

**BLOSSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
March 13, 2024**

The Council Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Jolene Hall. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attendance: President Jolene Hall, Vice-President Joshua Jones, Pro-Temp Kenneth Johnson
Council Members: Jill Nickerson, James Rakoski (Absent), Robert Bowens, Kallie Wickman, Mayor, Timothy Martin, Borough Solicitor, Patrick Barrett, Police Chief, Josh McCurdy, Borough Manager, George D. Lloyd, Borough Secretary, Cheryl Bubacz and School Representative, Kail Thompson.

Guests: Dawn Hull, Sam Rotella and Chad Riley – Southern Tioga School District, Susan Coole, Commissioner Shane Nickerson, Renee Carey – Northcentral PA Conservancy and Kristie Bowles from Tioga Publishing.

Renee reported that DEP and SRBC held their community meetings on February 22, 2024 at the Blossburg Fire Hall. The 2:00 pm session had about 70 people from the community and the 7:00 pm meeting had less than 10 people due to weather. The information presented regarding the AMD project was well received and many questions were answered. Some questions remain outstanding, but are being discussed among the parties. The permit application is close to completion pending the receipt of rights-of-way from landowners. Rights-of-way were sent to over 100 landowners.

Sam Rotella and Chad Riley – Superintendent of the Southern Tioga School District and Chairman of the Board of the Southern Tioga School District wanted to explain the outcome of the March 11, 2024 School Board Meeting and what it will mean to the Borough. Their April Meeting will provide additional information regarding the consolidation of the high schools and the infrastructure updates to the existing schools. Mr. Riley discussed an issue a neighboring community is having with Borough management regarding a consolidation in their area. The Council and Mayor whole heartedly stated that those types of issues would not be seen in Blossburg Borough. We will do everything in our power to work closely with the District.

A School Resource Officer (SRO) office in the school was discussed. Mr. Riley stated he was thrilled to see that the Borough is going to sponsor cadets who want to attend the municipal police officer training through local universities. That is a great way to attract and retain officers.

The Mayor and the Council explained that our doors are always open and Mr. Rotella and Mr. Riley were both welcome at anytime.

Susan Coole with Heart and Soul of Mansfield who recently received a grant to generate community involvement wanted to get acquainted with the Borough as we are noted for having great ideas for our communities. Jill Nickerson said we would be glad to help them.

Dawn Hull wanted to thank Mayor Martin for reaching out to the various businesses and individuals in the area to continue building our close-knit community. Mayor Martin thanked her for her kindness.

Minutes, Treasurer's Report, Bills, Police Report & Borough Manager's Report:

Minutes and monthly Reports were accepted as presented by Motion of Jill Nickerson, Second Kenneth Johnson. All in favor.

Mayor:

The Mayor had provided the Council members with maps showing drop-off and pick-up possibilities for the back of Toddler U and Head Start whose current locations are on Main Street. He reiterated that the traffic on Main Street and the number of children getting in and out of cars and on and off busses is very concerning to him. By utilizing the rear access points for both businesses, it would alleviate some of the traffic for picking up and dropping off children. The Mayor and Borough Manager will check the physical locations and report at the April meeting.

The Mayor and the Chief attended the recent in-service day at the School District. It was a poverty simulation and was very sad to see/hear what families go through to make ends meet. The Chief spoke and said that while most people only see the outside of a residence, he and his officers see the inside and they are very telling.

Commissioner Nickerson commented that the participation of the Mayor and the Chief resonated throughout the County and people who were present at the program are still commenting on the impact.

Police:

Jeff Perry completed his weapon certification and is set to start working the week of March 18, 2024. He will be working 16 hours one week and 32 hours the next week. He has received his badge, keys, uniforms and equipment.

At the reconvened meeting on February 26, 2024, Council agreed to proceed with Police Cadet sponsoring. There are two (2) dates in March and one (1) in April for testing for acceptance into the program at Mansfield University. The Chief would like to interview the five (5) candidates and select two (2) to proceed with the testing for the program. A Meeting of the Police Committee was scheduled for Monday, March 18th at 6:00 pm for interviews. Motion by Robert Bowens, Second by Joshua Jones to approve the two (2) candidates the Police Committee will recommend for the Cadet program and will ratify the same at the April Council meeting. All in Favor.

The Chief has two items to discuss:

Our Body Cameras are seven (7) years old and the software is no longer supported. Body cameras are usually purchased every five (5) years, however, we extended the initial five (5) year term to seven (7) years. The Chief received a quote from Axon, who is the representative of our existing cameras, for five (5) new cameras and software. The quote is \$29,719.40. The payment would be from the budgeted Act 13 monies. The body cameras are not editable. Once the camera is put on the docking station, the film is uploaded to the cloud. Other than the Chief, each individual officer can only view his/her

camera only. The Chief has full access as does the District Attorney. The Chief is super happy with the existing cameras and software and would like to stay with this system.

