**BOROUGH OF ELIZABETH**

July 23, 2019

Regular Meeting of Council

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

**Absent:** Gregory Huschak, Andrew Miklos, and Julius Brown

**Also Attending:** Police Chief William Sombo, 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 7:00-PM by Council President Paul Shaner. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. President Shaner asked for a moment of silence for the Pittsburgh police officer who was killed in the line of duty. President Shaner stated that, prior to the Council meeting, Council members met in an executive session to discuss personnel matters. Also, the meeting is being recorded for the purpose of minute-taking.

**VISITORS**

**Jocelyn Smrdel** stated that there is a very big tree in front of her house on Center Avenue near Ekin. The tree roots are so large that they have actually pushed through the concrete sidewalk. This has created a hazardous situation for pedestrians. They would like to fix their sidewalk, but they cannot do so until the tree and the roots have been removed. She said that she is not sure if she is allowed to completely eliminate the sidewalk and grade her front yard to the road. Solicitor DiMascio responded that, per the zoning ordinance, she must replace the sidewalk to where it currently is located, and the property owners are responsible for maintaining their sidewalks.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by C. Morris and seconded by Vice President Rager to approve the Minutes of the June 25, 2019, regular meeting of Council. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

**PAYMENT OF BILLS**

President Shaner said that Council wishes to add the following two invoices to the Payables Report: (1) Invoice #00117629-0 from Markl Supply Company in the amount of $471.23, and (2) Invoice #YCG from PSI Prestige Services in the amount of $496.25. A motion was made by R. Payne-Main and seconded by C. Morris to authorize the payment of the bills on the Payables Report dated 7/19/19, as well as the invoice from Markl Supply Company in the amount of $471.23, and the invoice from PSI Prestige Services in the amount of $496.25. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by R. Payne-Main to pay $25,000 against the current TAN. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

**REPORTS**

**Mayor Report**

Mayor Boucher stated that he has been approached by a former Merchant Marine about getting a new Merchant Marine flag for the Veteran’s Memorial. A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by R. Payne-Main to authorize the purchase of a Merchant Marine flag for the Veteran’s Memorial at a cost not-to-exceed $150. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

Mayor Boucher said that the Elizabeth Borough Volunteer Fire Company with its Swift Water Rescue team worked for two straight days with very little rest during the heavy weekend storms. He said that the Borough is fortunate to have them, and they did an awesome job. President Shaner agreed and said that the Fire Department is comprised of a truly impressive group of men and women.

Mayor Boucher said that the police department budget is on track this year. In fact, they are running a little under budget. Mayor Boucher thanked Police Chief Sombo for his leadership.

President Shaner read the following Treasurer’s Report:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **06/22/19 - 07/19/19** | | | | |
| **Bank Account** | **Bank Balance** | **Income** | **Expense** | **Ending Balance** |
| General Fund | 86,734.49 | 246,799.20 | 134,134.58 | 199,399.11 |
| Payroll | 70.23 | 24,975.50 | 24,622.21 | 423.52 |
| Special Projects | 97,496.89 | - | - | 97,496.89 |
| K-9 Fund | 422.47 | 666.64 | - | 1,089.11 |
| Liquid Fuels | 63,252.24 | 12.16 | 40,914.00 | 22,350.40 |
| Totals | 247,976.32 | 272,453.50 | 199,670.79 | 320,759.03 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Loans** | **Maturity Date** | **Loan Amount** | **Principal Paid** | **Balance Owed** |
| FCB - TAN | 12/31/2019 | 75,000.00 | 25,000.00 | 50,000.00 |
| PNC - Mortgage | 3/31/2023 | 115,000.00 | 33,263.70 | 81,736.30 |
| PNC - K-9 Car Loan | 2/4/2021 | 55,431.52 | 32,281.28 | 23,150.24 |
| Totals | - | 245,431.52 | 90,544.98 | 154,886.54 |

A motion was made by C. Morris and seconded by R. Payne-Main to accept the Treasurer’s Report dated July 19, 2019. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

**Solicitor**

Solicitor DiMascio said that most of her report was given to Council during the executive session. At last month’s meeting, Council authorized an ordinance for the vacation of three paper streets with regard to the Elizabeth Borough Municipal Authority pump station project. Also at last month’s meeting, the ordinance to update the zoning map was authorized by Council.

Solicitor DiMascio asked Gabriel Nowak, who was in the audience, if he was having any issues with his current construction project. Mr. Nowak said that he received an email from Mark Reis stating that there appears to be a zoning issue with the train car portion of his project. Solicitor DiMascio said that she received the same email. She said that she will contact Mark Reis first thing tomorrow to make sure that everybody is on the same page.

**Building Inspector Report**

President Shaner said that everybody should have received the May-June 2019, Building Inspector report. Any questions about the report should be directed to the Building Inspector through the Borough Secretary.

