

**BOROUGH OF MORTON**

**AGENDA MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 24-2021**

**VIA ZOOM**

The agenda meeting for February was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Council President, Michelle Miller. The Pledge of Allegiance was called to order and then Roll was called. The following was roll call response: Michelle Miller-present, John Miller-present, Michele Roberts-present, Robert McGrath-present, Hiele Hodnett-present, Joseph Boylan-present, Douglass Eager-present, and Mayor App-present. Also present: Kristin Acquarola-Tax Collector, Solicitor Ewald, Chief Laspina.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA**

Ms. Miller mentioned that the agenda should've been posted on the website, and hopes it will be in the future.

**PUBLIC BULDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Ms. Miller reported that work at Sycamore and Country Lane has started this week; digging is happening and drains are being put in and plantings will be placed. By next week we should see the trees planted.

Ms. Miller stated that the recent snow removal was done well, she did hear that Waverly Avenue was a mess one evening, but there is only so much you can cover and so much that can be done; it depends on where the sun falls.

Mr. McGrath stated that we have added some more sidewalk and a path to the borough and we may need to add them to the list of maintenance. Ms. Miller stated that people were using the walkway into the woods, and we should have the sidewalk cleaned between McGrath's property and the woods, and the walkway through the woods.

Ms. Roberts asked where we were at with the memorial or signage with Mr. Rice Mr. McGrath stated we are in process, as of yesterday he was looking into the red paint to match color of the train station. He stated he would be speaking with Mr. Poole to actually order the signs. Ms. Roberts stated she didn't want us to miss the opportunity to honor him.

Ms. Miller stated that in the building we are cleaning up closets to empty old files. She stated she and Mr. Cimino had begun the process and welcomed any who would like to volunteer, as there is a process to removing old files.

Mr. Boylan reported that the sidewalk area in front of the recycling igloos needs to be shoveled as the igloos are hard to reach due to the snow.

**FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION**

Mr. Boylan had no report. Kristin Acquarola reminded everyone that if you have not paid your 2020 taxes you now have to go to the Delaware County Tax Claim Bureau to pay.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

### Process to purchase Police Car

Mr. Miller began by asking a few questions. 1) what has been the policy on buying the police car, and escrowing the money, and what has the borough done in the past?

Mr. Poole answered there is no policy, but the practice has been that we put \$6000 in the budget each year and this is then transferred to the capital reserve. Right now, we have \$33,661; and explained the process; we have one vehicle that is under lease purchase – 2019 Durango. There is a yearly lease payment that will be made this year, but is in the budget. When we go to get a new car, this 1<sup>st</sup> year's payment would come from capital reserve. The existing lease purchase is budgeted for and taken out of the current budget.

2) The audit that Mr. Boylan was talking about, if this money is budgeted and put aside, how does this audit effect this purchase? Mr. Boylan answered that he saw two separate issues that eventually have to come together. The first issue is we make a practice of budgeting a certain amount of money to go into the escrow account and even it out over certain number of years so that when we are ready to purchase, we can just write the check. He was concerned about some large budget items that we were short on such as Mercantile taxes; so before we purchase, we should see where we stand at the end of 2020. 3) To Chief Laspina – he questioned why this car is needed at this time, when we are down one officer, and have five cars in service. Chief stated we are down officers, but not shifts, and the cars work 16 hours a day and are down 8 hours, and this has been the practice since he has worked here. Mr. Boylan responded that he opened the escrow account Commerce Bank, and we did get a new police car every 3 years instead of every 2. What has happened in the 15 year since, whether there was discussion to move from a 3-year cycle to a 2-year cycle, and also there were not leases involved but 100% purchase; this was another reason why we went every 3 years, as it was just too expensive at the time. Chief also stated that the police study indicated that this was a good practice.

Mr. Miller stated he, the Chief, and the Mayor also met and discussed other revenues that are coming into the borough, and they are also looking into the contract with Rutledge.

Ms. Hodnett asked for clarity on the capital fund, and Mr. Poole stated this can be used for any purpose, but are to be kept separate. Mr. Boylan added that he is not proposing that we use the money for the police car for any other purpose. It may make sense to go ahead and get bids and start the process, we may be in position to make the decision.

### Defibrillators

Ms. Miller then brought up the subject of defibrillators and asked if the department had one. Chief stated we do not have them at this time. Ms. Miller asked if there was a grant program to get on as she stated one reason she brought this up was a relative was at a football game in Indiana, and a state police officer saved his life because one was in his car, and she feels the police department should have one and have one in the building. Ms. Miller also brought up the Tag Reader.; and the good work it has done. Chief stated they are expensive and cost over \$10,000 - this was obtained with a Homeland Security Grant. She did ask if this paid for itself and asked if we have gotten back money off of it? The

chief advised that it is not about collecting money but about enforcement. She understood that the first time it was used, it turned out to be a small forfeiture. He stated this is very useful for the officers and makes the community safer. She continued if there was anything the committee or anyone could look into to assist the police department that the chief could reach out. Chief stated the readers are used for safety, and recently there was a shooting at Dave and Busters in Philadelphia, and our officers had the reader, made the stop, and got the person into custody and we are working with the city of Philadelphia on this matter.

