

MILTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
(ZOOM MEETING)

February 10, 2021
7:00 p.m.

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

Minutes: On motion of Mr. John Pfeil, seconded by Ms. Fawess and carried, Council approved the minutes from the January 27, 2021 Council meeting.

Report of the Borough Manager: Mrs. Novinger reported that after carefully evaluating the return on investment for the Community Rating System (CRS), which currently offers National Flood Insurance Plan (NFIP) participants within the borough a 15% discount on flood insurance premiums, it has come to her attention that this voluntary program no longer makes financial sense for the Borough to participate in.

NFIP policies peaked in 2012 and 2013 and we have seen a 59% decrease in NFIP policy holders due to more affordable privatized flood insurance options. Currently, the Borough only has 162 NFIP policy holders which are the only residents impacted by completing the CRS annually.

Over a 5-year CRS cycle, the Borough spends approximately \$176,355.96 (\$35,271.20 per year) which includes contracted services with SEDA-COG, mailings, and printing, as well as Doug's time completing information required for the certification process. The Borough utilizes taxpayer dollars paid by all residents to cover these expenses which only benefits 162 households. In summary, we have continued to see a decrease in NFIP policy holders based on historical data and the expenses of continuing the CRS Program will only increase in the future.

Mrs. Novinger asked for Council's consideration to discontinue participation in the voluntary CRS Program based on this information. If Council is in agreement, we will send all residents in the floodplain a letter notifying them of the Borough's discontinuation of the CRS Program and encourage them to consider researching alternate flood insurance rates. On motion of Mr. Moralez, seconded by Mrs. Meckley and carried, Council approved discontinuing the CRS Program as outlined by Mrs. Novinger.

Mrs. Novinger then informed Council that due to inclement weather and being short-staffed, we have moved this month's curbside recycling to Thursday, February 18th.

Report of the Mayor: Mayor Nelson was absent but informed Chief Zettlemyer that he agreed with the Fire Department's request for the Annual Palm Sunday Ham Dinner and suspending the "no parking" as requested.

Report of the President of Council: President Shearer stated that at the beginning of January, Mr. John Pfeil e-mailed him about creating a committee for Downtown Revitalization. After careful consideration, he appointed Mr. John Pfeil and Mr. Moralez as an ad-hoc committee to make recommendations to Council for approval. President Shearer also stated that if other Council members would like to assist them, they should reach out to Mr. John Pfeil or Mr. Moralez.

Report of Chief of Police: Chief Zettlemoyer reported that the License Plate Reader demonstration went well and thanked those that attended. After he met with them, he learned an improved system will be available in April for better night-time capabilities. Mrs. Novinger also stated that she felt it was a good demonstration and was impressed by the capabilities of the feature. Mr. Morales mirrored her statements.

Report of Public Works Director: Sam Shaffer reported that there were 4 snowstorms since the last Council meeting, and everything went well. They continue to remove snow.

Report of the Fire Chief: Scott Derr reported that in January, the Department responded to 42 calls with 226.18 manhours. He informed Council that the Palm Sunday Ham Dinner may be a drive through, depending on the status of COVID.

Public Comments: No public comments.

At this time, Council heard a presentation on Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) from Driving Real Innovation for a Vibrant Economy (DRIVE) Executive Director Jennifer Wakeman. Ms. Wakeman stated that LERTA allows businesses in defined areas within a municipality to not be assessed additional property tax rates for improvements to their properties for a period of up to 10 years. She also said that a LERTA must be approved by the municipality, school district, and County which levies taxes on properties in the defined area. She said that Sunbury, Catawissa, and Bloomsburg are all looking at implementing LERA programs. She believes that the Northumberland County Commissioners will be in favor of approving a LERTA in Milton Borough. She has never spoken with the Milton Area School District Superintendent, but she believes from articles that she has seen that Dr. Keegan is in favor of economic development. Ms. Wakeman told Council that DRIVE could assist Milton with establishing a LERTA at no cost to the Borough. Mrs. Novinger directed Council to compile a list of questions about the proposal which she will then forward to Ms. Wakeman for answers.

Highways and Protection to Persons and Property:

- A. On motion of Mr. Walker, seconded by Mr. Morales and carried, Council approved a request from the Milton Fire Department to host the 28th Palm Sunday Han Dinner on March 28, 2021 and request that the Mayor suspend the “no parking” regulations on Ridge Avenue near the Fire Station on that day.

General Government and Recreation:

- A. On motion of Ms. Fawess, seconded by Mr. John Pfeil, and carried, Council adopted Ordinance #1233 revising Ordinance #1223 to extend the “no parking” to both sides of the street on Red Hill Road from Golf Course Road to the Borough Boundary.

Finance, Health and Sanitation

- A. On motion of Mrs. Meckley, seconded by Mr. Specht and carried, Council approved paying the bills from General Fund, Reserve, Payroll, Community Pool and Cemetery accounts in the amount of \$102,027.78.

Mrs. Meckley asked if there has been any progress on the comprehensive plan. Mrs. Novinger responded that she reached out to Bloomsburg University but due to COVID there has been no progress. She also stated that she was looking for a strategic plan rather than a comprehensive plan.

Mr. Moralez reported that he has talked Bob Garret who stated he is willing to develop a strategic plan for the Borough of \$5,000.00.

There being no further questions or business, on motion of Mrs. Meckley, seconded by Mr. Walker and carried, Council adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Shelly Sandstrom
Secretary/Treasurer