



5:30 Executive Session – Personnel/Police Labor Matters

The Morrisville Borough Council met on Wednesday, November 10, 2021 at 6:53 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Morrisville Municipal Building, 35 Union Street, Morrisville, PA for a Special Council Meeting.

Mr. Parker stated, please rise for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ted Parker asked for roll call.

Those in Attendance:

Borough Council: Ted Parker, President
Bob Paul, Vice President
Justin Bowers
Helen Hlahol
Scott Robinson
Nancy Sherlock
Michael Yager

Borough Officials: Judith Danko, Borough Manager
Micah Heitz, Finance Director (via phone)
Virginia Cyphers, Assist. Borough Secretary (via phone)

Not in Attendance: Dave Rivella, Mayor
Duane Nicol, Councilperson
Scott Holbert, Solicitor

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

There were no special presentations this evening.

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

1. Deborah Colgan – *120 W. Hendrickson Avenue*

She stated, I know that you all have a very difficult task ahead of you tonight to determine our budget and I just wanted to throw out there that I know it's difficult. However, I'm begging you guys to please fund our borough, take care of it. I know that you feel that tax increases nobody wants them and you think that will make people leave town but I tell you what will make people leave town a lot quicker if our town is falling apart and we're not taking care of it. So please find the money, if you have to do an EIT bring the EIT. I encourage those who voted against it to bring it up again but whatever you have to -- you have to fund our borough please. Thank you.

2. Pator Mario Vignets – *100 West Post Road*

He stated, I'm the Senior Pastor of the Spanish Christian Church right here in Morrisville. I'm here in support of the police department right here in Morrisville. I was aware that there are some budget difficulties and that they are planning to cut up the police force in this beautiful Borough. I come to bring to your attention that we need a police department in our neighborhood more than ever. I've been the pastor of this church for the past eight, nine years. The police department has been a big support for our neighborhood, our Church. We are very proud to support the great job that the police department is doing right here in Morrisville. I know there are difficult times, there are problems and difficult like anybody else we have in our finances but there's a way to try to avoid to cut down the police force because today more than ever we need more protection in our neighborhood. The police departments are here to serve and to protect our neighborhoods and Morrisville is one of

the most beautiful neighborhoods around the area. I live in Trenton for the past 40 years and I'm also a Police Chaplain with the Trenton Police Department and it's tough. I experienced myself by working with a community not only right here in Morrisville also in Trenton. It is difficult it's a big dilemma where there's a lack of police presence in our neighborhood. We are so close to a big city we are so close to our neighbors across the bridge a lot of things happen. I believe whoever wanted to commit a crime or do something wrong they're going to find out that there is a shortage of police officers right here in Morrisville. We need to be protected we need to be safe. I'm here in support of the police department. Please I know it's difficult and I don't know how we're gonna do it but I'm here to support the police department to find out to see if there's any way not to cut the police department because we need it, it's something that we need more than ever there's so much crime there are so many difficulties happening here in our communities and the police presence is going to be very important for our protection and safety in our neighborhood. On Sundays we contract the police department to go to our Church to be in our parking lot and every Sunday four hours of the time that we are in the Church we have a presence of the police department and we have a contract with the police department and people come to our Church and they feel safe because there's police over there there's a police presence. In today's days there are so many different things and not only in the malls but also in Churches that they are coming there could be crimes -- they shoot, that's why we are so proud to have our police department for Morrisville supervising our area. There is a financial contract but we feel safe, I feel good I feel in peace when I know there are some police officers there because at our congregation we get people coming to our Church from different places but when they're there I feel comfort that the person is out there. I know in our neighborhood right here in Morrisville but they see the police, they feel safe, they feel protected. I know my time is up. I'm a preacher so I just talk too much. Thank you for your time. I pray to God that you guys

make a great decision and to work in favor of our beautiful police department right here in Morrisville. Thank you for your time.

