

CATAWISSA BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING MONDAY February 5, 2018 – 6:30 P.M.

An Executive Session was held prior to the Council Meeting.

CALL TO ORDER:

- The meeting was called to order by Council President, Doug Krum.
- The pledge of allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL:

- Present were: Doug Krum, Linda Neyer, AJ McKenney, Mary Neyer, Gary Steinruck, Linda Kashner, Barbara Reese, Mayor Tim Benner, Manager Fred Hess, Attorney Anthony McDonald.
- Council President Doug Krum announced there was a closed Personnel Committee Meeting that took place on Tuesday January 23, 2018 to meet with a mediator.

READING OF MINUTES:

- A motion was made by Barb Reese, 2nd by Linda Neyer to dispense reading of and approve minutes of the previous month's meeting with the following changes:
 1. Bullet #7 add Mary Neyer stated Penn Dot said the sidewalks need to be brought up to current standards.
 2. Bullet# 5 Doug Krum and Linda Neyer rescind their motion for the purchase of 40 transformers and a new motion was made by Doug Krum, 2nd by Linda Neyer to purchase 40 new meters for \$1360.00 plus shipping. All Aye.
 3. Under unfinished business "Councilwoman" AJ McKenney was changed to "Councilman" All Aye.

GUESTS TO BE HEARD:

- Council President Doug Krum made an announcement before any guest to be heard spoke that each guest has (2) minutes in total to speak.
- Guest Coleen Hulse stated she is standing with the 14th amendment section 1 - equal justice under the law. Ms. Hulse expressed her concerns with the citations that were issued for snow removal from a storm on January 4th to (2) of her renters while a neighbor only got a letter. Council President Doug Krum stated the Borough Council cannot comment on anything in litigation. Council President Doug Krum also told Ms. Hulse she can continue with her concerns if she would like. Ms. Hulse continued to share her concerns. Borough Manager Fred Hess handed Ms. Hulse a copy of the Borough Ordinance regarding Snow Removal. Ms. Hulse expressed her concern that a tenant was not allowed to see photos of her uncleaned sidewalks for the citation but her husband and son came in and they were shown those photos. Council President Doug Krum made Ms. Hulse aware her (2) minutes to speak were up.
- Guest Scott Keefer asked what qualifies (1) resident to get a letter and another to get a fine? Council President Doug Krum stated it was up to the discretion of the Code Enforcement Officer. Multiple guests stated you have to treat everyone equal. Council President Doug Krum asked everyone to speak one at a time and Mr. Keefer had the floor. Mr. Keefer repeated his question and Attorney Anthony McDonald responded there is no criteria as it is the discretion of the Code Enforcement Officer.

- Guest Kevin Ferris stated he was cited for not clearing snow and a half dozen other houses on his street were in the same condition and they were not cited. His question was why was he singled out and the others didn't even get a warning. Council President Doug Krum asked Mr. Ferris if he was going to fight his citation. Mr. Ferris stated yes he was. Council President Doug Krum replied he could not comment on the issue then.
- Guest Patty Hess expressed that most people work and couldn't take care of the sidewalks in a 5 hour time frame. Council President Doug Krum and Councilwoman Linda Neyer stated Borough Manger Fred Hess waits 24 hours before he serves any citations. Councilwoman Linda Kashner stated maybe the Ordinance needs to be modified. After a brief discussion between Council and Guests, a motion was made by Linda Neyer, 2nd by Linda Kashner to have the Public Safety Committee take a look at the Ordinance regarding snow removal to be modify to current standards. All Aye.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Borough Secretary Connie Cole reported that if any elderly or handicapped borough residents need help clearing sidewalks they can call Pastor Mike of the Catawissa Christian Church at 570-336-2566. They have volunteers that will help.

