

The regular monthly meeting of the Town Council of the Borough of East Rochester was held Wednesday, May 3, 2023 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 and roll call was taken.

PRESENT: John Drumm, Joyce Gordon, Joseph Seminick, James Simon and David Wagner

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Knox, Solicitor Paul Steff, Sgt. Dawn Shane, Engineer Jeff Frye and Deborah Ahern.

ABSENT: Code Enforcement Officer Frank Mercier

CITIZENS REPORT: Mrs. Ahern asked if the borough is still paying the insurance for the fire department. Mr. Drumm replied “no”.

Mrs. Ahern asked about soliciting permits. Questioned whether anything is on the borough website about soliciting. Secretary responded that she has not issued soliciting permits for at least 3 years. Mrs. Ahern went into detail about people soliciting in the borough regarding home renovations. Sgt. Shane said if there is doubt about whether a soliciting permit was issued, please call the police and they will check to see if a permit was issued. If no permit was issued then they can ask the person soliciting to leave the borough. Sgt. Shane that sometimes if a permit is issued through Rochester Borough or Rochester Township, the person soliciting thinks the permit applies to East Rochester also.

Mrs. Ahern then asked how many hours the borough secretary is being paid per week. Mrs. Gordon responded 24 hours.

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

COMMUNICATIONS: Secretary read email from Rep. Matzie’s office regarding a lunch and learn regarding grants which will be held on May 19, 2023 from Noon to 2:00 at the 911 Center. Secretary said she would like to attend and Mrs. Gordon said she would attend.

MAYOR and POLICE: Mayor Knox gave the police report. There were 82 calls for service in April, 1 arrest and 15 traffic citations.

Sgt. Shane mentioned about the person who owns the property near the bridge who threw the generator box off his property. Discussion held about keeping the generator at the bridge. The gentleman who owns the property dragged the empty box for the generator to the edge of the street and cut the chain that was attached to the box. Mr. Drumm said he will check the

borough maps as he thinks there is a right-of-way of 15 feet, which should allow the borough to keep the box on the 15-foot right-of-way. The property owner was mad because someone drove on his property, not sure if it was the borough laborer. Also, Mr. Drumm said he will contact the property owner. Sgt. Shane is necessary can put the generator on a dolly and wheel it over to the traffic signal box.

Mr. Drumm said he will also discuss this with PennDOT when he meets with them.

STREETS & SEWERS: Council reviewed the bids received for the garage door for the salt shed. One bid was from Doors by Ike for \$1,600 for a warehouse type roll up door and no door seals included. The other bid was from Electric Garage Door Sales for \$2,197.50 for a warehouse type roll up door with door seals. Secretary was asked to contact Doors by Ike to see if they would include a door seal. Mr. Wagner made motion to accept bids from Doors by Ike if they would include a door seal up to an amount of \$1,900. Mrs. Gordon seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion was carried.

Mr. Drumm said the sewer line along Route 65 was repaired. It was completely backed up. He said a 7-foot piece of pipe was replaced.

Mr. Simon said the service truck has been repaired and is back at the borough building.

Mr. Drumm said he noticed someone was dumping debris at the lift station and he called the police. The person owned a white van with ladders on the top. Not sure if permission was given to dump there. Mrs. Gordon asked if the materials were dumped on Gentilli property. Mr. Drumm was asked to look for a plot plan for that area.

BUILDING PERMITS: Mr. Mercier's report in folder. It was mentioned that Mr. Brkovich's garage on 1st Street is ready to fall over. Mayor Knox said that the previous code enforcement officer was working with the county to get the property on the county demolition list, but not sure exactly what had been done. Also, the properties on Oak and Pine need to be looked into to see if they are on the county demolition list. According to the Code Enforcement Officer's report, the owner of the property on Landell who had the property torn down is in the process of getting dumpsters to have the property cleared.

Mrs. Gordon said that Mr. Steff had addressed previously about cleaning up the properties and then putting liens on properties. Mr. Steff said the issue with filing liens is that the borough may not get their money back. Mr. Steff said that if taxes on the properties have not been paid and they are in the county tax repository, there is no one who will admit they are the owner of the property. If you put borough money into the property, tear it down and then put a lien on the property, who will then pay off the lien. If someone buys property through judicial sale, it can be purchased free and clear of the lien.

With regard to Oak Avenue, there is a different program for getting property demolished by county. Mr. Steff said you can voluntarily put a property on the list for demotion by the county, but there is certain money available through the county if you have an owner that you can actually talk to and they consent to put it on the demolition list, there is funds available through the county, the county will bid out those projects and have the property demolished.

But the county puts a lien for the demolition on the property which comes off at a rate of 20% per year for 5 years. So, in five years it would all go away, but it prevents someone from using that program to clear the property and flip it. Mr. Steff said he does not have a file on that property and what Mr. Morrow did about that property. Mr. Steff said to find out about if the property is on the voluntary list, he would have to contact the county. With respect to 826 Oak Avenue, he can check with the county. Mrs. Gordon said 826 Oak is owned by Delanko. Then it was thought that 826 is owned by Mr. Kaminski who passed away. Mayor Knox asked Mr. Steff if the borough would have to locate someone with ownership interest in the property in order to have it put on the list. Mr. Steff said “yes”.

