

CATAWISSA BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 5, 2014 6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER:

- The meeting was called to order by Council Vice-President Forest McClintock
- The pledge of allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL:

- Present were: Forest McClintock, Connie Benware, Jay Roberts, Gary Steinruck, Joe Benware, Doug Krum, Mayor Frank “Jeff” Achy, Borough Manager Roger Nuss, Attorney Anthony McDonald.
- Scott Keefer was absent.

READING OF MINUTES:

- Joe Benware made the motion to dispense with the reading of and approve the minutes of the previous month’s meeting. Jay Roberts seconded the motion. All aye.

GUESTS TO BE HEARD:

- **Terry Eckart**, Police Chief for Montour Township, spoke with **Chief Eckart** is Corporal **Timothy Kiefaber**. “The reason we are here tonight, and I will only take a couple minutes of your time, we are here to offer Police coverage for Catawissa Borough. Now, just to give you a brief description about what we can offer you. If you are interested we would be happy to hold a public presentation later to go over all the plans details, questions and answers from both council and the public. First let me stress that our intent is not to put individuals out of a job. This isn’t what this is about. Actually our proposal if accepted would create positions in our own department. Because we would need to fill those spots so we can’t simply absorb your department. Because obviously MOPEC would not allow that because it was one department and another department also just as the same you would not be able to absorb our department because you would want to interview them, do background investigations things like that. So we would encourage every one of them to apply for those positions. In the past the Borough has looked into a regionalization study for police services. When that study came out it would have saved the Borough tax payers about \$40,000 per year. According to that and that was what about 3-4 years ago? The plan that we are looking at would save you even more money. Not only would it save you money but it would increase the number of officers on the street each day. Our proposal would save Catawissa Borough approximately \$100,000 per year from its current budget. On top of those savings you would not incur any unforeseen costs as far as hiring new officers. They range anywhere from \$4,000 -\$5,000 every time we hire a part time officer. Until you train them, pay for their hours of training, outfit them and everything else that goes along with it it’s between \$4,000 and \$5,000 depending on how fast they pick it up. We would be the ones to incur those costs. Again that is only for part-timers that costs that would not be on you that would be on us. All fine money written in the Borough would be your fine money. Checks are written to us. What we would do is turn it in and it automatically goes into an account come right back out the same as we do for Catawissa

Township. Come in and comes right back out it's a wash. You get issued a check for all your fine money. We wouldn't touch it. Other than issuing the check. If you accept the proposal you would be able to save, we are figuring, at least \$500,000 within 5 years. That's a lot of money to take the burden off of your tax payers. We would need some of your equipment. It would still be your equipment. We would of course need to use some of it so we would not incur all of those costs. It will be owned by you. Anything that we didn't need you could liquidate. In addition to saving money we would be able to offer you more police coverage. Our plan would put... We currently have 4 full time officers plus multiple part time officers. This plan would put 6 full time officers on the street. Several 32 hour part time officers and other part time officers that work there. And there would be an officer assigned to the Borough 24 hours a day. So let me make that clear somebody would be assigned to the Borough 24 hours a day. Now yes, they may have to run to assist with one municipality or another just as they do now or if they have paperwork. We will try not to have 2 officers in the station to do paperwork if one of the officers is in the station for paperwork for the Borough another officer will fill in. **Jay Roberts** asked if the officer assigned to the Borough would be on site. **Chief Eckart** stated "He'll be on site in the Borough that is correct". Unless he would have to go do paperwork at the station things like that. The other thing that you need to think about is that me as Chief of Police I live 5 minutes away from here. I have another officer that lives closer than that. So we are always going to be available. I will always be available. My cell phone and my office is an open door for you guys. If you needed something you wouldn't have to go through our board of supervisors you would just simply call me or call the duty officer. Aside from the economic savings we would also like to stress that we may not live within the Borough limits but we do consider this part of our community. The only thing separating our community is the body of water there. We would consider this part of ours. Any new lettering that would be done on the cars would have Catawissa Borough lettering on it. Currently the cars say "Protect and Serve" but we would like to change that if you accept this proposal we would like to change that to any new vehicles to "Proudly Serving" Catawissa Borough, Catawissa Township, Montour Township however it looks best laid out. Not necessarily in that order but your name would be on both sides of the car. We would also be willing to assist with your snow removals. Because again we are going to have multiple officers on duty at shift. You never know when a snow storm is coming. Right now it makes it tough to call a guy in and commit him to snow removal. We are going to have several people on a shift. So we are here. As long as we are not on a call we would be here to help you with that. Halloween Parade things like that. We feel we would be suitable and capable of this plan due to our highly trained professional officers. We have a brand new police station. And our current coverage area already surrounds the Borough so we are already driving through on a regular basis multiple times a day we are through here. Plus we eat over here every day I mean we are here all the time. So in summation I would like to reiterate that our intent is not to take job away from your current officers. Again we would need to hire officers. So we would encourage every one of them to apply. It is simply our desire to provide more police coverage to your Borough for substantially less amount of money. Limiting the burden to your tax payers and council. We would like to hold a separate public meeting if you have any interest at all. I'm not asking you to make a decision tonight or anything like that because I promise you there

