

MEETING MINUTES
MORRISVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2016
7:00 p.m.

The Morrisville Borough Council met on Friday, December 30, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Morrisville Municipal Borough, 35 Union Street, Morrisville, PA for a Special Council Meeting.

Mr. Kerner stated, we will start with a moment of silent prayer followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Mr. Kerner stated, I will now ask the Borough Manager, for a roll call.

Mr. Sooby took roll call at this time.

Those in Attendance:

Borough Council: Fred Kerner, President
Ted Parker, Vice President
Victor Cicero
Corryn Kronnagel
Danielle Larison
Bill Pepitone
Todd Sanford
Debbie Smith

Borough Officials: Mayor David Rivella
Robert C. Sooby, Borough Manager
Robert A. Seward, Assistant Borough Manager/Code Enforcement
Sean Kilkenny, Solicitor

Absent:

Junior Councilperson: Garlie St. Cyr

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

There were no special presentations this evening.

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

1. Holly Harman - South Pennsylvania Avenue

She stated, for many years there was no financial oversight or accountability by the former Borough Manager. The current Manager admittedly has no managerial experience and has had a year to set up maintenance schedules and task lists. They're still are none. There is no recording of mileage for Borough vehicles, and many if not all Borough road crew employees are allowed unlimited use of Borough vehicles for personal use. According to current IRS regulations any mileage used for personal use is to be reported as a taxable income for the employee. This is not being done. This also increases depreciation and excellerates the expiration of the vehicle warranties not to mention the need for increased maintenance and replacement parts, all at the taxpayers expense. The current manager has ignored repeated requests to implement Borough property maintenance schedules. In spite of the deficit, he continues to make unnecessary purchases in the past year and has budgeted for non necessary purchases like a sound system for the park that is rarely used. None of how the trash charges have been calculated makes any sense. Along with keeping the taxes at the same milage, the trash fees have been raising the equivalent of 2 1/2 mils. There needs to be some serious belt tightening. There is no action plan to implement a hiring freeze or outsourcing various labor intense activities such as payroll. The borough still does manual payroll with timecards, right from the stone ages. Too many funds are nebulous with no line items and non-requisites such as the street sweeping budget quadrupled and decades of ignored tree stump removal can be spread out over several years instead of addressing it all at once. This morning in court, Ms. Kronnagel, Mr. Sooby and Mr. Kilkeny sure had a good laugh leaving that courtroom and I didn't find it funny at all. Thank you.

2. Kurt Holthenrichs - 300 Melvin Court North

He stated, are we really buying two more trucks in this budget?

Mr. Sooby replied, no.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, we're not -- I can get this on audio tonight, we're not buying more trucks this year, correct? There's no dump truck plan, no other vehicles?

Mr. Sooby replied, there is a possibility we might buy a truck, but not trucks.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, okay.

Mr. Sooby replied, I'm not even sure we're going to buy one. But I don't want to say I would, because we do need one, because we're using our bucket truck as a tow vehicle. A bucket truck is very expensive to replace, so public works is asking for a truck to pull the stump grinder, one of the trailers that we have that carries the stump grinder, things like that. But nothing is definite, there are no plans right now.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, my Dodge can pull that stump grinder around. We don't have a pick up truck on the public works? The truck that's out there that's used for public works, the pick up truck, the nice white one, that doesn't have a tow hitch to tow a stump grinder?

Mr. Sooby asked, which one are you talking about? I don't know which truck you are talking about.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, the one that I guess the Crew Chief drives around in.

Mr. Kilkenny stated, I do want to remind Mr. Sooby and Mr. Kerner and everyone that this is time for public comment, not necessarily a question and answer --

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, well, I mean, we have other trucks.

Mr. Kilkenny stated, unless directed by the Council President.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, that's fine, but we have trucks, we have to buy another truck to tow a stump grinder. My Xterra can tow the stump grinder around. It doesn't make sense that we're maintaining a 32.75 mil tax rate, our fees are going up with the tax -- with our trash bills and we have a deficit we are running and we are thinking about buying another truck just to tow a stump grinder around that we don't even need, that we aren't even using regularly. As far as hiring the new police officer, part-time, full-time, aren't they supposed to go through certain channels to be hired? It isn't just, I know a guy and we're going to hire an officer. Aren't there certain civil service protocols to go through to bring in --

Mr. Kilkenny stated, not for a part-time officer.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, no, it could be anybody.

