

Laurel Mountain Borough

Regular Meeting

January 2, 2024

A regular meeting of the Laurel Mountain Borough Council was held on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at the Shelter House and via Zoom.

Council members present were Mathew Henson, President; Sharon Detar, Vice President; Tanner Solich. Also present were Mayor Ross Dixon; Ben Faas, Engineer; Scott Lentz, Secretary/Treasurer.

Participating via Zoom were Robin Roberts, Gladys Light, and Charles D'Angelo (representing Solicitor Demosky).

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

President Mathew Henson called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM Eastern Standard Time. A quorum of Council members was present, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was deemed ready to proceed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Public Comment

Susan Crouse alerted the Council to the need to ensure that fire hydrant inspections (believed to be semi-annually) are current. Ms. Crouse also recommended that the Council to assign a representative to work with the Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency (LMIA).

Approval of Prior Minutes

The Minutes from the December 5, 2023 Regular Meeting were presented for approval. Following discussion and unanimous approval, Council President Henson indicated that the minutes stood approved as presented.

The Minutes from the December 20, 2023 Special Meeting were presented for approval. Following discussion and unanimous approval, Council President Henson indicated that the minutes stood approved as presented.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report for November 2023 and proposed disbursements for December 2023 were presented. Following discussion and unanimous approval, the Treasurer's Report for November 2023 and proposed disbursements for December 2023 were approved.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Dixon shared the November 2023 Police Report. There were 51 routine patrols, one 911 call for service that was a hang-up, zero incidents investigated, zero traffic citations or warnings and zero criminal arrests.

Mayor Dixon also discussed his participation in a kickoff meeting for the stream crossing project on Beechwood Road. Mayor Dixon indicated that subsequent work on the project is subject to weather conditions, and that he will provide additional information at a later date.

Introduction of New Secretary/Treasurer

Mr. Lentz was introduced as the Council's new Secretary/Treasurer.

Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency Report

None.

Ongoing Business

Gas Company Repair of Roads

Following discussion, the Council agreed that Mayor Dixon will contact Council member Mark [Hollick](#) to serve as the community's primary point of contact with West Penn Power regarding roadwork.

Council Members' Reports

Sharon: The Park Association has received approval for a 501(C7) to become a non-profit as a social organization [regarding rental of the shelter house?]

Engineers' Report

Mr. Henson introduced Mr. Ben Faas to provide an overview of the Borough's water main situation.

Mr. Faas provided a general overview. He noted:

- The Borough's water system has been self-managed for several decades.
- The Borough is experiencing issues with water pressure and potential water quality for its residents.
- The Borough does not have a public water supply permit that is in compliance with Westmoreland County's water standards.
- The estimated cost to comply with County standards / transfer ownership of the water supply to Westmoreland County is approximately \$2.0 - \$2.5 million.
- The Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County (MAWC) has indicated a willingness to assume ownership of the Borough's water system, subject to upgrade.

- Mr. Faas also indicated that approximately \$600,000 in state and federal grants have been applied for and received by the Borough. Mr. Faas stated that a decision re: a potential transfer of responsibility of the water system from Borough residents to Westmoreland County is influenced by these grants, which expire in 2025/2026. with application deadlines as early as February 2024.

- MAWC has provided preliminary estimates of an approximate surcharge of \$40 per month / per residence, for a period of 20 years, in order for MAWC to pay for the up-front capital costs of assuming ownership of the Borough's water system.

The Council agreed that this issue merited additional discussion and input from the community, and that a "workshop" meeting would occur on January 24, 2024 at 6:00PM.

Solicitors' Report

None

Emergency Manager's Report

None

Correspondence

None

Public Comment

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made and adopted, the Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Scott Lentz, Borough Secretary/Treasurer

Minutes amended by motion passed at the 2/15/2024 council meeting:

Council has designated Mathew Henson, Council President, Sharon Detar, Council Vice President, and Scott Lenz, Council Secretary/Treasurer, as signatories on the Borough bank accounts at First Commonwealth Bank.