are a lot of plans to go into place. We are also thinking would go in place on January 1, 2015. So that everyone has time to hash out an agreement if you are interested. But a public meeting would be nice. We could put a power point presentation together laying out the plans. Everybody would have the opportunity to come and ask questions or raise concerns. And if you are not interested you are not going to hurt our feelings. We are going to say "Okay thank you". We are still going to continue to provide support to your department that you currently have just like we do every day just like they do for us. I know Josh is upset with me right now and I don't want him to be. He would be one that we would like to see come over there. So if this is the plan that you would accept. If you have any other questions or anything like that you can contact me. Again we would like to see a public meeting set up. **Attorney McDonald** asked: "Chief, what prompted your appearance here tonight?" "Were you invited?" **Chief Eckart**: "We were not invited we you know the police department is the biggest burden on a municipalities budget. No matter what Municipality it is it is the biggest it's the largest burden. So what we would be able to do, we were thinking, How can we save some money in our municipality create a better bigger police department and still help everybody around us. We would save a little you would save a whole lot." **Attorney McDonald**: "All right but just so I'm clear. Nobody in the Borough invited you here tonight?" **Chief Eckart**: "That is correct we this is a department decision." **Attorney McDonald**: "Did you call the press?" **Chief Eckart**: "We did let the press know that we were going to be here. That is correct." "Because we want the public to have the opportunity to talk about it." **Jay Roberts** asked: "What would the costs be to us?" **Chief Eckart**: "Your cost would be your current budget is \$330,804 that is your current police budget we would knock \$100,000 off of that right off the top if it. That is not counting the fact that you don't have your hidden cost that you don't budget for which is your all of a sudden you lose an officer you have to hire a new one which is like I said \$4,000-\$5,000. I don't know whether you liability insurances are included in that payment or not or if anything else. You wouldn't have that. You would not have the liability of having the police department on your shoulders either." **Jay Roberts**: That was not my question "What is it going to cost us. **Chief Eckart**: "About \$200,000-\$230,804." **Forest McClintock** asked if **Chief Eckart** had all this written down in a proposal? **Chief Eckart** stated that he did not have a written proposal he wanted to see if you (council) had any interest at all before a written proposal was submitted. **Attorney McDonald** recommended to **Chief Eckart** to submit a written proposal to the police committee and have the committee bring it back to the board. Then if council is interested they should invite the Chief back at a time of Council choosing and invite him to talk about it (the proposal). **Forest McClintock** asked: What would be to stop our police department from coming to your township with the same type of proposal? **Chief Eckart**: "Nothing would stop you from doing that." **McClintock**: "We could actually save your township money. Eckart: "You possibly could do that. However, having Catawissa Township. **McClintock**: "Oh, we would go after that too." **Eckart**: "I'm not trying to spark any anger." **McClintock**: "Oh, I'm not angry. I'm just asking a question." **Eckart**: "You have the right to do that. My board is behind me they even know I was coming here tonight. And we were just looking for cost savings that is simply all this is about. Cost savings and putting more officers on the street. Cost savings from both sides. You have already done the regionalization study. It wasn't so great because it was only \$40,000

