

MILTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
(Hybrid Meeting)

November 23, 2021  
7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by President Walker. The following Councilpersons were present: Mrs. Meckley, Mr. Specht, Mr. Dale Pfeil, Mr. Walker, Mr. Morales, Ms. Fawess, Mr. Robol, and Mr. Swartz. Also in attendance were Jess Novinger, Shelly Sandstrom, Sam Shaffer, Chief Derr, Attorney Benion, Chief Zettlemyer, and Kevin Mertz. Mr. Medina, Mr. John Pfeil, and Mayor Shearer joined via zoom.

Minutes: On motion of Mr. Dale Pfeil, seconded by Mr. Morales and carried, Council approved the minutes from the November 10, 2021, Council meeting.

Report of the Borough Manager: Mrs. Novinger reported the insurance savings for 2022 – we have budgeted \$165,000 (anticipated 5% increase) and she received the estimated premium total from The Kilmer Group today and it is estimated to be \$128,262 for an estimated savings of \$36,738.00 under the original budgeted amount. This savings does not include the anticipated dividend (which was \$17,609.67 this year). The reduction in premium is primarily due to the reduced use of Workers' Compensation this past year and the opportunity for the Borough to join the Keystone Municipal Insurance Trust (KMIT) for Workers' Compensation coverage. The Borough's experience mod dropped from 1.44 to 1.069 (The experience modification factor is a multiplier used to calculate our workers' compensation premium. It shows how our organization's workers' compensation claims experience compares to other businesses similar in size and types of jobs). The higher experience mod costs the Borough approximately 40% more in Workers' Compensation premiums. With the added safety trainings implemented when the Borough switched to EMC insurance, this has helped reduce workers' compensation usage and dropped the experience mod enough to allow the Borough to be accepted into KMIT which reduces our estimated Workers' Compensation premium for 2022 from \$65,911.00 to \$50,327.00 which is a \$15,584.00 cost savings (already lumped into the Borough's reduced premium). KMIT requires two resolutions by Borough Council (which will be brought before you at the first meeting in December) one stating the Borough wants to participate in KMIT and the other stating that all new police hires will be HEP C tested (current officers are grandfathered in and do not require testing).

If the Borough chooses not to join KMIT and keep workers' compensation coverage through EMC insurance, the estimated 2022 premium will be \$143,262.00 total, workers' compensation being \$65,911.00 of that premium. This would be a savings of \$21,738.00 over the budgeted \$165,000.00.

Report of the Mayor: Mayor Shearer had no report.

Report of the President of Council: President Walker thanked everyone on Council and the employees of the Borough for their work on the budget. He realizes it was a huge undertaking this year.

Report of Chief of Police: Chief Zettlemoyer reported that there has been a rash of catalytic converter thefts. He asked that everyone keep an eye on areas where there are a lot of vehicles. The Christmas Program is in full swing and going well. He then said that tomorrow is considered one of the biggest party nights and for asked everyone to not drink and drive.

Report of Public Works Director: Sam Shaffer reported that leaf pick-up continues. There seems to be a lot of brush involved so they have to separate things and it takes much longer. Christmas decorations are up both at the Borough offices and downtown.

Report of the Fire Chief: Chief Derr's report stating that so far in November they have responded to 18 calls for service. The volunteer EMS staff has had 26 calls for service. Micu 15 has responded to 178 calls for service in November. Year to date, they have responded to 2100 calls for service. He informed Council that the Department will be bringing Santa to town on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and participating in the toy drive to be taken to the Salvation Army.

Public Comments: No comments.

Public Works and Cemeteries: No report.

Public Safety: No report.

At this time, 7:09 p.m., Council entered into an Executive Session to discuss Personnel Issues. Council reconvened at 7:11 p.m.

General Government and Finance:

- A. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the 1<sup>st</sup> reading of the 2022 budget. President Walker stated that it is a balanced budget with a 1 mill increase. Mr. Specht feels this is a disservice to the library to change their millage to a flat contribution. Mr. Morales also feels that education should be the number one focus in any community and the library is not there to make money. Mrs. Novinger explained that the Borough needs to start managing some of the increases we are seeing in-house before we can take care of other nonprofits. Mr. Robol asked if this would help the Borough not have to utilize the capital reserve and Mrs. Novinger stated that it would. She stated that she has a 5-year plan in place to make this happen. Mr. Swartz stated that the Borough is working toward having non-residents assist with the recycling income and has the library considered reaching out to the surrounding municipalities that utilize the library. Ms. Fawess indicated that the library has recently hired a grant writer to help offset some of the costs and bring in more funds for the library. Mr. Morales stated that they used a grant to hire the grant writer. He also said that he would send a budget to the Borough from the Library for review in the future. Mrs. Novinger stated that in previous years, the library received .425 mills in taxes from the Borough, plus delinquent taxes paid from that millage. As a result, she said the library received \$35,100 in millage, plus varying amounts of delinquent taxes. The 2022 budget eliminates the tax milage allocated to the library. Instead, it will now receive a flat \$45,000 contribution from the Borough. The decrease in funding will equal approximately \$7,000 from 2021. On motion of Ms. Fawess, seconded by Mrs. Meckley and carried, Council approved the 1<sup>st</sup> reading of the budget. Mr. Morales was opposed.

- B. On motion of Ms. Fawess, seconded by Mrs. Meckley and carried, Council authorized Attorney Benion to prepare and advertise the 2022 Tax Ordinance. Mr. Moralez was opposed.
- C. On motion of Ms. Fawess, seconded by Mrs. Meckley and carried, Council approved paying the bills from General Fund, Reserve, Payroll, Community Pool, Liquid Fuels, and Cemetery accounts in the amount of \$193,013.83.

President Walker wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving from him and his family.

There being no further questions or business, on motion of Mr. Dale Pfeil, seconded by Mrs. Meckley and carried, Council adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Shelly Sandstrom  
Secretary/Treasurer