

CATAWISSA BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, February 8, 2016 6:30PM

CALL TO ORDER:

- Meeting was called to order by Council President Gary Steinruck.
- Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL:

- Present were Connie Benware, Doug Krum, Joe Benware, Gary Steinruck, Jay Roberts, Linda Kashner, Barb Reese, Borough Manager Roger Nuss, Mayor Frank "Jeff" Achy and Attorney Anthony McDonald.

READING OF MINUTES:

- **Linda Kashner made a motion** to dispense reading of and approve minutes of previous month's meeting, Joe Benware seconded the motion. All aye.
- Linda Kashner noted the minutes for both December meetings were not completed.

GUEST TO BE HEARD:

- Gail Hummer had documentation to give Gary Steinruck with meter readings for a borough resident. A complaint was made by Ms. Hummer about these readings and Council President, Gary Steinruck said he would check into it.

MAYOR: FRANK "JEFF" ACHY:

- Mayor Achy had nothing to report.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

- Borough Manager, Roger Nuss read a summary report of the Borough employee activities for the month of January.
- Roger gave a summary report of his activities for the month of January.
- Council President Gary Steinruck added that a decision would need to be made in the future as to whether the borough would proceed with the Senior Center or Rails to Trails projects. It was stated that at this time the borough cannot financially do both.

WATER

- Water Authority Superintendent Cindy Bachman had nothing to report.

CODE ENFORCEMENT:

- Code Enforcement Officer Brian Rhone reported that in the month of January they investigated twenty six issues, sent three letters, hung six door hangers, gave eleven verbal warnings, issued two permits and two citations.

Police:

- Catawissa Borough Police Chief Joshua Laidacker reported that during the month of January they responded to 204 (two hundred four) calls.
- 2010 SUV was sent in for repairs on the spotlights. Still having problems with the transmission.

- After meeting with the Borough's labor attorney, while examining the chiefs office it was recommended that a wall be added due to confidential documents that are kept in that office. A quote to complete the work was received.
- Policy was adopted for use of body cameras which are now being used by the officers. Notifications were sent out to the surrounding departments.
- Officer evaluations for the year 2015 have been completed
- Officer Hayes was honored in January at the Columbia County Commissioners Office where he was awarded the 2015 VOCA Award for his efforts with the victims of domestic violence.
- Officer Gallie was appointed as the department's Narcotics Officer due to volume of open cases in the area.
- Officer Hayes was appointed to the position of Special Victims Officer. He will deal with crimes of abuse.
- A letter was received from the Police Memorial Fund notifying the Chief that May 13, 2016 at the annual candlelight vigil in Washington DC, Assistant Chief Fox is going to be honored and his name engraved on the police memorial wall. It was requested that at least one representative from the department be present to accept the honor.
- After going over the amount of open cases the police department currently has, Chief Laidacker requested additional hours for part time officers.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

UTILITIES:

- Committee Chairperson Joe Benware reported in the month of January 139 (one hundred thirty nine) electric late notices, fifteen sewer late notices were sent out. Seven limiters were installed, two remain.
- Promissory notes were rewritten.
- Council was given a report of total past due amounts for electric and sewer.
- Council is considering writing off accounts that are four or more years past due. If these customers move back into the Borough they will not be able to get services until these amounts are paid in full.
- Doug Krum asked how many people that would be. The response from Linda Kashner and Joe Benware was a lot.
- Joe Benware stated that the Electric Committee has been meeting every Monday since the committee was formed and it is going to be a long process.
- Linda Kashner informed everyone that we will be getting a portion of money owed on one of the liens we currently have.
- Patty Hess asked Linda Kashner how much money we were talking about being past due. Linda responded with \$176,000.00.
- Gary would like to post names and past due amounts in the newspaper.
- Linda Kashner questioned Roger Nuss on the response to doing in a prior year. He stated there was virtually no response.

Parks & Recreation:

- Linda Kashner stated the committee has not met yet.

PROPERTY/BUILDING MAINTENANCE:

- Council President Gary Steinruck said most everything had been covered previously in the meeting.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION:

- Committee Chairperson Linda Kashner stated General Fund is in the red \$3,637.58, Electric Department is in the red \$6,029.71 and Sewer Department is in the red \$14,113.96. Linda said payroll isn't posted yet, but these numbers are pretty close.

UNION NEGOTIATION:

- Borough Manager Roger Nuss stated current negotiations are going on with the uniform officers at this time but could not give specific information.
- Council President Gary Steinruck announced the Union Negotiation Team is himself, Roger Nuss, Linda Kashner and Barbara Reese. They will handle all contract negotiations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Barbara Reese stated the committee has not met yet, but she has met with Fred Gaffney from the Columbia/Montour Chamber of Commerce regarding getting contractors interested in the vacant properties in the Catawissa.
- Barb informed everyone that the Bickert property was to go to judicial sale. If this happens none of the liens will be paid. A discussion between Linda Kashner and Attorney Anthony McDonald pursued and Attorney McDonald is going to go over the file.
- Barb requested permission for council to get a few bids for demolishing the Bickert property. If we could get this property for a low price it would solve part of the parking problem in town. Since this is a large property it could be split, half could be sold to make up the money it cost us and the other half could be used for parking. Brian Rhone spoke up and said he has already gotten an estimate on demolition cost which was \$18,000.00.
- Linda Kashner asked Roger Nuss to check with Miller Brothers to see if they would be interested in the Bickert property.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- **Motion made by Linda Kashner** seconded by Barbara Reese to discuss and adopt the 2016 budget. All aye.
- **Motion was made by Linda Kashner** seconded by Joe Benware to discuss and consider adopting Resolution 2016-01 lowering the base rates for residential, small power and large power by \$5.00 to \$15.02, \$21.38 and \$314.18 respectively, effective the end of February 2016 billing. After discussion **a motion was made by Linda Kashner** seconded by Dough Krum to table the previous motion until next month. All Aye.
- Council discussed Code Enforcement Appeals Board and request volunteers. Linda Kashner stated that she has one volunteer and was going to talk to another after the meeting. Barbara Reese also has two people in mind that she is going to talk to. Council asked if anyone in the audience was interested. Harold Kitchen asked if they could serve on more than one board to which no was the answer. Attorney Anthony McDonald would like to have them ready to be nominated at the next council meeting. Gary Steinruck asked if they needed to have any special training. Brian Rhone said they need to have experience or training in property maintenance.

