

BOROUGH OF LEHIGHTON

PHONE 610-377-4002
FAX 610-377-6638

MUNICIPAL BUILDING, P.O. BOX 29, LEHIGHTON, PA 18235



February 3, 2025

RE: Lehighon Borough Council Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2025

CALL TO ORDER – 6:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation

Roll Call

The regular meeting of Lehighon Borough Council was held in the municipal building on Monday January 6, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President Grant Hunsicker. Council Members in attendance were: Autumn Abelovsky, John Kreitz, Jordyn Miller, Dave Zimmerman, Rebecca Worthy, and Steve Hawk. Officials in attendance were: Mayor Ryan Saunders, Borough Manager Dane DeWire, Fire Chief Patrick Mriss, Police Chief Troy Abelovsky, Public Works Superintendent Kris Kunkle, Light & Power Superintendent Barry Fisher, Solicitor James Nanovic, Borough Engineer Vanessa Nedrick, and Borough Secretary Jessica Ahner. Officials that were absent: Recreation Director Tom Evans and Junior Council Member Alex Sebelin.

HEARING OF PERSONS PRESENT

Joe Flickinger addressed Council regarding the Sunshine Act and asked why the Borough continues to use generic terminology when going into executive session. In a packet he distributed and referred to page 4, he read information to Council and then questioned them.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DeWire announced that Chief Abelovsky had some changes to the December 2, 2024 minutes. Chief read *24 frozen turkeys and \$3700.00 will be donated to the veterans at Valor House in Carbon County. Our police department also was able to collect 6,000 non-perishable food items to support the Valor House. In December, the police department will be participating in the December "Shop with a Cop" event. During this event, less fortunate families with children will have an opportunity to shop with our officers. Santa makes an appearance and lunch is*

provided to the families and volunteers. He passed on verbiage to the secretary to change. Abelovsky then announced she would like to make changes to the minutes from December 16, 2024 , changing the tax levy to 11mils instead of 11.5 mils. RW/JK motioned to approve the Regular Meeting minutes dated December 2, 2024 and the Special Meeting minutes dated December 16, 2024 with changes and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DeWire spoke about the Special Event Plan, considering some things Council wanted to implement. He recommends we implement this plan as soon as we can. Abelovsky mentioned that in the event the EMC is not available, it will defer to the Deputy to handle EMC operations. Flickinger agreed. DeWire stated that any number of attendance would only require one ambulance going forward. Abelovsky asked if there was anything in the plan regarding the type of events. Flickinger stated he would reach out to Mr. Heckman regarding coverage for this. He noted firework events would need fire coverage; it does depend on the type of event. DeWire wanted to know if everyone agreed to one ambulance. Miller asked if we have different forms for service events. DeWire responded that we do have forms that tag along for Public Works Department for barricades and Light & Power for electricity service requests. He gave the suggestion to Council to adopt the Special Event Plan tonight so it doesn't hold up the non-profit Events any longer. SH/JK motioned to adopt the Special Event Plan and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

DeWire commented that even though we adopted the Special Event Plan, all or some Events may not be approved.

AA/SH motioned to approve LDI 2025 Events and 6 were in favor and Rebecca Worthy abstained. 6-0-1

Abelovsky mentioned that there are two applications for Plant Fest. Going forward, Amy Wood will be handling the Plant Fest Event. JK/RW motioned to approve Carbon County Plant Fest event and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

Kreitz commented on LAMA events regarding parking and excessive noise in park. Saunders agreed that park should be closed at 10pm due to noise. Fire Chief Mriss was concerned about closing 1st Street and trying to get through in the event of emergency. The suggestion was made about moving LAMA Event to 2nd Street and not closing 1st Street. Abelovsky mentioned that the liability insurance should be coming from organizations, not from a person. JK/SH motioned to approve LAMA's 2025 Midnight Market and 5 were in favor. Autumn Abelovsky was not in favor and Rebecca Worthy abstained. 5-1-1

SH/RW motioned to approve the D&L Trail Stencil and to allow the stencils to be applied to our trail and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