MAYOR:

- Mayor Tim Benner thanked borough workers for keeping the streets nice after the last 2 snow storms.
- Mayor Tim Benner reported Woody's would like to know if the one way street between the restaurant and the Christian Church can be made one way coming down. Woody would like to put a drive up window in. Councilwoman Linda Kashner asked Chief Laidacker if a study needed to be done. Chief Laidacker replied that yes a study needed to be done. After a brief discussion Councilwoman Linda Neyer suggested they do nothing until they hear from Woody himself, council agreed.
- Mayor Tim Benner reported he is meeting with each individual police officer and conducting a personal interview. When the Mayor is done he will meet with the Police Committee to discuss things that may need to be improved or changed.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

- Manager Fred Hess reported the Street Department plowed, salt and cindered routes and sidewalks, picked up Christmas trees, worked on equipment, did plumbing work at the Police Station, cleaned storm drains, filled potholes and put new signs up at Recycling Center.
- Manager Fred Hess reported the Electric Department cut down trees at Quaker Grove and Eyer Park, read meters, posted door hangers, fixed lights at Borough Hall, picked up Christmas trees, removed Christmas trees at the Opera House and Eyer Park, removed Christmas lights and decorations, re-fused a 25 KVA transformer, started the electrical work at the Community Center, salt and cindered streets, had an electrical call on Mill Street and replaced a bad fuse.
- Manager Fred Hess reported his office worked on submitting the 2017 census survey, public pensions report, FEMA Funded Mitigation Projects Report, 2017 Floodplain Management Report, US Department of Energy 861S Federal Energy Report, Community Center Labor & Industry upgrades project. The Community Center was inspected by L & I on January 4, 2018. Manager Fred Hess reported his office is working on the AT & T Cell site contract, codification project, attended a Co-Stars webinar training, worked on personnel issues and any other issues that arose during the month of January.

- Manager Fred Hess also reported the pins are set and he received the survey report for Union Cemetery. The letter summarizing the report was included in each council member's packet. There are also maps available for review if anyone would like to look at them.

WATER:

- Water Authority Superintendent, Cindy Bachman reported the Water Authority will be working on getting identifying clothing for workers to wear during meter reading time.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT:

- Borough Manager Fred Hess read the Code Enforcement report as follows:
- The Code Enforcement Office investigated (3) issues, sent (4) letters, placed (1) door hanger and issued (5) verbal warnings. (0) permits were issued, (24) citations were issued and (0) days were spent in court.
- Councilwoman Barb Reese reported she was contacted by several people asking why we are paying a fulltime employee to go around and write down code violations to bring into the Office. Code Enforcement Officer Fred Hess replied it is saving his own time instead of him spending double triple time to do it. Mr. Hess also stated it is cheaper to pay someone else to do it, instead of him. Mr. Hess also stated the employee is using his own vehicle to do it. Councilwoman Barb Reese said no the employee is using a borough vehicle. Mr. Hess said sometimes but most of the time he uses his personal vehicle. Councilwoman Linda Kashner stated it is not in the employee's job description. Mr. Hess stated it is faster for the employee to take him around then (1) person in and out, in and out. Councilman Gary Steinruck noted Mr. Hess said it was cheaper to pay the employee but if they are driving Mr. Hess around we are paying double time. Councilwoman Barb Reese stated the person who called her said there was only one person in the car and they spoke to the employee and the employee stated that's what he was doing. Code Enforcement Officer Fred Hess said, "that's news to me". Councilwoman Linda Neyer stated she thinks this should be referred to the personnel committee.

POLICE:

- Police Chief Joshua Laidacker read the monthly report which stated during the month of January 2018 the department responded to (306) calls for service. Police Chief Laidacker also reported the following:
- The department is in the process of applying for 4 grants through the State and Atlantic Sunrise.
- A purchase order has been submitted for the (2) additional taser weapons that were budgeted for 2018.
- He looked into getting the speed sign for Mill Street and it is still unavailable, they are still looking into it.
- Officer Rebuck and O'Donnell are continuing their training and have about a month ago.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

- Committee Chairperson Doug Krum had nothing at this time.

UTILITIES:

- Councilwoman Linda Kashner reported there were (64) electric door hangers and (29) sewer door hangers posted today. She then proceeded to read the totals owed the Borough from open and closed utility accounts. She then stated a fantastic job is being done collecting the electric and sewer payments.

- Councilwoman Linda Kashner recognized what a good job Connie Cole is doing collecting payments on the electric and sewer accounts.