- Status on phone line for power outage was discussed. Borough Manager Roger Nuss is currently working out the most feasible and economical option. After discussion Doug Krum suggested using Roger's Borough cell phone.
- **Motion made by Linda Kashner** seconded by Barbara Reese to discuss and consider approval of the new promissory note for outstanding utility bills. Borough Manager Roger Nuss will approve all promissory notes. **Linda amended her motion** to include all cost and fees on the note. After discussion vote was all aye.
- Council discussed Renter's Ordinance for the borough. More information was requested by Linda Kashner and Gary Steinruck. They would also like to have an open forum with landlords and residents.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Connie Benware made a motion** seconded by Jay Roberts to discuss the hours for Code Enforcement and consider approving the mileage rate of \$0.54 per mile. Council President Gary Steinruck stated that all raises were to be effective in 2016 and Code Enforcement was issued theirs in November 2015. That raise will be rescinded. James Haney will go back to the hourly rate of \$16.26 and Brian Rhone, \$13.00. After discussion **motion was amended by Connie Benware and Jay Roberts**. Motion passes 6-1. Jay Roberts was the only nay vote.
- **Linda Kashner made a motion** seconded by Barbara Reese to discuss and consider new purchasing policy and procedures for the borough. After discussion **a motion made by Doug Krum** seconded by Barbara Reese to accept the new purchasing procedures. All aye.
- **A motion was made by Barbara Reese** seconded by Connie Benware to discuss alterations to the police station. After discussion **a motion was made by Linda Kashner** seconded by Doug Krum to table this until next month. All aye.
- **Motion was made by Barbara Reese** seconded by Connie Benware to discuss the amended standard operating procedures for snow and ice call-out policy. After discussion vote was all aye.
- **Motion was made by Linda Kashner** seconded by Joe Benware to discuss and consider spending approximately \$450.00 to Diversified Technology for changing from all duplicate bill being sent to landlords to only past due bills being forwarded. After discussion motion passes, all aye.
- Council to discuss and consider identifiable lettering on the borough vehicles again. A discussion ensued. Linda Kashner would like all borough vehicles to be identified as well as all borough employees.
- Council to discuss and consider adopting the amended legal language for the AT&T cell tower contract due to prior inconsistencies with the original contract. This was tabled until next month due to a last minute phone call to Roger Nuss. Attorney Anthony McDonald would like time to review changes.
- **Motion was made by Doug Krum** seconded by Barbara Reese for council to discuss adding \$350 to all liens filed for costs and administrative expenses. After discussion Attorney Anthony McDonald suggested \$500. After amending the amount to \$500, motion passes. All aye.
- Discussion on Borough property vandalism. Vandalism must be reported to the Borough Manager who in turn will report it to the Police Department immediately. People will

be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. After discussion a **motion was made by Connie Benware** seconded by Doug Krum to accept this policy. All aye.

- **Motion made by Joe Benware** seconded by Barbara Reese to discuss additional part time hours for the Police Department. After discussion a **motion was made by Linda Kashner** seconded by Doug Krum to table this until next month so Chief Laidacker can put some figures together. All aye.
- Linda Kashner would like Lori George to printout budgets monthly for all departments.

FINANCE:

- **Joe Benware made a motion** seconded by Doug Krum to accept the payment of the bills as written. All aye.

GUEST TO BE HEARD:

- Patty Hess questioned why the PPAC charges are still so high on Borough electric bills. Borough Manager Roger Nuss tried to give an explanation on how this percentage is determined.
- Harold Kitchen said Council is inconsiderate because a man gave a bid to do a repair and after disclosing the amount it is rejected. Attorney Anthony McDonald clarified that this was not a bid, it was a phone quote. Attorney McDonald did agree that Harold's point was well made. Jay Roberts would like to give the bid to Wayne Levan, other council members would like to review the budget first.
- Harold Kitchen asked who made the recommendation to have a wall added to Chief Laidacker's office. Attorney Anthony McDonald answered the question and more discussion ensued.
- Chad Sokol questioned hours worked by our Public Works Department during snow storms. He was concerned about the streets not being plowed after the workers reached their hours limit. He asked if there was anyone on stand-by in the event that we have an extreme snow storm. After discussion the Public Safety Commission is going to meet to determine how to prevent this problem.
- Cindy Bachman asked for clarification on Code Enforcement hours. Gary Steinruck informed her that one Code Enforcement Officer will work 8am-12:30pm, the other 11:30am-4pm on Tuesday and Thursday.

ADJOURNMENT:

- **Connie Benware made a motion** seconded by Barbara Reese to adjourn.

MEETING ADJOURNED:

Submitted by:
Lori George
Administrative Assistant