DeWire discussed the Riverfront Property Acquisition Survey Proposals. We received four proposals for this project. The property is 75 acres total within 4 lots by the Riverfront. The

property will require a physical survey, electronic survey, a deed study, a deed description for a new parcel, and a reverse subdivision. It will be a long process with the railroad being involved, so this is going to be a multi-year process until this is finished. The four proposals we received range from \$17,000 to \$45,000. DeWire thoroughly took the time to read through them and the \$17,000 proposal is not fully inclusive. He does not think the \$17,000 proposal will get us what we need. DeWire went on to explain that the rest of proposals were Barry Isett Associates, GPI, and KCE, and none of the proposals are alike. The highest proposal from KCE of \$45,000 is a price ceiling and we will never pay more than \$45,000. The \$35,000 proposal from BIA is a price floor. Kreitz asked if this was included in the 2025 budget. DeWire replied it is in the 2025 budget. He explained the numbers and how it exhausts half of the engineer budget. DeWire stated that as long as we do not have high accumulation of snow, any of these companies could do this in 2 to 3 months. It was asked if it could be priced separately for multiple stages. DeWire said it can be, if the vendor will allow it, but they are all charging for services differently. Worthy commented that she believes that \$45,000 is a good number for how big the project is. DeWire's recommendation would be to use Barry Isett at \$35,000 or Keystone Engineering at \$45,000 for this project. Hawk commented that you really don't know what you are getting into until you start a project. Abelovsky agreed. EMC Flickinger asked where the access locations are, and DeWire said there are a few; one being at the east end of Maiden Lane and under the train trestle which is owned by Norfolk Southern. This would be the southern access. There is a northern access in Packerton Yards, basically accessed for utilities. We must always provide 100% access to the County. There was further discussion on why we want this property.

AA/DZ motioned to select Keystone Consulting Engineers at \$45,000 for the Riverfront Project and 6 were in favor and Steve Hawk abstained. 6-0-1

DeWire wanted to make sure Council was aware we voted last year to take the Rental Inspection Program from a 1-year requirement to a 2-year requirement. There were also additional clauses that were voted on last year. What is in the packet is an ordinance that amends the former. AA/SH motioned to advertise Tenant Registration Ordinance, and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

NEW BUSINESS

Abelovsky announced the winners for the Christmas Light Decoration contest for residents that included 231 Carbon St. Melissa Frey, 229 Carbon St. Denise Watts, 338 Coal St. Jill Parsons, 463 N 4th St. Beth Mesko, 728 Mahoning St. Brad Cressley, 1 2nd Ave. Lamont Rodgers, 47 2nd Ave. Erica Mesaros, 105 Stedman Ave. David Kern, 163 S 5th St. Maryann Muffley, and 483 S 9th St. Vaughn Andrew.

DeWire announced the results of winners for the Christmas Light Decoration contest for business properties that included Salon Indigo, Leighton Boys & Girls Band Hall, Anthracite Mercantile, Styling Zone, Violent Venus Tattoo Studio.

Motion to Approve/Reappoint Borough Officials does not need to be done every year but can be according to Solicitor Nanovic.

Abelovsky questioned the Crossing Guard Salary. DeWire replied it was left the same as the 2024 budget because he never heard back from the School District regarding other projects. Abelovsky then asked what the Recreation Assistance Program Employees is. DeWire replied that this was a position the previous manager had in budget, but the position was never created. DeWire only made changes to Part-Time Linemen Helpers, which increased from \$14.00 to \$20.00 per hour. Kunkle asked what warrants a \$6.00 per hour increase over any other position. He wanted to know if Public Works Positions were given any kind of consideration for increase in pay. DeWire replied this is what was discussed and there were considerably amount increases in all departments. Abelovsky asked how many Part-Time Public Works employees there were. Kunkle said 2. Fisher went on to say his Part-timer is a great asset to the department. Fisher said the only thing is he does not have a CDL Certification. Kunkle said one of his Part-Time employees does have a CDL Certification. DeWire said he could split the difference between the 3 employees. There was Council Discussion and they agreed. DeWire to have a meeting with Public Works and Light and Power to revisit their Part-Time employees. DZ/BW motioned to approve Resolution #R-01-2025 base salary rates for 2025 and 6 were in favor and Autumn Abelovsky abstained from motion. 6-0-1

JK/SH motioned to approve Resolution #R-02-2025 Setting the Rate of Contribution to the Police Pension Fund for Calendar Year 2025 and 5 in favor and Autumn Abelovsky and Rebecca Worthy abstained from motion. 5-0-2

JK/DZ motioned to approve Resolution #R-03-2025 Financial Depositories and Check Signatures and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

JK/RW motioned to approve Resolution #R-04-2025 for AMP Pennsylvania R.I.C.E. Peaking Project and Shares and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

JK/RW motioned to approve Resolution #R-05-2025 adjusting the PPA B-factor by \$0.003 to adjust the electricity rates for 2025 and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

