischief | 3 |  | Theft | 2 |
| Disabled vehicles | 3 |  | Traffic complaint | 5 |
| Domestic | 5 |  | Traffic stops | 126 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Traffic & Non-Traffic Citations** | | | |  |
| **Traffic Stops** | **126** |  | **Citations Issued** | **40** |
| Driving w/o insurance | 1 |  | Inspection violations | 0 |
| Driving w/o a license | 0 |  | Obedience to traffic controls | 13 |
| Driving w/ suspended license | 2 |  | Speeding | 8 |
| Driving at unsafe speed | 5 |  | Stop signs | 2 |
| Emissions violations | 4 |  | Registration violation | 5 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criminal Arrests 5** | |
| DUI | 2 |
| Drug investigation | 1 |
| Possession | 2 |

Mayor Boucher said that he is looking into the possible assignment of a police officer to handle property maintenance violations such as high weeds and junk cars.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **12/15/18 - 01/18/19** | | | | |
| **Bank Account** | **Bank Balance** | **Income** | **Expense** | **Ending Balance** |
| General Fund | 46,052.00 | 115,012.66 | 87,667.41 | 73,397.25 |
| Payroll | 186.37 | 36,375.00 | 36,368.86 | 192.51 |
| Special Projects | 621.74 | - | - | 621.74 |
| K-9 Fund | 12,907.36 | 1,450.00 | 712.25 | 13,645.11 |
| Liquid Fuels | 24,545.81 | 4.55 | 8,331.96 | 16,218.40 |
| Totals | 84,313.28 | 152,842.21 | 133,080.48 | 104,075.01 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Loans** | **Maturity Date** | **Loan Amount** | **Principal Paid** | **Balance Owed** |
| FCB - TAN | 12/31/2019 | 75,000.00 | - | 75,000.00 |
| PNC - Car Loan | 5/1/2019 | 39,500.00 | 36,638.40 | 2,861.60 |
| PNC - Mortgage | 3/31/2023 | 115,000.00 | 27,902.49 | 87,097.51 |
| PNC - K-9 Car Loan | 2/4/2021 | 55,431.52 | 21,196.22 | 34,235.30 |
| Totals | - | 284,931.52 | 85,737.11 | 199,194.41 |

A motion was made by R. Payne-Main and seconded by C. Morris to accept the Treasurer’s Report dated January 18, 2019. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

**Solicitor**

Solicitor DiMascio said that Council needs to vote to ratify the settlement of Case #2:2017 CV00008. A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by A. Miklos to ratify the settlement of Case #2:2017 CV00008. **Those in favor: R. Payne-Main, C. Morris, A. Miklos, Vice President Rager, and President Shaner.** **Those opposed: None. All in favor, motion was carried.**

Solicitor DiMascio said that, with regard to the same action, Council needs to vote to ratify that Council Member Andrew Miklos was authorized to execute the Council-authorized settlement documents on behalf of the Borough of Elizabeth. A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by C. Morris to ratify that Council Member Andrew Miklos was authorized to execute the Council-authorized settlement documents on behalf of the Borough of Elizabeth. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

Solicitor DiMascio said Council needs to vote to establish a panel of interviewers for the Chief of Police position to be made up of law enforcement professionals for the first round of interviews. A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by A. Miklos to establish a panel of interviewers for the Chief of Police position to be made up of law enforcement professionals for the first round of interviews.

**All in favor, motion was carried.**

Solicitor DiMascio said that Council needs to vote to invite a West Elizabeth public official to attend the second round of interviews for the Chief of Police position, along with the Mayor and the Council members of the Borough of Elizabeth. A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by C. Morris to invite a West Elizabeth public official to attend the second round of interviews for the Chief of Police position, along with the Mayor and the Council members of the Borough of Elizabeth. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

A motion was made by A. Miklos and seconded by C. Morris that all purchases and spending for the Police Department, not including work schedules and gasoline purchases, exceeding $100, must be pre-approved by the Mayor. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

A motion was made by C. Morris and seconded by Vice President Rager that all repairs, service and purchases for police vehicles shall be performed at the closest available, qualified facility as approved by Council. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

A motion was made by A. Miklos and seconded by C. Morris that all Elizabeth Borough Police Department vehicles shall be kept at the Elizabeth Borough Police Station when not in use by the officer on duty or being compensated in an official capacity. Police vehicles are not to be used as transportation to and from work with the exception of the Borough’s one and only K-9 Officer, Garrett Kimmell. Officer Kimmell may use the Police Department K-9 vehicle for the purpose of transporting the K-9 to and from work. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

**Building Inspector Report**

President Shaner said that everybody should have received the December 2018, Building Inspector report. Any questions about the report should be directed to the Building Inspector through the Borough Secretary.

