The regular monthly meeting of the Town Council of the Borough of East Rochester was held Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Lacock Dwellings Community Center, East Rochester, PA.

Meeting was called to order and Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PRESENT: John Drumm, Joyce Gordon, Joseph Seminick, James Simon and Cathy Hutsky

ALSO, PRESENT: Solicitor Paul Steff, Engineer Jeff Frye, Officer Murphy, Sam Landis, Zachary Stroupe, Kristen Brutout, Vincent Guandolo and Ken Stroupe.

ABSENT: Mayor Knox and Code Enforcement Officer Randy Morrow

CITIZENS REPORT: Zachary Stroupe said that he and Kristen are trying to open up a barbershop and nail salon at 890 Ohio River Boulevard. Vincent Guandolo is the owner of the property and also Zachary's uncle. Zachary said he is paying rent to his uncle and has not been allowed to open the business because Code.sys is holding things up. Code.sys asked for him to have architectural drawings prepared which cost him a lot of money. Then he was asked to get an electrical engineer, mechanical engineer and plumbing engineer. He has already spent over $3,000 for architectural drawings. He said they are such a small business and at this point he is pretty much out of money. Looking for help by council. Mr. Drumm asked if there were changes that he made in the building and Mr. Stroupe responded "very little". New outlets were put in, new ceiling and changed some duct work, sinks installed. Mr. Guandolo said when he bought the building previously from Judge Dohanich he was informed that there were numerous plumbing drains, plumbing vents and supplies and numerous outlets because the building had been a bar and hotel. Mr. Guandolo said Mr. Stroupe paid over $3,000 so far for architectural drawings and has been paying rent to him and still not able to open their business and it has been over 8 months since the process started. He said Code.sys is now requesting revised drawings. Mr. Guandolo said he is hoping that council can grant a variance or waiver on this last requirement by Code.sys. Mr. Guandolo said Mr. Stroupe has spent over $10,000 if you calculate the drawings and rent and the construction costs. Mr. Seminick indicated that Mr. Stroupe contacted him about a union electrician doing the work. Code.sys is giving the electrician a hard time. Kenneth Stroupe said he works in construction and has never experienced issues that Code.sys say exist. He said Code.sys is delaying his son from opening up his business. The Borough's zoning officer initially approved a demolition permit because Zachary was removing a wall. Zachary said to date he has spent almost $10,000 to comply with Code.sys request and still nothing has been approved. He is asking for council's help to resolve the issues.

Mr. Drumm said he is not sure why Code.sys is making Zachary and Kristen do all the extra drawings and so forth. Mr. Steff said council is not able to do anything and suggested that Zachary and Kristen prepare a letter to the Borough indicating what Code.sys has been asking them to do and how Code.sys many requests are keeping them from opening up their business. Then the Borough will call Code.sys and see what is going on.

A discussion was held about how Code.sys is not only affecting projects in our borough but also in other municipalities. Mr. Steff said that other municipalities have had complaints about Code.sys. Mr. Steff said there are other 3rd party inspection agencies that the Borough could use.

Mr. Drumm said that the borough will contact our Zoning Officer to discuss this situation and then will have a meeting with our solicitor to see how to handle the complaints about Code.sys. Council agreed for Mr. Drumm to proceed with talking to the solicitor and then making a call to Code.sys to discuss the situation in the borough and see how to get things turned around.

Mr. Seminick indicated that Code.sys had shut down his remodeling project at his home for several reasons. Secretary indicated that Code.sys is also slowing down a project at the Co-Go's.

Mr. Steff said that Code.sys works for the Borough. He suggested talking to someone in charge at Code.sys and see what can be done.

Mr. Drumm told Zachary and Kristen that the borough will talk to Code.sys and see what can be done about getting their project moving so they can get their business up and running.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING: Mr. Drumm asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting. There being none, Mr. Seminick made motion to accept minutes of previous meeting. Mrs. Gordon seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS: Secretary said she noticed that the Borough's Comcast bill had increased. When she called Comcast about this, she was told that the Borough's contract expired and it should be renewed. She negotiated with Comcast and a new contract was agreed to. The contract is for 2 years and the monthly rate will be reduced.

Secretary read email regarding a Veteran's day ceremony at the Rochester VFW on November 11 at 10:00 AM

MAYOR and POLICE: Officer Murphy gave the report. 88 calls for the month which included 8 traffic citations and 6 arrests. Mr. Simon made motion to accept police report. Ms. Hutsky seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion was carried.