Mr. Kilkenny replied, well this is an Act 120 certified officer.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, okay, I'm saying it could be just someone brought in.

Mr. Kilkenny replied, as long as they are Act 120 certified meaning certified by the state and graduated the Police Municipal Academy and I understand this person has been a police officer for over 25 years in another municipality.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, okay, I'm not questioning who he is, I'm saying --

Mr. Kilkenny stated, well, if you had listened, the Chief gave a report at the last public meeting describing the detail and his background.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, but we didn't have this on the agenda, there was no agenda meeting to put forth a vote for this, so this should not happen tonight. At the end of the year going in, there was no agenda, it was not put into the agenda. You don't just shove it into tonight's meeting if it was never --

Mr. Kerner stated, it's on tonight's agenda tonight.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, there was no agenda meeting to put it on tonight. You don't do that.

Mr. Kerner replied, yes we do.

Mr. Holthenrichs asked, that's not why we have agenda meetings to say, we want to put new business up?

Mr. Kerner stated, anything can be put on the agenda, as long as it's on that agenda and you have time to see that it's on the agenda, that's all you need.

Mr. Kilkeny stated, it's perfectly legal.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, then why do we have agenda meetings?

Mr. Kerner replied, so we can see each other's faces and talk about what's bothering us.

Mr. Holthenrichs stated, exactly, put something on to the agenda and say hey, we want to do this. Let's get a vote and see if it's something we need and can do it, not just throw it on here December 30th, let's --

Mr. Kerner stated, this council could put something on the agenda right now, we just have to open public comment up again.

Mr. Holthenrichs replied, okay.

Mr. Kerner stated, it's just how government runs.

Mr. Holthenrichs, okay, seems like a friendly hire, okay.

Mr. Kerner asked, anyone else for public comment tonight?

There being no further comments, public comment portion was closed.

Mr. Kerner stated, we will then move on to finance.

FINANCE

Motion 5A - Motion to approve the 2017 Borough budget.

Motion made by Mr. Cicero.

Ms. Kronnagel seconded the motion.

Mr. Kerner asked, is there any discussion on the Borough Budget?

Ms. Smith stated, yeah, I guess it would be me. I wasn't going to come here tonight, because actually, I was supposed to be on vacation, I'm supposed to be in another location right now. But this budget bothers me, it really does. And it bothers me that the public's upset about it and they've got a reason to be. They've got a reason to be upset about the budget before this. I know there's a mess that came from the former manager that just keeps trickling out here and there, it's gotten to a point where we really can cut back on and it's just not going to happen, but you can't say this is a bare bones budget, because it's not. Some of the things I've got to say ditto to, that the residents are mentioning has been mentioned, I've mentioned it. My personal opinion, I think this budget could be a hell of a lot better than what it is, so I'm not happy with it at all. I have to agree with them. This has been a conglomerate of things that have happened to bring it to this point. But when you started out in the beginning of the year with a deficit to begin with and you already had projects that were imminent that had to be getting done along with everything else, there should have been a lot more belt tightening then what we have, so, that's just my opinion on it.

Mr. Kerner asked, any other comments or questions on the budget? We'll do a roll call vote, or hold on, Danielle?

Ms. Larison stated, that's okay, it's fine, do a roll call.

Mr. Kerner stated, a roll call vote.

Mr. Sooby stated, excuse me, I thought Danielle was going to talk.

Mr. Kerner stated, it's a 4-4 tie on the voting, is this one the Mayor is capable of breaking?

Mr. Kilkenny replied, yes.

Mayor Rivella stated, alright, since it is a tie, I will absolutely vote, but I'm going to make a comment, I restrained my comments because I didn't realize it was going to come out this way. I'm going to add in that I personally don't like the budget myself, however, this is the preliminary budget that the council worked out, I attended all the budget workshop meetings, I was surprised that no council person actually came up with a different solution, no one -- at least if they did I certainly didn't get any memos saying we should do this or we should do that, no one showed me different facts. Some of the numbers out there that the public are upset with I certainly understand, some of them are actually incorrect. A lot of people think that \$140,000.00 is going in for police pension next year, it's

\$53,000.00, I'm not sure how that got mistaken for \$140,000.00. I would like to see personally, something that Chief McClay has said over the years, I have said, I have actually expressed it to the new Manager. Monthly meetings, head of the department heads should get together with the management. I'd like to see the finance committee work on the budget and give recommendations throughout the year. I guess we'll have to see what happens, because this is the budget that the council came up with. So, at that, I will vote yes for it. I don't like it, but I'm going to say, the council did not come up with a different budget, so it's yes.