DeWire explained that normally we do not release fire escrow the funds until the home is returned to its original condition; however, in this case the owner is not permitted to rebuild in the C1 or C2 district. In order to rebuild, the owner can go to ZHB for a variance, or we can adjust the zoning map so owner can rebuild the same structure. JK/RW motioned to release fire escrow funds for 1st Street Cleanup and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

DeWire noted the new PathStone Annex Rental Contract will be valid from July 2025-2029. He addressed that they will be paying the utilities going forward. Abelovsky addressed that she thinks that if anything gets broken, she does not think the Borough should be held responsible. She also said she cannot get upstairs of the building when needed after hours and requested that changes should be changed to PathStone Annex Rental Contract.

AA/RW motioned to amend the agenda to add discussions on moving the canal boat and on verbiage within the agreement with Walnutport Canal Association and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

DeWire wanted to expedite the moving of the canal boat to Walnutport by creating an agreement with them. There is a verbal agreement that Walnutport will pay \$1000.00 towards moving the boat. We will be paying the other \$900.00 to the contractor. DeWire is looking for a motion to proceed with moving the canal boat, to release the \$900.00 to Northeast Industrial Services for the move, and to permit Atty Nanovic to create a formal contract.

AA/RW motioned to hire Northeast Industrial Services to move the canal boat, and to have a contract drafted and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

SH/JM motioned to appoint Borough Secretary as delegate and Borough Treasurer as alternate for 2025 Carbon County Tax Committee and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

JK/RW motioned to accept Resignation Letters from Autumn Abelovsky, Carol Ritter, and Richard Zimmerman from Parks & Recreation and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

Abelovsky spoke about the future of the Parks and Recreation Board and the lack of volunteers. She stated that a lot has been accomplished, but it no longer aligns with original board description. She stated there are only 2 remaining members. JK/SH motioned to advertise meeting for Parks and Recreation, and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

DeWire spoke about extending APT's contract. JK/SH motioned to extend Advanced Pipe Technologies – I&I Rehabilitation Contract to February 14, 2025 and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

Kreitz addressed concerns that were raised with Borough Engineering Services. Nedrick was asked why rates were raised so much, and her reply was that it was done by the CEO of the company. Nedrick went on to say she is willing to take the rates back to her manager to take another look at them. She went on to say that every project that is done for the Borough is generally quoted in a Proposal, not an hourly rate. Kreitz asked Zoning Officer Dohmen if he had issues with RVE. Dohmen said they seldom work with RVE, but there were some setbacks. Abelovsky then asked Dohmen about having problems getting answers from Nedrick. Dohman answered, yes, regarding the Buglov application. Nedrick said she couldn't give information if their engineer, Cornerstone, wouldn't call her back. She reiterated that it is on them that she couldn't get answers.

OFFICIAL'S REPORTS

President of Council – Nothing to report.

Borough Manager – Paper report provided. DeWire wanted to address that he is working on the second distribution of funding from the state for I&I work. There are pieces of pipe that need to be replaced on Stanley Hoffman Boulevard and funding hopefully will be coming in next

year to replace the highway. The 2025 Salt Contract has been secured and Public Works ordered salt as of Friday, January 3, 2025. AMP's off-peak generation is more efficient than what was originally proposed when the former manager was here in 2019. DeWire will be working with Fisher on the off-peak generators. The generators to be installed on the other side of the railroad tracks. DeWire is also working with Keystone to run wire for cameras in the park. The new website is coming along; Bob Bysler, with Na Studios, has been working in the background to get the website up and running. DeWire is looking to get a hiring committee formed for the Vice-Superintendent Position for Power and Light and for the Police Administration Position. Abelovsky asked about park cameras. DeWire said we are going to be running the wire from the roof to council chambers then dropped into one cable going to be dropped down into the manager's office. DeWire will have access to all the cameras being installed. We are moving along on this and hopefully will have cameras installed on this building and start troubleshooting shortly.

Borough Engineer – Paper report provided. Nedrick spoke about the I/I work that has been done and that the payment Certificate #1 was approved by Council in November 2024 for payment in the amount of \$22,482.65. The lining operation has begun and there are some pipe sections that will not be lined due to collapsed pipe. These pipe sections will need to be excavated and replaced. Pipe sections to be replaced are located on South Street, First Street, and Sgt. Stanley Hoffman Blvd. Public Works Staff will working to uncover buried manholes. RVE recommends approval of Payment Certificate #2 in the amount of \$411,552.76.