STREETS & SEWERS: Secretary indicated that TC Energy who replaced the transmission line for Columbia Gas across from the borough building would like to make a $500 donation (not calling it a donation, but rather an inconvenience fee). The representative from TC Energy sent to the secretary a release which asked that we sign. Said release was provided to Mr. Steff for his review. It was mentioned that the $500 donation would be deposited in to the Parks and Recreation account. Ms. Hutsky said maybe we can get the shelter fixed now. Mr. Simon made motion to sign TC Energy Release. Mrs. Gordon seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion was carried.

Secretary also indicated that she had been contacted by Columbia Gas and they indicated that they would be replacing the lines on Lacock Avenue in 2020. They are aware of the permit fee and that the road will be put back when project completed in compliance with the ordinance.

Mr. Drumm said the garage door opener on the shed is tore apart. Should have new one. Mr. Drumm said he would like to get a price to replace the opener. Also, the main beam at the back of the salt shed needs replaced before spring. He would like to get another beam. Mr. Landis said that whoever put the building in on the side toward the hair salon they put 2 x 8 all the way up and then on the back wall there is nothing but OSB board. Suggested taking siding off the back side and putting in another post. Mr. Drumm asked Mrs. Gordon about finances for this. She inquired about how much this would cost. Mr. Drumm is thinking about $1,000.

Mr. Seminick asked about using concrete jumbo blocks and build the back of the shed off of the blocks. Mrs. Gordon asked Mr. Seminick if he was talking about a false wall and he said "yes". Mr. Drumm said Mr. Landis could get a price on what the blocks would cost. Mr. Seminick said they are about $75.00 each. Mr. Landis said that is a good idea but how are you going to get the blocks behind the building, there is not much room there. It is something to consider.

Mr. Drumm said he purchased the electrical box for the gazebo and would like council to approve the purchase of wiring and he will install same. Mrs. Gordon said that the borough had previously purchased the wiring but not sure where it is. Secretary to check prior Yesco Electric bills to see if wiring was purchased.

Mr. Simon asked about the lights that are out on Route 65. He said he noticed caution tape on some of the lights that are not working. Officer Murphy indicated that the police department put the caution tape around the poles. Secretary indicated that she submitted the list of lights that are out to Duquesne Light for repair and would follow-up with Duquesne Light.

Mr. Drumm brought up about replacing the borough's dump truck. It is 10 years old. A discussion was held about the way to finance the purchase of a new truck, namely by using funds from the Sewer Maintenance account. Mr. Steff said funds can be taken from the fund as long as it is not depleted in case repairs are needed to the lift station. Mrs. Gordon said she is not agreeable to using Sewer Maintenance funds. Mrs. Gordon said the borough takes in $53,000 per year in receipts, but also pays out $20,000 per year as payment on the $350,000 Pennvest loan for the sewer separation. Bids had been received from Woltz & Wind and Stephenson Equipment. Ms. Hutsky mentioned that there are grants through the county. Mr. Steff said there are grants but the borough would have to qualify and adopt certain programs. He said you have to pass certain ordinances and he said certain procedures need to be followed. After further discussion, it was decided to wait to purchase a new borough truck. Will revisit purchase of new truck at a later date.

Mr. Drumm said the catch basins at the gazebo is really deep and at JR's need to be replaced. Mr. Drumm said bids need to be received. Mr. Drumm said his business can present a sealed bid but cannot vote on accepting the bid. Mr. Simon said he has no problem with Mr. Drumm presenting a sealed bid to replace the catch basins. Mr. Seminick also said he has no problem with Mr. Drumm submitting a sealed bid. Mr. Steff said a person sitting on council cannot benefit by getting a contract. Member can bid on project if it is out in the open and council

acknowledges and accepts the issue. Mr. Steff said it is an open process. Mrs. Gordon said she is not totally comfortable but willing to give vote on it. Ms. Hutsky said she is OK with taking sealed bid from Drumm as long as it is not illegal. Mr. Drumm's company will put bid in for catch basin work on 5th Street and at gazebo. Mr. Frye said he received bid for catch basin work on 5th Street near JR's.

Mr. Drumm said that Mr. Landis needs another load of No. 4 limestone for Oak Street. Ok to purchase.

BUILDING PERMITS: A copy of Mr. Morrow's report is provided to council in their folders. Secretary read summary as follows: Sign permit issued for 890 Ohio River Boulevard.