savings plus everyone else around you theirs went up. Their budgets would have went up. That happens with regionalization's. Regionalization's tend to cost more money. **Forest McClintock** asked **Chief Eckart** to put the proposal in black and white and make sure that **Forest** gets it so he can take it to the committee for review. **Chief Eckart** will be away the next few days for training and will submit the proposal when he returns. "Again this is nothing we are not trying to spark any anger what we are trying to do is help as neighbors we are trying to help everybody. It has nothing to do with any type of retaliation there is no retaliation we work well together. Departments work well together. **Jay Robert**: "We appreciate your offer and we look forward to reviewing it." **Chief Eckart**: "Does anyone else have any questions?" A resident asked a question regarding health care costs. **Chief Eckart**: "Well we would figure again that would be able to hash out. Each obviously you are going to have increases each year as health care costs go up and your insurances go up for your liabilities and your fuel prices go up. So I would have to put some time of increase in there that would be something we could hash out and it would be locked in at that. Is basically what it would be whether it be 2%, 3% and I don't even know what that is off the top of my head. I was just using that as an example. That could happen." **Doug Krum**: "Well it's going to be the same, our costs would go up whether you would be in charge of us or not." **Chief Eckart**: "That is right. So that is why I'm saying. If we were to do that we could work the costs right in anytime in the contract and we would not exceed a certain amount. Whatever, however we want to do it. We could work it out, sit down and do that if you are interested." "Again if you are not interested that is okay again we will be here to assist in any way we can be here to assist. **Gary Steinruck**: "As a member of council, I am not part of the police committee, but I am very interested." **Chief Eckart**: "Again I think we have a very professional police department and a lot of experience we have members on the SWAT Team all full timers are on the drug task force we are very community oriented so I think that ahh." **Gary Steinruck**: "You know if you tell us that you are going to provide us with 24/7 police coverage as good as what we have now for \$100,000 a year less." **Tim Keifbar**: "I am a police officer with Montour Township. You are not going to get the same coverage you have now you are going to get more. There is going to be more officers on the street than there is now. Just so you are all aware more officers less money. It is pretty simple. **Resident**: "Is there health care and everything?" **Chief Eckart**: "No burden, it would be the Montour County Police department. It would be no burden to your Municipality what so ever. All costs would be on us. Everything associated with the police department. Your name would be on the side of the cars." **Attorney McDonald**: "When do you think you would have your written proposal together?" **Chief Eckart**: "I think we could have it together for some time next week." **Attorney McDonald**: "Make sure I get a copy of that too. And I think everyone on council should get a copy of that too." **Chief Eckart**: "And of course that is just the basic proposal and everything can be hashed out. **Resident**: "I have a question for you Terry (Chief Eckart) my concern would be because you have the school over there in the township on the other side of town would you still be able to give us the same thing for our kids over here to cover the bus right here? **Chief Eckart**: "There would be somebody in the Borough there is going to be somebody in the Borough unless that are assisting another department or doing paperwork or something

along those lines you will see those cars.” **Chief Eckart:** “Thank you for your time. I am sorry to interrupt your evening.”

- Karen Drake asked Mr. Haney: “What is the rule with dogs and keeping them in their own yard?” Does a pet have to have a fenced in yard? Mr. Haney explained that a yard does not have to have a fence if someone has a pet. But you do have to control your dog. Ms. Drake asked if there is an issue with the neighbor’s dog being on your porch because your neighbor does not watch the dog what do we do? Who do we call? The dog warden, the police, you? Mr. Haney asked Ms. Drake to call him at the office anytime to discuss the matter.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- There was no correspondence.

MAYOR:

- Mayor Achy had nothing to report for meeting.

Staff and Authority Reports

MANAGER’S REPORT

- Borough Manager Roger Nuss gave a brief report of the employee activities for the month.
- Roger attended the Columbia County Commissioners Flood and Storm Water meeting on April 22, 2014. The purpose of the meeting is to begin to create an actual Flood Plane manager and management body for flood and surface runoff. Lycoming County has already created an authority. The purpose is to have an individual to coordinate all the information with FEMA/PEMA. The next meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2014.
- The FERC settlement agreement has been reached the approximate settlement amount will be \$89,000 in cash, rebates and adjustments. This is a settlement from the suit against PPL. Council needs to delegate someone for a representative for someone to sign the agreement. Must be returned by June 1, 2014.
- Forest McClintock made the motion to appoint Manager Roger Nuss as the delegate for signing of the settlement. Joe Benware seconded the motion. All aye.
- The section of the roof of the Senior Center was blown off during a storm. Special thanks to B & R Roofing for the fast action in coving the roof and for Bob, Clair and Scott for their help. The insurance company has been notified and may possibly replace the complete roof.
- Roger will be meeting with our property insurance carriers to review the plans and negotiate prices.
- Roger will be meeting with an AFLAC representative on May 13, 2014.
- He will also be meeting with Peters Consultants to go over the sewer plant project on that day.

WATER:

- Water Authority Superintendent Cindy Bachman had nothing to report.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT:

- Code Enforcement Officer James Haney reported to council that the demolition of the flood of 2011 properties has been postponed due to hazardous materials. The money for the removal of hazardous material will be reimbursed by FEMA/PEMA.
- Mr. Haney is still waiting for some information from some of the residents to be bought out. That is delaying the progress of the buy-out.

POLICE:

- Chief Joshua Laidacker reported an anonymous donation of \$1,914 towards the department weapons. This was to cover the purchase of the SWAT rifle that was recently purchased. The department also received a donation of carpet from Bloomsburg Carpet Industries for the back area of the station.
- During “Drug Take Back Day” two (2) full boxes were removed. The final weight is not available.
- Jay Roberts asked Chief Laidacker how the proposal from Chief Eckart would affect the Borough. Chief could not answer at this time without more information.