Current items open for Planning Commission are 255 Bankway Street, awaiting review and approval from CCCD; 431 South 7th Street, Lot line Adjustment to consolidate 2 lots; 413 Mahoning Street convert office building into 4 apartments, asking for Conditional Use and 115 Fourth Street convert former church into 12 apartments, asking for Conditional Use.

Solicitor – Nothing to Report

Treasurer – Paper Report provided.

Mayor – Civil Service Funding Grant for police officers would be a good idea. We can use it for sign on bonus or to send an officer for Act 180 training. Hawk said he thought many months ago we found a sign-on bonus more desirable. Abelovsky asked what the sign on bonus amount would be. Chief replied that the amounts are usually \$5,000. She said that it would place us very competitive with other departments.

Police Chief – Paper report provided. Chief Abelovsky stated we are planning to fill our secretary's position at the Police Department. Chief included last month's report in the packet and had nothing to report this month. He spoke about the ceiling in garage area and met with Public Works and the Borough Manager. Over the Holidays, the department sponsored 4 families, 6 juveniles, and raised over \$1,500 to support them. We also had a Christmas party with Volunteers and Santa who handed out presents to families in need. It was held at the Recreation Center and had a good turnout.

Fire Chief – Paper Report provided. Fire Chief examined two hot spot locations. He also looked at Fire Hydrant location on South 9th Street. He wanted to make everyone aware in case information was needed.

Light & Power Superintendent – Paper report provided. Nothing to Report.

Public Works Superintendent – Paper report provided. Kunkle reported we received our salt delivery on 1/6/2025. The street sweeper is still in Harrisburg being evaluated. We still have not heard what is wrong with it and waiting on quote. He has a person coming to look at guardrail repair on Gypsy Hill Road, and we will need to involve our Police Department so we can get compensation back to the Borough for the repair.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Administration – David Zimmerman, Chair; Jordyn Miller. Zimmerman thanked First Responders, Fire Department, and Police Department for responding to an incident at his home.

Economic Development, Buildings and Codes – Autumn Abelovsky, Chair; John Kreitz, Co-Chair. Nothing to Report.

Police, Fire and Safety – Ryan Saunders, Chair; Rebecca Worthy, Co-Chair. Nothing to Report.

Light & Power Committee – Rebecca Worthy, Chair; Steve Hawk, Co-Chair. AMP Scholarship nominee, Emma Bonser was announced.

Sewer Committee – Steve Hawk, Chair; Autumn Abelovsky, Co-Chair. Nothing to Report.

Streets, Public Works & Recreation – John Kreitz, Chair; David Zimmerman, Co-Chair. Kreitz- Nothing to Report.

Library Board – Rebecca Worthy. Nothing to Report.

Parks & Recreation Board – Autumn Abelovsky. Abelovsky announced that Christmas in the Park trees to be undecorated by Sunday, January 12, 2025. Trees scheduled to be removed from the park on January 13, 2025.

Canal Commission – Ryan Saunders. Saunders reported that Canal Commission will not be meeting until January 2025.

Council of Governments- Steve Hawk, Delegate; Dave Zimmerman, Alternate. Hawk reported that the Council of Governments next meeting will be January 10, 2025.

Junior Councilperson – Alexander Seblin. Nothing to Report. Not Present.

ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICIAL'S REPORTS

RW/AA motioned to accept the official reports as presented and all were in favor with no questions or objections. 7-0

ACCEPTANCE OF PAYABLE ACCOUNTS AND ADDITIONAL BILLS

JK/DZ motioned to approve bills \$137,560.91, a \$300,000.00 transfer from L&P to the General fund as needed, and additional bills of \$3,960.20 and all were in favor with no objections. 7-0

AA/JM motioned to amend the agenda to include discussions on hiring committees for the Light & Power Assistant Superintendent and the Police Department Administrative Assistant, and Discussion on direction of Civil Service Grant and 6 were in favor and Rebecca Worthy abstained. 6-0-1

Grant Hunsicker appointed a hiring committee for the Light and Power Assistant Superintendent vacancy: Worthy, Hawk, DeWire, Fisher, and himself.

Grant Hunsicker appointed a hiring committee for the Police Department Administrative Assistant vacancy: Hawk, Miller, Saunders, DeWire, and Chief Abelovsky.

ADJOURNMENT

RW/SH motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 pm. 7-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Ahner, Borough Secretary