FINANCE & BUDGET TAX REPORT: Taxes collected for October $60.86; Tax Collector Commission $1.83; Total Bills Paid $23,767.09; Payroll $4,415.65; Pennvest November payment $1,604.54; October collection from Rochester Area Joint Sewer is $5,543.89.

Mr. Simon made motion to accept report and pay tax collector commission. Mrs. Gordon seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion carried.

Mrs. Gordon asked for approval to transfer $40,000 from EIT account to general fund in order to cover bills for January and February until tax money is received. Mr. Seminick made motion to transfer $40,000 from EIT account to general fund account. Ms. Hutsky seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion carried.

The proposed 2021 budget was presented. There will be no tax increase. Mentioned about need to raise taxes one mill more. Secretary said no one complained about tax increase last year. Mr. Drumm asked Mrs. Gordon if the borough will make it through 2021 with no tax increase. Mrs. Gordon said the budget prepared is not extravagant and if the engineer controls his bill, we should be OK. Mr. Drumm said if we put in for the storm water grant again next year, Mr. Frye has already done the leg work; and will need only to finalize the paperwork and permitting for submission next year. Mrs. Gordon said the engineering fees for 2020 to date are $24,000 over budget and most of those fees were for preparing all the documentation and submitting the grant application. Mr. Steff will advertise that the proposed 2021 budget is available for inspection at the borough office. Mr. Simon made motion for solicitor to advertise proposed 2021 budget. Mrs. Gordon seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion carried. Mr. Drumm asked for motion to have solicitor prepare tax ordinance for 2021 at 23 mills and advertise for adoption at the December meeting. Mr. Simon made motion to have solicitor prepare 2021 tax ordinance at 23 mills and advertise for adoption at December council meeting. Mrs. Gordon seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion carried.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Secretary received report and there were no fire calls for month of October.

SOLICITOR, ORDINANCE & LITIGATION: Mr. Steff said he did review the ordinances presented by the fire department and emailed the Rochester Township solicitor

regarding some questions he has on the ordinance with recovering costs from insurance companies. Mr. Steff said he sees no problem with us approving the ordinance but just has a few questions for the Township solicitor. Mrs. Gordon asked about fire department recovering costs for services through insurance companies. It was noted that no individual will receive a bill from the fire department, the bill will be sent to the insurance company. Mr. Steff said the other ordinance regarding regulation of false fire calls. He mentioned that sometimes there are malfunctioning alarm systems and the fire department answers the call anyway. He read the schedule regarding the number of false alarms and the costs as follows: 2 false alarms – no charge; 3-5 - $50 charge; 6 and 7 false alarms - $100 charge; 8 and 9 false alarms - $200 charge and 10 or more - $500 charge.

Mr. Steff said regarding Ordinance No. 330 from April 6, 2016. This is an ordinance amending the code of ordinances establishing No Parking Zones along Lacock Avenue. Parking is prohibited along Lacock Avenue as follows: East side of Lacock from intersections of 1st St. to 7th St.; from State Route 65 to 1st Street on both sides of the roadway; from intersection of 7th Street to Rochester Township line on both sides of the roadway. Mr. Steff asked if it is the Mayor's intention to get rid of all or part of the no parking on Lacock. Secretary said she thinks it is his intention to get rid of it except for around the bend at the borough building. Mr. Seminick said the ordinance was put in because of snow plowing. Mr. Steff said if satisfied do not change ordinance and if not going to enforce parking restrictions, then remove the signs.

BOROUGH ENGINEER: Mr. Frye said he did research regarding the alley way between Pine and Atlas, namely Canton Way. The alleyway is 15 feet wide. Feels that property belongs to Lacock Cemetery. Shrubs hang over the bank onto the roadway. Mr. Landis will also check. Secretary will contact head of Lacock Cemetery.

RECREATION: Ms. Hutsky said she wants to get the shelter repaired. Mr. Drumm said that will be a project next spring.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Drumm said he attended a virtual call with Mr. Foreman from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and members of Rochester Borough council and Rochester Township commissioners before the council meeting. He mentioned that if the 3 municipalities combine services, jobs will be lost. He said the state will pay for a survey, but feels that the combination of services would not benefit the residents of the borough.

There being no further business a motion was made by Mr. Simon and seconded by Ms. Hutsky to adjourn the meeting. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Dunn, Borough Secretary/Treasurer