PARKS & RECREATION:

- Committee Chairperson Barb Reese reported there was a meeting scheduled for Wednesday February 7, 2018 at 1:30 p.m. but due to the weather forecast the meeting has been changed to Thursday February 8, 2018 at 10:30 a.m. at the Borough Office. The Committee will be planning for the rest of the year. If anyone is interested in helping or have any ideas the committee welcomes your participation.

PROPERTY & BUILDING MAINTENANCE:

- Chairman Gary Steinruck stated he wanted to know what was going on at the Community Center. Borough Manager Fred Hess explained the electrical system and subpanel are being upgraded, running new romex and replacing the housing and overhead lights. After a discussion about inspection and classification of the building it was agreed Borough Manager Fred Hess would call Steve Belski to discuss the classification and report the information to Chairman Gary Steinruck and Council President Doug Krum.
- Chairman Gary Steinruck stated the radiator covers were installed and accepted. Mr. Steinruck also stated there are (4) radiators that have to have tops on them. He wanted to know if we were going to do the covers. Council President Doug Krum responded yes we are.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION:

- Committee Chairperson Linda Neyer reported the committee met on January 31st for the benefit of new members. They learned how fund transfers have been done. The committee talked about the status of electric reserved funds. The reserve was recalculated with the formula provided by Amp by Borough Manager and again by Borough Engineer Jim Harvilla. The new calculation comes to \$133,130.00.
- Committee Chairperson Linda Neyer read the totals for the fund balances as of January 31, 2018
- Committee Chairwoman Linda Kashner read an overview of the 2017 budget percentages. Then Ms. Kashner read the percentages for the 2018 budget. Council Chairperson Linda Neyer asked if at the next committee meeting if Ms. Kashner could share how she arrived at these figures and for some of the benefit of Ms. Kashner's experience.

UNION:

- There are no union negotiations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Committee Chairperson Barb Reese reported the committee met with a new group of people last year and formed Catawissa Dreaming. Catawissa Dreaming is no longer part of the Economic Development Committee. They are a stand-alone group and are looking to become a nonprofit.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Councilwoman Mary Neyer asked about the recreational fires ordinance. Borough Manager Fred Hess stated Attorney Anthony McDonald has it and will be looking it over.
- Councilwoman Linda Kashner asked Borough Manager Fred Hess if he got ahold of Mr. Dolittle to see if he will still honor his quote from last year for the Quaker Meeting House. Councilman Gary Steinruck expressed he felt a meeting should be set up with the Property Maintenance

committee, Borough Manager Fred Hess, CDBG Representative and Mr. Dolittle so the borough doesn't get in the same situation as before with the Sewer Plant.