**Animal Control**

None.

**COMMITTEES**

**Finance and Budget**

A motion was made by C. Morris and seconded by Vice President Rager to advertise that the Borough is in the process of applying for a line of credit, with the loan amount to be determined. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

President Shaner said that Steel Rivers COG notified the Borough that the grant application filed for the Plum Street Improvement Project Phase 6 has been approved for CITF funding in the amount of $100,000. There is a 1% or $1,000 grant origination fee. The Borough’s engineer will need to provide the COG with a reduced scope of work, as well as a budget itemizing the work components to be completed. Vice President Rager said that this project is going to be used to incorporate improvements from Plum Street to Water Street. A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by C. Morris to accept the CITF grant funding in the amount of $100,000, with a 1% ($1,000) grant origination fee, for the Plum Street Improvement Project Phase 6. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

**Public Safety**

Police Chief Sombo said that part-time Police Officer Connor Helinski submitted his letter of resignation. He has found a full-time position with another police department. He added that Officer Helinski was a very good police officer, and he will be missed. A motion was made by R. Payne-Main and seconded by Vice President Rager to accept the resignation of part-time Police Officer Connor Helinski. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

Police Chief Sombo said that the new phone system has been installed. There is one final switch that needs to be incorporated in order to complete the process. The updated computers are all in, but they will not be installed until the new switch comes in, which should be sometime next week.

Police Chief Sombo said that the 2014 Ford sustained approximately $1,400 in damages to the passenger side rear window and window frame. The Borough has a $1,000 deductible. A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by C. Morris to approve the payment of the Borough’s $1,000 collision deductible for the repairs on the 2014 Ford. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

Police Chief Sombo asked for Council’s approval to allow him to apply for a Firehouse Subs grant to acquire new portable police radios. There is an application fee of $100. A motion was made by C. Morris and seconded by Vice President Rager to authorize Police Chief Sombo to apply for a Firehouse Subs grant, including the payment of the $100 application fee, for the purpose of acquiring new portable radios for the police department. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

Police Chief Sombo presented the July 2019 Chief’s Report, for June 25, 2019, through July 23, 2019.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monthly Complaint Report 06/25/19 thru 07/23/19** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Alarms | 7 |  | Animal Complaint | 0 |  | Assault | 7 |  | Assist EMS | 10 |
| Assist police | 11 |  | Assist fire | 9 |  | Assist citizen | 7 |  | Burglary | 2 |
| Criminal mischief | 2 |  | Disorderly conduct | 3 |  | Disabled vehicle | 5 |  | Domestic | 2 |
| DUI | 3 |  | Harassment | 5 |  | Hazardous conditions | 6 |  | Local ordinance | 5 |
| Meetings | 3 |  | Missing persons | 1 |  | Motor vehicle crash | 6 |  | Other | 11 |
| Patrol | 0 |  | Property | 2 |  | Public drunkenness | 0 |  | Suspicious person | 4 |
| Thefts | 6 |  | Traffic complaints | 4 |  | Traffic stops | 28 |  | Warrants | 1 |
| Weapons calls | 1 |  | Welfare check | 4 |  |  |  |  | **TOTAL:** | 155 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Calls for service: | 180 |  | Traffic citations: | 11 |
| Criminal arrests: | 14 |  | Traffic warnings: | 15 |
| Traffic stops: | 28 |  | Drug arrests: | 2 |

President Shaner said that he has been receiving a lot of positive feedback from residents regarding the increased police presence in the Borough.

Police Chief Sombo said that the warranty for the 2014 Ford has expired.

**Public Works**

Vice President Rager said that Council Member Andrew Miklos wanted him to update Council on the repairs to the 2007 Ford F550 truck. The repairs, which included new brakes and new rotors, were done by Jim Shorkey Auto for $1,931.62. Vice President Rager passed around photographs showing the rust and the worn-out auto parts. He said that these types of vehicle repairs have never been done to this truck, so the damage was rather extensive.

Vice President Rager said that Andy Miklos is asking Council to authorize the purchase of a battery charger for the Public Works Department. The existing charger no longer works. A. Miklos obtained a couple of estimates for a new charger, and the one that he would like to purchase costs $125.99. A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by C. Morris to authorize the purchase of a new battery charger for the Public Works Department at an amount not-to-exceed $130. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

Vice President Rager said that both the 2014 and the 2016 Fords had recalls that needed to be fixed. The 2014 Ford had issues with the catalytic converter, and the 2016 Ford had issues with the rear suspension. Both vehicles have been fixed at no cost to the Borough.

Vice President Rager said that a couple of trees were blown down at Duke Park (now known as Jacob’s Park) as a result of the weekend storms. The Public Works Department will be removing these fallen trees later this week. There may have also been some damage to the new “Jacob’s Park” sign.