Mr. Steff indicated that he will check with the county to see if the property on Oak Avenue is on the county demolition list. There are various ways to have properties put on the demolition list with the county, which are each handled differently. Mr. Steff said if there is someone trained in the demolition process, can go through condemnation process under the International Property Maintenance Code, or through own borough ordinances or through Civil Litigation with expert testimony about the condition of the property looking for a court order, or you can end up with a voluntary consent agreement with the county.

Secretary said that 826 Oak is owner by Mr. Gentilli who has no running water. It was mentioned that the property talked about is owner by Mr. Kaminski who passed away. Secretary said she will provide Mr. Steff with the exact address.

It was mentioned that Mr. Gentilli has no running water to his residence and has had none for some time. He turns the water on at the curb with a wrench and turns the water on so he can use it. The water company will not cut the service at the curb.

FINANCE AND BUDGET/TAX REPORT: Tax Collection for April \$29,685.18; Tax Collection Commission for April \$900.09; Total bills paid in April \$25,716.21; Payroll for April \$3,946.92 (net pay - includes street, secretary, zoning, tax collector); Pennvest April payment \$1,024.95; Payment for March from Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority \$4,583.85

Mrs. Gordon made motion to pay tax collector’s commission. Mr. Wagner seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion was carried. Ms. Gordon made motion to pay bills. Mr. Simon seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion was carried.

Mr. Simon made motion to pay invoice of \$9,686.00 to Drumm & Sons Contracting for repair of the sewer line along Route 65 (to be paid from sewer maintenance account); pay Stephenson Equipment invoice in the amount of \$1,124.79 for skid loader repair (to be paid from liquid fuels account) and invoice from Drumm & Sons Contracting in the amount of \$11,525.00 for catch basin repairs (to be paid by county pursuant to ARP Fund grant). Mrs. Gordon seconded. By way of roll call vote, with Mr. Drumm abstaining from vote, all in favor and motion was carried.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Two hazardous condition calls for the month of April.

SOLICITOR, ORDINANCE & LITIGATION: Progress

BOROUGH ENGINEER: Mr. Frye said he has called PennDOT to discuss the catch basin issues on Stewart Avenue. He said the majority of the problem in that area is PennDOT's not maintaining the catch basins. He said he is hoping that PennDOT will respond and offer to help with the situation. If not then it may be necessary for the solicitor to send a letter. Mr. Frye said that PennDOT has caused damage to Stewart Avenue. It was mentioned that if the borough has to repair Stewart Avenue, it would have to use the monies set aside for other streets in the borough.

Discussed about installing catch basins on Ramsey Way and also from Sixth down to Fifth Street, and Stewart Avenue. There is money left in the county ARP Fund. We have approximately \$60,000 remaining. Hopefully PennDOT will be willing to share via agreement the cost of the catch basins. If not, the borough may need for Mr. Steff contact PennDOT. One catch basin is falling apart and covered with leaves and the water is running over top of it and the other catch basin is caved in. There is nothing going into PennDOT's draining system – it is just running out into the street. Mr. Frye will set up a meeting with PennDOT. Mr. Frye said that if doing catch basin project, the county ARP funds will not pay for paving, but if associated with the project they will pay for it because it would be considered restoration from the project. Mr. Frye said he work on getting bids for Ramsey Way, Sixth Street down to Fifth.

There was a water main break on Fourth Street. Beaver Falls Municipal Authority repaired the break and patched the area, but the road is a mess. Mr. Frye suggested putting the Beaver Falls Municipal Authority on notice to contact the borough with regard to their plans to restore the road.

Mr. Frye said he received a call from Lennon, Smith, Souleret Engineering with regard to the project at the East Washington Street Ballfield. He was told that the project was completed and that the engineers said there are one or two pieces of old fence and asked if we want replaced. Mentioned at this time, that water is laying along the first base line at the ballfield which was not previously there. Mr. Frye said he will check with the engineers, since there was not water there previously. Mr. Simon said Duquesne Light put a lock on the gate. It has DLC on the lock. It had to be cut so the borough man could get into the ballfield area.

RECREATION: Mayor Knox said he received information on the Greenway Trails Grant. The grant funds can be used for anything recreational. He indicated that the borough would need to get pricing from the engineer. He mentioned about making putting a parking lot in the back field area that would be used as an entrance to the ballfield. Mayor Knox said it is a matching grant, but if you do the work, the work done by the borough is a match. Mrs. Gordon asked who is going to do the work. Mayor Knox said the borough man. She said he already has work to do in the borough. She also said the borough cannot afford another matching grant. Mayor Knox said he is just putting out ideas. Mr. Frye said he has dealt with this in other municipalities, they use borough labor to offset some of the matching costs or donated materials. But the borough only has one laborer.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Progress

NEW BUSINESS: Progress

EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 8:00 p.m. council went into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

Council reconvened the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Mr. Simon made motion to increase the hourly rate for Gregory Gozur, street laborer, to \$18.50 per hour. Mr. Wagner seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion was carried.

Mr. Simon made motion to increase the hourly rate for the borough secretary to \$16.50 per hour. Mr. Wagner seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion was carried.

Mr. Simon made motion to hire a street laborer for four hours per week at the rate of \$10.00 per hour. Mr. Wagner seconded. By way of roll call vote, all in favor and motion was carried.

There being no further business a motion was made by Mr. Simon and seconded by Mr. Seminick to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Dunn, Borough Secretary/Treasurer