- Councilwoman Linda Kashner stated in the minutes last month it was voted on Bloom Heating to be our fuel supplier. But J.J. Fuel bills were in to be paid. Borough Manager Fred Hess explained he called around to get the lower price to save the Borough some money. After a discussion Council President Doug Krum and Councilman Gary Steinruck rescinded their motions to appoint Bloom Heating as their fuel oil supplier. All Aye.
- A motion was made by Barb Reese, 2nd by Gary Steinruck that Borough Manager Fred Hess has to call around to get pricing every time the Borough needs any and all fuel oil. All Aye.
- Guest John Creasy asked if the fuel oil suppliers we use do service work. Borough Manager Fred Hess explained yes they do.
- Guest Scott Keefer offered information that some fuel oil suppliers will sell preset amounts of fuel for lower pricing.
- Councilwoman Linda Kashner asked if the video cameras were put up at the Recycling Center. Borough Manager Fred Hess stated he was looking into getting better quality cameras. Councilwoman Linda Kashner stated it was voted on to use the cameras the police have. Ms. Kashner also stated there is a grant out there for surveillance cameras where rubbish is being dumped. She feels it is worth seeing if we qualify for the grant.
- Councilman Gary Steinruck asked Borough Manager Fred Hess the status of removing the trees in the park. Borough Manager Fred Hess replied they are being worked on. Councilman Gary Steinruck asked when they will be completed. Mr. Hess replied when the Community Center is finished in about 2-3 weeks.
- Guest Coleen Hulse expressed her concern about Uxbridge Avenue not being kept clean when we have bad weather.
- Councilman Gary Steinruck asked about Walnut Street being barricaded. Council President Doug Krum and Borough Employee Clair Kingston stated it has been barricade for years in the winter because there is no winter maintenance on the hill..
- Guest Patty Hess asked why the street behind resident Carol Drumheller's house was not plowed yet. After a brief discussion an answer was not given.
- Councilman Gary Steinruck asked where we are with the speed study for the crosswalk on Mill Street. Council President Doug Krum replied that Chief Laidacker is working on that whenever he can get the equipment from Riverside.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A motion was made by Linda Neyer, 2nd by Gary Steinruck to approve the cost of the Community Center electrical materials at \$1350.00. After a brief discussion Councilwoman Linda Kashner asked for a list of cost and supplies. Ms. Kashner also asked, "Shouldn't this have been voted on by Council before work started?" Ms. Kashner asked if Chase Petty fell through the ceiling. Borough Manager Fred Hess stated he would have to get a list and cost of materials from Harry Young and Chase's foot slipped off the rafters and stepped on the slats which knocked the plaster off. Chase did not go through the ceiling. (6) Aye; Gary Steinruck Nay. Motion carries.
- A motion was made by AJ McKenney, 2nd Barb Reese to appoint Tom Long to a (3) year term on the Catawissa Zoning Hearing Board. All Aye.
- A motion was made by Linda Neyer, 2nd by Linda Kashner to approve Resolution 2018-01 regarding the application for traffic signal approval for the potential Mill Street crosswalks. Council had a discussion regarding why the resolution was needed and what the application was for. All Aye.

- A motion was made by Barb Reese, 2nd by Gary Steinruck for the purchase of (2) new tasers in the amount of \$3,510.00 for the Police Department, these items were budgeted for 2018. All Aye.
- A motion was made by Linda Kashner, 2nd by AJ McKenney to appoint John Slotterback to fulfill the unexpired term of Dick Martz on the board of the Catawissa Water Authority. All Aye.
- A motion was made by Linda Kashner, 2nd by Barb Reese to accept payments for Catawissa Electric and Sewer bills only at the Catawissa Branch of the First Columbia Bank & Trust. All Aye.
- A motion was made by Linda Neyer, 2nd by Mary Neyer to modify the 2018 budget. Councilwoman Linda Neyer & Councilwoman Mary Neyer withdrew their motions.
- A motion was made by Linda Neyer, 2nd by Mary Neyer to approve \$1000.00 for an Emergency Management Coordinator and Council receives a quarterly written report from the Coordinator. (6) Aye; Linda Kashner Nay. Motion carries.
After vote Councilwoman Barb Reese asked if council could get a signed list of his training as she was concerned that there is no signature on the lists submitted. Borough Manger Fred Hess stated he had copies of all his diplomas. Guest Harold Kitchen stated he is at training and an Emergency Management Coordinator doesn't do anything unless there is an emergency. He also stated he believes there is only 4 courses you must have and once you take them you are good.
- A motion was made by Linda Neyer, 2nd by AJ McKenney to accept employee agreements. After a discussion a roll call vote was taken for Harry Young's grievance. Doug Krum; Aye, Linda Neyer; Aye, AJ McKenney; Aye, Mary Neyer; Aye, Gary Steinruck; Nay, Linda Kashner; Aye, Barb Reese; Aye. Motion Carries.
- A motion was made by Linda Neyer, 2nd by AJ McKenney to accept employee agreement for Crystal Stoker. A roll call vote was taken. Doug Krum; Aye, Linda Neyer; Aye, AJ McKenney; Aye, Mary Neyer; Aye, Gary Steinruck; Nay, Linda Kashner; Nay, Barb Reese; Nay Motion carries.
Guest Scott Keefer asked Attorney Anthony McDonald if he can shed some light on the subject Council is discussing. Attorney Anthony McDonald stated it is union grievances filed and they are completely separate and unrelated issues.
- Councilwoman Linda Kashner asked about paper products it was agreed upon to order from Amazon. But there are bills for Weis Markets to be paid. Council President Doug Krum stated his personal opinion was to keep the business in the Borough. Council Vice President Linda Neyer stated she agreed. Councilwoman Linda Kashner asked, "Don't you want to save the borough money?" She also stated the Borough is paying an employee to do the shopping when someone could click a button to save and order.
- Councilwoman Linda Kashner asked about an invoice for the codification project that should have been paid out of last year funds and is now expected to be paid out of this year's funds. Ms. Kashner explained there are no funds to pay it out of this year. Ms. Kashner asked for a reason why it was not paid. Borough Secretary Connie Cole explained the codification box came, was date stamped and handed over to the Borough Manager on 11/17/2017. Ms. Cole received an email on January 4th stating the invoice for codification was past due. She went to Borough Manager Fred Hess hunting the invoice. Ms. Cole date stamped the invoice and wrote received from Fred. Then turned the invoice into the Treasurer.
- Councilwoman Linda Kashner asked Borough Manager if Dempsy said in the initial meeting they would do all the emblems and name tags for free. Ms. Kashner read off what Dempsy is charging us for this service. Ms. Kashner ask Borough Manager Fred Hess to look into it.
- Councilwoman Linda Kashner read the new bid limits that PSAB published on their website.