Vice President Rager said that the weeds and vegetation are being sprayed down at the barge, down at the waterworks, and in the area of Polk and Cemetery.

Vice President Rager said that the new Public Works employee is working out very well.

**Parks and Recreation**

R. Payne-Main said that the annual Kid’s Day event is being held on Saturday, August 3rd, from Noon until 4-PM, at Jacob’s Park. Several churches will be joining the Borough this year with games, prizes and a snow cone machine, and there is going to be a bike rodeo, a petting zoo, and face painting. The fire fighters are going to have a special fire trailer to help kids learn about fire safety.

**Riverfest**

Vice President Rager reminded everybody that the annual Riverfest event is happening this weekend.

**Ordinance**

None.

**Personnel**

None.

**Economic Development**

Solicitor DiMascio said that she spoke with PA Representative Puskaric regarding the multi-model transportation grant that Council voted on at last month’s regular meeting for the purpose of constructing a parking lot in the Central Business District. He told her that this particular grant is not really suited for this type of project. He did mention that he has some funding available from the proceeds of State gambling income which the Borough could use for a parking lot project. As long as the project can be shown to be a “growth” project which will help to draw people and businesses to town, then the Borough will qualify for these State funds. Representative Puskaric suggested that the Borough may want to think about getting funds for scooter rentals at the dock. These could be used by people who arrive in town on a boat and need some type of transportation to get around town. Solicitor DiMascio said that, if the Borough is interested, then this money will be given to the Borough as long as it is used to fund a growth project. She added that this money is immediate – it is not something to be used for a long-term project. Solicitor DiMascio suggested that these funds could also be used to pay for the demolition of an old, abandoned property on which a new parking lot could be constructed in the Central Business District. A motion was made by Vice President Rager and seconded by R. Payne-Main to contact Representative Puskaric about a growth project in the Borough for which these State funds could be used. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

Solicitor DiMascio said that she will contact Representative Puskaric’s office first thing tomorrow.

**Planning Commission**

C. Morris said that the Planning Commission needs to fill the vacancy that was created when former member Garrett Kimmell moved out of the Borough. She has received three letters of interest for this position, and two of the interested parties were in the audience: Gerald LaFrankie and Jocelyn Smrdel. Solicitor DiMascio asked the Borough Secretary whether there were any openings on the Zoning Committee. She responded that, as far as she knew, all three residents who are on the Zoning Committee are still active, but she is not aware of the term expiration dates for the current members, Gene Love, Stephen Surmick and Joe Muenzer. Solicitor DiMascio said that we should reach out to the Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor, Amy Schrempf, to get a list of the current members and their term expiration dates.

Solicitor DiMascio asked Ms. Smrdel and Mr. LaFrankie whether either one would be interested in serving on the Zoning Committee if there were a vacancy. Ms. Smrdel said that she would be interested. Mr. LaFrankie said that his preference is to serve on the Planning Commission. He then asked if Council was going to appoint somebody this evening to fill the vacancy on the Planning Commission. Solicitor DiMascio suggested that Council should make a motion to appoint somebody to fill the remainder of Garrett Kimmell’s term on the Planning Commission. At the next meeting, Council will likely have the terms of the Zoning Committee members, and it can then discuss appointments to the Zoning Committee. A motion was made by C. Morris and seconded by R. Payne-Main to appoint Gerald LaFrankie to fill out the term of former Planning Commission member Garrett Kimmell, who was appointed on June 26, 2018, for a four-year term. **All in favor, motion was carried.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

President Shaner said that Council received a letter from *Grow Pittsburgh* about the possibility of applying for a community garden grant through Allegheny County Economic Development. The grant application for a spring 2020 garden is due by October 1, 2019. The mission of *Grow Pittsburgh* is to teach people how to grow food and to promote the benefits that gardens bring to our neighborhoods. Solicitor DiMascio added that the Borough will need prove that there is broad community support for the garden, and it will also need to have a committed local corporate partner in order to be eligible.

Police Chief Sombo said that, when you are coming off of Highway 51 South, if you look up at the PNC Bank building, there used to be a painted sign on the building. PNC Bank told him that, if the Borough is interested, the bank is willing to allow the Borough to use the space to design a new painted sign that might attract visitors to our town. Solicitor DiMascio said that this is a good spot for the Borough to put up a “Welcome to Elizabeth” sign. President Shaner said that maybe this sign could be used to tell people what types of businesses are in town. Solicitor DiMascio said that the Borough needs to be careful about what goes on that sign because it should not be picking and choosing certain businesses to be advertised. Although, in order to defray the cost of paying for the sign to be painted, the Borough could sell space on the sign to local businesses.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business before this Council, a motion was made by President Shaner and seconded by Vice President Rager that the meeting be adjourned at 8:05-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**