Committee Reports

PUBLIC SAFETY:

- Committee Chairperson Forest McClintock explained that interviews were conducted for a full time police officer. The committee recommends promoting Stefanie Gallie to the position at a starting salary per the uniform contract.
- Jay Roberts made the motion to hire Stefanie Gallie to the full-time police officer position. Connie Benware seconded the motion. Gary Steinruck asked about health care. Mr. Steinruck thought that the contract was to be ratified before voting on another full time officer. **Chief Laidacker:** “I gave that to Rose, she is in contact with the representative. As far as I know everything is a go. Just waiting on the final paper work from us.” **Steinruck:** “That was a condition that the hiring would take place with.” **McClintock:** “Well Rose isn’t here to verify it so I can’t give you an answer on that Gary. Whether she sent the paperwork in or not I don’t know.” **Steinruck:** “Well it was supposed to be a change in the contract.” **McClintock:** “A change in the contract is a resolution to the contract. Are you talking about the police officers contract? That was not done yet. The resolution was not put in yet. **Steinruck:** “I thought we were supposed to take care of that before we did the hiring. That was a contingency.” **McClintock:** “Well I think the contingency is going to be done there is no objections from the police department on that but the change of the insurance from the current one to the higher deductible is being taken care of now.” **Steinruck:** “But it is not done.” **Chief:** “The switch from the current insurance plan to the new insurance plan was initiated by the officers association and myself. We came together, we brought the proposal to council of our own free will. I think I can speak for Officer Hayes who is not here. I had some serious conversation with him and this is something we would like to do and we completed the application process for both the Borough and the Officers separately those have all been submitted to the insurance broker at this point there is just a few minor details but it is a done deal as far as I’m concerned. Attorney McDonald stated that the secretary should enter Chief Laidackers statement verbatim in the minutes. Roll Call: Doug Krum-no, Joe Benware-yes, Gary Steinruck-no, Jay Roberts-yes,

Connie Benware-yes, Forest McClintock-yes. Motion to hire Stefanie Gallie as full-time police officer passes.

UTILITIES:

- Committee Chairperson Connie Benware reported 146 (one hundred forty-six) late notices for electric non-payment were sent May 5, 2014. The sewer late notices were delayed due to computer problems. Last month 3 (three) meters were pulled for non-payment and remain off.

PARKS AND RECREATION:

- Committee Chairperson Joe Benware reported “Dumpster Day” was a big success we had 23 (twenty-three) people from Catawissa Township and over 100 (one hundred) from Catawissa Borough. Residents inquired about a second date. Joe informed them that a second date is not set for this year but he will consider it for next year.
- The Degenstein Grant was approved.
- There is another grant Joe and Roger Nuss are working on for the Chamber of the Arts that is due in June.

PROPERTIES/BUILDING MAINTENANCE:

- Committee Chairperson Gary Steinruck did not have anything to add to Rogers’ report regarding the Senior Center roof damage.
- Harry has received 2 (two) LED street lights and should be installed for consideration this week.
- Kenny Artly spoke to Gary about his concern about the possible collapse of the sewer pipe behind his house. It is Park Ave. Gary will look at the problem with the Street Department.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION:

- Due to Committee Chairperson Scott Keefer’s absence no report was available.

UNION NEGOTIATION:

- Committee member Doug Krum stated that a meeting is to be held next Tuesday to resume negotiations.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Unfinished business was taken care of with the Public Safety section.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Joe Benware made the motion to invest \$900 for equipment for the concert series events. Connie Benware seconded the motion. After a discussion of the necessity of the equipment and budget. Roll Call: Doug Krum-no, Joe Benware-yes, Gary Steinruck-no, Jay Roberts-no, Connie Benware-yes, Forest McClintock-no. Motion does not pass.
- Due to hazardous material report needed the demolition bids for the 2011 Flood properties was stricken from the agenda. FEMA/PEMA are aware of the delay.
- Jay Roberts made the motion to donating \$1,000 to the Catawissa Fire Co. to help offset the cost of the annual carnival. Joe Benware seconded the motion. All aye.

FINANCE:

- Gary Steinruck made the motion to accept the payment of the bills as written. Jay Roberts seconded the motion. All aye.

GUESTS TO BE HEARD:

- Linda Kashner suggested emailing the electric bills to customers to save money. Ms. Kashner was informed that council is already looking into the process.
- Harry Young requested council to consider hiring someone to help the electric department. Forest explained that the option is being considered.

ADJOURNEMENT:

- Doug Krum made the motion to adjourn. Connie Benware seconded the motion. All aye.

MEETING ADJOURNED:

Submitted by:

Kimberly Rhoades

Secretary.