- Councilwoman Linda Kashner shared there is a breakfast on Wednesday February 8th at 8:00 a.m. at the Conservation Office for administrative staff to learn how to fill out the paperwork for Dirt, Gravel & Low Volume Roads. Ms. Kashner feels Borough Manager Fred Hess should go.
- Councilwoman Linda Kashner announced there is a grant available for cigarette litter prevention programs. The paperwork is due February 21, 2018. The Co Stars salt agreement is due March 15, 2018. Ms. Kashner asked Borough Manager Fred Hess if this was completed. Mr. Hess replied yes.
- Councilwoman Linda Kashner announced there is a grant writing class that Borough Manager Fred Hess and Chief Laidacker may want to attend through the PSAB coming up in Daulphin County.
- Councilwoman Linda Kashner reported there is a Historical Preservation Grant that expires March 1, 2018. The Quaker Meeting House wall needs repaired and maybe we can have Mr. Dolittle take a look and see what we need and try for the grant.
- Councilwoman Linda Kashner reported she got some papers from Donnie Traugh for a generator cost. Ms. Kashner called Eric Stahley. Mr. Stahley gave some grant assistance and would like to set up a meeting with his office and PEMA. Mr. Stahley offered his assistance if the Borough would like to go this route. The generator is for the Fire Hall, to make it a shelter incase of an emergency.
- Council President Doug Krum stated a discussion regarding Jeff Achy receiving \$100.00 donation for performing a wedding and was told by then Council President Gary Steinruck it had to be turned over to the borough. After a brief discussion a motion was made by Barb Reese, 2nd by Linda Neyer to return the \$100.00 to Jeff Achy. All Aye.

FINANCE PAYMENT OF BILLS:

- Motion to accept payment of bills as written made by Barb Reese, 2nd by Gary Steinruck. All Aye

GUESTS TO BE HEARD:

- Guest Coleen Hulse expressed her concern about traffic on East Main Street. Council informed Ms. Hulse that this is a state road and this issue has been brought to Penn Dot by the Borough. Everything concerning that road must go through Penn Dot. Ms. Hulse also expressed concerns about parking on the sidewalks to keep from getting property damage. Councilman Gary Steinruck stated that it was discussed and it is up to the Officer to use his discretion and leniency if there was enough room left for a pedestrian to walk through. Mr. Steinruck also stated not to park all the way on the sidewalk.
- Guest Patty Hess stated her observation of tonight's council meeting was disgusting. Ms. Hess stated she observed people rolling their eyes, people over stepping their boundaries on what they are supposed to do and everyone not getting along. Coleen Hulse interjected we all pay your salaries.
- Council President Doug Krum announced when the Public Safety Committee meets to go over the Ordinance regarding snow removal it will be open to the public. Anyone who wants to come and give their opinions and ideas to bring back to the next Council meeting are welcome.
- Councilman Gary Steinruck wanted to discuss the Chain of Command Memo and asked where it came from. Council President Doug Krum responded the PSAB website. Councilwoman Linda Kashner read a speech she had prepared :
First, as council members, we have the right and responsibility to respond to inquiries, condemnations, and sometimes compliments regardless whether it be directly to the public or

to the public via the news media. If I don't know the answer, I know how to find the answer. Most of us have been on council long enough that we know what information can legally be made available to the public, or to borough employees. Hopefully, it is not your intention to keep some members of council or the public in the dark when it comes to council and/or borough activities and decisions. Two years ago the new council leadership made a conscious decision and effort to maintain communications with all council members and when permissible, with the public.