Our tasers are currently fourteen (14) years old and are obsolete. Currently we only have two (2) tasers for 3 officers. When Officer Perry starts next week, he and the Chief will share a taser. Additionally, taser cartridges are no longer available. The same company, Axon, has quoted five (5) tasers which would be model 7. The package quoted included the replacement of cartridges each time a cartridge is deployed for the term of the five (5) year contract. Each year, each officer must be re-certified with their taser and Officer Perry is a certified instructor. The quote for the new tasers is \$22,749.00. The State Police use the 7 taser and love them. The Borough would be utilizing the stand-off cartridges only rather than the one stand-off and one close quarters. Our policy may need to be modified regarding using stand-off cartridges only, however, that is not a problem. The funds for payment of the new tasers would also come from the budgeted Act 13 monies.

Motion by Jill Nickerson, Second by Kenneth Johnson to authorize the purchase of both the new body cameras, software and tasers from Axon. All in Favor.

Police Committee:

Meeting scheduled for March 18, 2024 at 6:00 pm to interview cadet applicants.

Borough Manager:

Nothing at this time.

Junior Council Person:

There is a 3x3 basketball tournament is this weekend to benefit the Ronald McDonald House. Kail also reported that he will be serving on the Tioga County Advisory Board. He was congratulated for this appointment.

VIBE:

The Community yard sale date was set for May 4, 2024. To get on the yard sale list contact Wendy Jones at 570-404-1226.

Planning Commission Report:

No Meeting.

Zoning Hearing Board:

No Meeting

Recreation:

The Rec Board approved the Tioga-Bradford Equipment Sale to be held on the Park August 22, 2024 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. The Chief suggested that any equipment brought to the Park the day/night before the sale be parked near the Borough Garage for security purposes. Motion by Kenneth Johnson, Second by Jill Nickerson to allow the equipment sale to be held on the Park. All in Favor.

The Board also approved that the pool prices from 2023 will be the same for 2024.

A new pool heater is being ordered and that purchase was approved to be paid for by the Swim Association.

Fire and Ambulance:

Minutes and status of the departments were received.

Library:

The Director of the Library provided the minutes from the last meeting as well as an update on the status of the Library. Tonight is the kick off of “Raise the Region” funding where funds donated during the next 30 hours will be matched in whole or in part by Blaise Alexander.

Street Committee:

Nothing.

Shade Tree Commission:

Nothing.

Budget:

Nothing at this time.

Blossburg Municipal Report:

The municipal authority is very busy. The sewer plant is just about completed. The plant should be running for testing purposes in April/May and possibly online and operational by June or July.

The Taylor Run generator will have a hard-start on March 18th and will run the wells for a period of time. The water will be fed back into the creek. Once the chemical dosage is correct, then DEP can come and inspect and hopefully we are up and running in May. Once Taylor Run is up and running, the Sportsmans’ Well media in the filters can be changed.

OLD BUSINESS:

LED Streetlights (April 2021): Waiting for Penelec to schedule the remaining work.

Project Goals for 2022: Project Goal Updates:

- a. **Sidewalk, Lighting and Signage for Island Park:** Waiting for Spring.
- b. **Island Park Restroom Replacement:** The restrooms were demolished on February 26, 2024. The new facility was laid out and the footers have been poured and the corner blocks were laid March 13, 2024. The blocks for the structure are on order and are about 3 weeks out.
- c. **Plaza Refurbishment:** Hold.

Blue Ridge Franchise Agreement: The Solicitor stated that he reviewed the Agreement and believe we should draft a letter to Blue Ridge to negotiate the renewal.

TCAB Meeting June 20, 2024: It was decided that the Meeting will be held on the Park and the menu will be a chicken BBQ dinner. Chickens will be prepared by Sleazy and the salads by the Bloss Holiday. The Secretary will contact Mary Wickman about desserts. A speaker will be determined at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Residents are seeing an increased number of stray cats again. A discussion will be started with the Tioga County Cat Project regarding their services.
2. The Cadet Sponsorship Agreement has been reviewed by the Police Committee and was recommended for adoption. Motion by Kenneth Johnson, Second by Joshua Jones to adopt the Cadet Sponsorship Agreement. All in Favor. The Chief noted that MOPTEC will reimburse the Borough 75% of the tuition paid for each cadet as well as 45% of the wages paid during the training of the cadet once the cadet has successfully completed the program and becomes certified.
3. The Revised Drug and Alcohol Policy was reviewed. This policy is for all employees, uniformed and non-uniformed. Motion by Jill Nickerson, Second by Kallie Wickman to adopt the revised policy. All in Favor.
4. The Attendance Policy for all employees, uniformed and non-uniformed, was reviewed. This is a three (3) stage meeting process to offer assistance if needed, etc. Motion by Kallie Wickman, Second by Robert Bowens to adopt the Attendance Policy. All in Favor.
5. Civil Service Rules and Regulations were reviewed. Motion by Kenneth Johnson, Second by Jill Nickerson to authorize the Solicitor to advertise the Rules and Regulations prior to adoption. All in Favor.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

The Mansfield TCAB meeting will be held on March 21, 2024. We have four (4) members attending.

The Solicitor called an executive session following adjournment to discuss legal matters. No action will be taken.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Kenneth Johnson, Second by Jill Nickerson to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 pm. All in Favor

Executive Session adjourned at 8:05 pm.