3. George McClay – *Chief of Police, Morrisville Borough*

He stated, remember six years ago Mr. Bowers you brought your red camera here you videotaped everything and six years ago I said we need to find a financial stream for the Borough and if we don't get one we're going to have a Borough that does not flourish you're going to have a police department that looks quite different. Well for six years we still have not addressed that problem now the department's going to look very different. We started at 11 we went to 10 we're down to 8 officers now that's the only way I can put two officers on the street 24 hours a day. We go down to six you're going to have two on the overnight shift and you're going to have one on day work. One officer to patrol your town, it can't happen, it's dangerous to my officers, it's dangerous to your families. If my officers are here on an arrest they're out of service for three hours that means we don't answer calls, no calls, because they're here with a prisoner they cannot answer calls that cannot happen. Yeah I can be out there I can get there, I still have Chiefs duties to do I have a lot of things to do. I'm still the Chief of the Major Incident Response Team that came here when we had riots in Trenton. There's a reason why they came here because I was the Chief of that team. I can give up all those duties, I can stop going to the meetings I can do all that stuff and be here eight hours a day, that still leaves four hours a day with one officer on the street. It leaves two days that nobody's going to be on the street with that officer that's scary, that's really scary guys. You're starting to put your families in danger and there's one thing people depend on is police service if we're not there for them who's going to be? Falls isn't coming over to answer those calls, the state police aren't coming in to answer those calls, Lower Makefield is not coming in to answer those calls, it's us. This is going to get dangerous it's going to get dangerous quick. I can't blame things on Trenton, a lot of our problems are here internally but you're right across from a river that's has an average day homicide a

week, last week I think they had three. Things are ugly everybody sees the news in Philadelphia things are ugly okay. We've been very lucky here we have some very good officers that help our community out because of that. Imagine being a person calling for help on the 911 line for domestic disturbance officers don't show up because we're in here doing something else or if my officers are on call and we're substituting for school crossing guard, we're not going to do that either because we're going to be on the one call, now we have kids crossing on those days that we're short a crossing guard. When seconds and minutes count you have to depend on your police department you have one person out there I don't care if it's the middle of the night or it's noon time, you need your officers. So we've talked about and I've heard from several of you Mr. Yager, Mr. Bowers about that people will exit our town if we implement this EIT tax.

Mr. Yager stated, we didn't have a conversation sir.

Chief McClay replied, no you spoke up there publicly.

Mr. Yager replied, yes. I just want to make sure because it sounded like you were saying we had a conversation I just want to make sure.

Chief McClay stated, I've listened to you. I listen to everything you guys say up there and that's one of the things you've mentioned right, am I right?

Mr. Yager replied, that's not exactly that way but go ahead.

Chief McClay stated, you basically said the people will leave town because that's really the only thing we haven't done yet is the EIT and there's going to be an exit of people because –

Mr. Yager stated that's not what I said but okay, that's okay, go ahead.

Chief McClay stated, well I just want to talk about a little town next door to us called Middletown Township. I don't think they have an exit of people I think they're doing wonderful over there but wait they have an EIT, a local service tax, a per capita tax, amusement tax, a parking tax and a mercantile tax and they are doing wonderfully, they sent money back to their people this year because they had so much money plus they get money from the casinos which we need to get badly. People want service, people don't care if they're paying taxes as long as their services meet up to that and we're seeing even with John we talked about that leaf yard something minute but we went from street sweepers, we collected leaves, now we're down to trying to open up the leaf yard, so service is just going bye-bye and that's what's going to happen to your police department the service is going to go bye-bye to make it simple. You want to lay off my two secretaries, I'll just be a secretary because that's all I'm going to do. I have to have someone to answer the phones. I'm going to do all the paperwork, I'm on the street or I'm here, it doesn't work, we can't continually cut the police department and maintain the services people want here. Mr. Robinson we met Halloween night we had a discussion and the discussion from you after three handshakes was that you will not lay off two police officers and that you will vote for the EIT, I'm holding you to that promise, three handshakes. I'm going to end with something I learned over the years, being a Boy Scout and being a Boy Scout Leader, Council can you say to yourself, this is a rhetorical question, have you left this Borough in better shape than when you came into office? That's something you really got to think about where are we going? Thank you.

There being no further public comment, President Ted Parker moved to the business portion of the agenda.

Discussion of two Proposed Preliminary Budgets; option “A” and option “B” for the 2022 fiscal year took place regarding the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn, made by Mr. Yager.

Motion seconded by Ms. Sherlock.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

8:50 Executive Session – Police Labor Relations

<https://www.morrisvillepagov.com/meeting-videos/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0q7sXJchiT8>