**Animal Control**

No report.

**COMMITTEES**

**Finance and Budget**

Vice President Rager said that the Public Works Department needs a new truck. He asked the Borough Secretary how much money she put under Debt Service in the 2019 budget for a new truck. She said that she did not remember the amount. Vice President Rager asked her to explain what the dollar amount of $38,000 under Debt Service Principal consists of. She stated that the Debt Service Principal is the total amount that the Borough anticipates spending on principal loan payments this year. This amount includes the Borough’s mortgage of over $1,128 per month, and the outstanding PNC Bank car loan with a monthly payment of approximately $720/month. Vice President Rager said that, based on this information, there is ample money in the Debt Service budget to cover the cost of monthly loan payments for a new Public Works truck. He will obtain vehicle bids for Council to review at the next meeting.

Solicitor DiMascio said that Council will be reviewing the recent report from the delinquent real estate tax collector to try to determine how much of it is actually collectable. Also, Council is going to begin a program to address blighted properties in the Borough. The Blight Program will map out the blighted properties, as well as the properties with ordinance violations. Council can then cross reference the Blight map with the real estate tax delinquencies to see if there are any correlations. Council will be starting this program within the next couple of months.

President Shaner said that, a couple of hours ago, he spoke with Representative Michael Puskaric and his colleague Amanda Hall regarding potential projects for the Borough. They are extremely forward-thinking regarding the future of Elizabeth Borough as a business center magnate by taking advantage of the Highway 51 corridor and the River, and they want to expand on this. Representative Puskaric went so far as to say that the Highway 51 North off-ramp, which currently leads you out of town, could be altered to divert this traffic so that it leads you through the heart of town - down 2nd Avenue. Representative Puskaric also discussed the benefits of strategic signage, especially signage placed near the Highway 51 off-ramp. He mentioned that an Elizabeth Borough sign showing some of the businesses and attractions that the Borough has to offer could bring in visitors as well new businesses.

**Public Safety**

This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

**Public Works**

A. Miklos said that he has documentation listing all of the work projects that were performed by the Public Works Department going back to December 19, 2018. The Public Works employees, Wayne Lewis and Devon Brown, keep track of the work that they do on a daily basis. Wayne Lewis is working out well and is doing a great job for the Borough. He added that Wayne believes that the Street Department is the face of the Borough.

A. Miklos said that they are having issues with the salt spreader. There is an electronic part on the salt spreader that has a motor in it to drive the acceleration of the motor and the choke mechanism, which may need to be replaced. The cost for this part is approximately $450, so he wanted to give Council a heads-up.

Vice President Rager said that on February 1, 2019, there will be a conference call regarding the merger of the Elizabeth Borough and the West Elizabeth Borough fire departments. Since the borough secretary is the main point of contact for the DCED, she will be a part of the conference call.

**Parks and Recreation**

R. Payne-Main said that she is currently working on this year’s *Kid’s Day* event.

R. Payne-Main reminded everybody that she would like Council to hold a Town Hall meeting sometime in the spring.

**Ordinance**

No report.

**Personnel**

No report.

**Economic Development**

No report.

**Planning**

C. Morris said that there are some programs out there to assist municipalities with refurbishing blighted properties or tearing down properties that are beyond repair. Planning Commission members are going to look into these programs to see how the Borough of Elizabeth may benefit from them.

President Shaner said that Harry Faulk from Representative Puskaric’s office recommended that the Borough apply for CITF funding this year.

President Shaner said that he received some information from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) regarding available grants for 2019. The DCNR recreation and conservation grants program will be accepting applications from January 22 to April 10, 2019. This grant program provides funding for community parks and recreation, land conservation, watershed protection, watershed restoration/rivers implementation, and trails.

Solicitor DiMascio said that there have been rumors about the new owners of the old St. Michael’s school, saying that they will be using the property for storage. This property is not zoned for a storage facility. Mayor Boucher said that he knows the people who purchased this property, and it is his understanding that this property is not going to be used for storage.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business before this Council, a motion was made by R. Payne-Main and seconded by A. Miklos that the meeting be adjourned at 8:23-PM. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

**I enter these Minutes into the public record having been duly recorded and accepted at a public meeting.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Pamela J. Sharp, Secretary**