#### Rutledge Police Contract

Mr. Boylan questioned if the Rutledge police contract was up for bid? Mayor App stated it is up for the year 2022, and he recently reached out to their mayor to see if he could find out bid information going forward. They currently had a four-year contract with Swarthmore. Chief mentioned that Morton did police Rutledge at one time.

Mr. Eagar stated that the Rutledge policing sounds like a win-win, but did question Mr. Boylan, the suggestion that we hold the funds to the following year? And if so, are we thinking of other big-ticket items we would have to cut so we don't look like we are piling up on the police force. Mr. Boylan agreed, and stated once the audit comes out, if it is nothing to worry about, we can move ahead, but if it is more on the bleak side, we will pull out the budget and put together suggestions in terms of cutting back or eliminating. Mr. Eagar questioned the chief the price of a brand-new police car; the chief answered that we normally get a price on three vehicles and look at our needs and meet with the public safety committee. Mr. Poole stated that the 2017 Charger was a little over \$33,000. Chief stated we do get rid of the other vehicle at auction and we would get that money back also. Ms. Miller asked if there was another brand of car instead of Dodge, as she said they have very bad repair rates. Chief stated they are driven by different officers, 13 or 14 people and idling and run all the time. It is hard to say that one is better than the other. We look at all manufacturers and see what works for us. Mr. Poole added that we do this purchase through CoStars, a State-run program. They are also packaged with certain items, certain models.

Mr. Miller made the Motion to begin the process on the purchase of the vehicle for the police department. Mr. Eagar seconded the Motion. Voice vote – 2 No's (Michelle Miller and Bob McGrath). Rest of council voted yes. 5 Yes – 2 No. Motion carried.

#### **COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Ms. Hodnett spoke about the availability of the Covid 19 vaccine. Spoke about the sites to sign up for to obtain the vaccine.

#### Blood Drive

Ms. Hodnett had a flyer for the blood drive and thanked Amanda from the State Rep's office. The drive will be March 15 from 2:00-7:00 p.m. at the Borough Hall. – the site to sign up is [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org). Ms. Hodnett encouraged all who were willing to donate plasma, are requested to sign up. Ms. Hodnett thanked Amanda, and the State Rep's office for their assistance.

Ms. Hodnett stated that their next meeting for Community Development would be held the 13<sup>th</sup> of April at 7:00 p.m.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH & SANITATION**

No report. Ms. Roberts reported that the sewer and trash bills have gone out.

## **LAW AND ORDINANCE**

Mr. Eagar had one items on the agenda- the update on the Zoning ordinance amendment, which was authorized to send to County Planning. Their response recommends approval. We will advertise this for the March 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. – this is in regard to driveways in front of twins.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

Ms. Miller reported that they met on Monday evening, an executive committee meeting, to discuss things with Covid and our financial situation, what we feel we can do this year, but we are going to meet again on March 8 to go over some things and a public meeting on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. We are trying to figure things out with the finances that are available.

### Sycamore woods

Ms. Miller stated the woods are turning out to be interesting, surprising number of people are walking through and enjoying. Mr. McGrath sent a text that he saw someone playing fetch wit their dog. This did not happen a year ago.

Ms. Hodnett questioned if this was a park, and it is to be open? Ms. Miller and Mr. McGrath stated that technically it's a walk through and not a park, it is not a dedicated park yet.

Discussion was held regarding opening the parks, plans in the works, and having meetings. Ms. Miller stated on March 8<sup>th</sup> we can finalize an opening process. Mayor stated he would be happy to attend and have the opening of the parks addressed.

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

Mr. Eagar discussed briefly the school opening plans.

Mario cimino – 46 S Morton – welcomed Mr. Lee, so happy to see his face on zoom. His other comment was a shout out to Lil Basil for their excellent Covid protocols.

Amanda Hammock – 36 Providence Road- Rep O'Mara has a telephone town hall tomorrow evening, and encouraged attendance.

Kristin Acquarola –as Tax Collector - gave everyone notice that the end of March is cut off for discount and encouraged everyone to pay as soon as possible due to the mail issues.

Michael Lee -123 W Sylvan Avenue – glad to be back on council, glad to see everyone, thank you for Mr. Cimino's shout out. Also having mail problems, and blamed the current post master general.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Roberts made a Motion to adjourn; and the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Preston, Secretary