Mr. Kerner stated, thank you Mayor and with that we have a approved budget with a 4-4 tie, tie broken by the Mayor in the positive.

Motion carried by roll call vote, 4-4 with the Mayor breaking the tie. (nay votes being Ms. Larison, Mr. Pepitone, Mr. Sanford and Ms. Smith)

Motion 5B - Motion to adopt the 2017 tax rate ordinance.

Motion made by Ms. Kronnagel.

Mr. Cicero seconded the motion.

Mr. Kerner asked, are there any questions or comments on that tax rate ordinance? Roll Call.

Mr. Kerner stated, we have a 4-4 tie again. Mayor.

Mayor Rivella stated, well, it's interesting. The first meeting of the year I voted a lot, and I guess the last meeting of the year. I'm going to vote yes.

Mr. Kerner stated, thank you Mayor, and again a 4-4 tie voted in the affirmative by the Mayor.

Motion carried by roll call vote, 4-4 with the Mayor breaking the tie.

Motion 5C - Motion for Borough Council to authorize the extension of time for completing the purchase of the property known as M. R. Reiter from the Morrisville School District from December 30th 2016 to January 31st 2017, and to execute the amendment to the agreement of sale in a form as to be approved by Borough Council and as agreed to by the Borough Solicitor.

Motion made by Mr. Parker.

Ms. Smith seconded the motion.

Mr. Kerner asked, are there any questions or comments on that?

Ms. Smith stated, I'd just like to make a comment about it. I attended the meeting with the Commissioners, it was very nicely spoken about Morrisville Borough by Dave Johnson who is with the Planning Commission up there. He spoke about how important the property was, not only to Bucks County as far as history, but our National history. So, we have a piece of property along side of that historical building that is a significant piece of land that we all have had a part of preserving, so I have to tell you that it was a sense of pride to be there and I personally want to thank the School Board and the MEAC and all the Council Members and the Administration that has worked for the last 2 1/2 almost 3 years I guess it is, to align all of this. It was so much to do to get it to this point. Mr. Sooby coming in this in January, I'll never forget the first night you were sworn in and you leaned over to me after the meeting and said I don't know what this is all about, and I said, I'll be right in. And he got up to speed very quickly and he did work very hard to keep up on the paperwork and find out what needed to be done and contact who we needed to contact, so if anything with this Council and the Mayor and everyone else involved, they should all be very proud of being a part of preserving such an important piece of history here in Morrisville, so I thank you all.

Mr. Kerner stated, kind words. All those in favor say aye. Opposed?

Motion carried by voice vote, 8-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business this evening.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion 6A - Motion to hire Michael Levitsky as a part-time Morrisville Borough Police Officer.

Motion made by Ms. Kronnagel.

Mr. Cicero seconded it.

Mr. Kerner asked, any questions or comments on this motion?

Ms. Smith stated, I just want to welcome the new officer into our force. I wish him well and be safe.

Mr. Kerner stated, if we approve him.

Ms. Smith replied, yeah.

Mr. Kerner stated, all those in favor say aye. Opposed?

Motion carried by voice vote, 8-0.

Mr. Kerner stated, that concludes business, do we have any announcements?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Smith stated, if I could just say something, to reiterate something that the Mayor had said, and I have to absolutely agree. It was mentioned about being a little more on top of the finance -- as far as the finance committee, I know is scheduled to meet twice a year, I think it needs to be more, I think we need to be more abreast of expenditures and funds coming in and watch a little closer, it's not good enough to do it twice a year. We need to be on top if it, so I will agree with him with that, something I think we need to look into. Thank you.

Mr. Kerner stated, I would agree with that as well. Borough Officials is kind of the same as Announcements in my opinion. All we have left is adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Mr. Parker and seconded by Mr. Sanford.

Meeting adjourned.