Second, Nancy Yost and Connie Cole have performed exemplary work which is particularly noteworthy since neither had ever worked in a municipal office prior to being hired by the borough. Nancy inherited an office that was in total chaos due to inadequate oversight of her predecessor. In spite of this, Nancy learned the Treasurer's job very quickly and also assumed the role of Administrative Assistant. Nancy has a comprehensive knowledge of the borough's finances and related policies.

Following Connie's hiring as secretary, she has organized the office and learned her job very quickly. Connie's work includes the handling of delinquent electrical accounts and she has ensured that large sums of money that were owed the borough have been paid and is diligent to ensure delinquent accounts are kept at a minimum. She has provided a no non-nonsense but fair and impartial mindset in dealing with the public, particularly in dealing (but not limited to) the borough's electrical business.

These ladies are both very organized, work well together and are very good representatives of the borough in dealing with the public and other entities. Connie and Nancy are both eager to learn. They have taken webinars from PSAB to expand their knowledge and to keep up to date on policies. Nancy attended a budgeting conference with Fred last year. They make every effort to perform their duties efficiently and productively and are ever watchful to ensure the residents' financial interests are a priority.

The memo as signed by President Doug Krum stating that the staff is not allowed to work with council members in the customary manner is short sighted, ill-advised, without precedent and will detract from the efficiently operating office that these two ladies have developed. They are independent thinkers and have the borough office running more smoothly than it has in many years. Requiring them to ask permission from the Borough Manager every time they are asked for information is unreasonable. They know their jobs and should not be made placed in a position that will only serve to reduce the productivity that is almost like a second nature to them.

In my 40+ years of working in an office environment, it is my opinion that these requirements are counterproductive and are at odds with the concept of office efficiency and productivity. In my opinion, if this naïve, vindictive policy is allowed to continue, Catawissa Borough may well lose these valued employees. If that were to happen, there is no one in a council leadership role nor in the office who will be able to ensure the office will operate in the manner that will ensure the borough's business is performed in the highly professional manner that we enjoy today. In short, we will be regressing to the costly inefficiencies that prevailed just a few short years ago. And some other employer is going to acquire two of the best employees that I have encountered. And the blame for all this, Mr. Krum, will be on you and those who are supporting this agenda.

Councilwoman Linda Kashner also stated she would like to make an official request that she be put back on the list to receive emails from the website.

Council President Doug Krum stated he was just trying to stop transferring funds that's all. Mr. Krum was trying to make it so Borough Manager Fred Hess knew what was going on.

Council Vice President Linda Neyer stated she feels you have to have a chain of command or confusion reigns. Ms. Neyer also stated this was no reflection on Connie or Nancy.

Attorney Anthony McDonald stated he did not review this before it was sent out. Attorney McDonald had an issue with paragraph 5. Council can control an employee because they work for you but you cannot control another Council Member. Attorney McDonald also addressed the website email and stated Council members have the right to see the website email. Council Members are an elected Official and have the right to speak to anyone.

- Guest Patty Hess stated now everyone can lose their cocky attitude. Ms. Hess stated the residents pay Council's salary and observed that everyone had their own agenda instead of the residents' agenda.
- Guest Sharon Krum stated she feels there is a lack of communication between everyone.
- Guest Diane Steinruck stated that the new Council President and Vice President has come in and have the new members to one side while the Council President feels the other council members have their own agenda. Ms. Steinruck feels there are personal agendas going on within Council.

ADJOURNMENT:

- Motion to adjourn made by Mary Neyer, 2nd by Linda Neyer. All Aye.

MEETING ADJOURNED.

Submitted by:
Connie M. Cole
Secretary