

**MINUTES
BLAWNOX BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regular Meeting February 14th, 2024**

Call to Order

President Laskey called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers. A Zoom was set up for anyone that was not feeling well or not comfortable attending in person.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

The roll was called to establish a quorum.

Council Members Present: Elaine Palmer, Christine Carnevali, Katie Coban, President Deborah Laskey, Vice President Randall Stoddard, and John Simmons

Council Members Not Present: Meghan Kennedy

Also Present: Mayor Anthony Gross, Solicitor Dalfonso, Engineer Gordon Taylor, Junior Council Member Jacob Anthikad and Borough Manager Kathy Ulanowicz. Assistant Borough Manager Mallori McDowell via Zoom.

Comments from the Public – No Comments

Agenda Items

Motion to approve Council Meeting Minutes of the January 2nd, 2024 Reorganization meeting.

Moved: Ms. Laskey Second: Ms. Palmer Motion Carried: 6-0

Motion to approve Council Meeting Minutes of the January 2nd, 2024 meeting.

Moved: Ms. Laskey Second: Ms. Palmer Motion Carried: 6-0

Motion to approve bills from the General Fund for January in the amount \$198,044.18.

Moved: Mr. Stoddard Second: Ms. Coban Motion Carried: 6-0

Finance Committee

- 1) Motion to Authorize an ACH payment for MEIT benefits payment Monthly

Moved: Ms. Palmer Second: Mr. Simmons Motion Carried: 6-0

- 2) ACH Paperwork retention and destruction – Now that the Borough is offering ACH payments for water the office receives peoples' bank information and we need to know how long we need to keep them and how they are to be destroyed. Solicitor Dalfonso will be looking into this for us.

Property and Planning

- 1) Mr. Pompeo building plans for Center Avenue – would like to develop his property on Center Avenue next to the High Rise. There is a small problem because the property is

in 2 separate Zoning Districts. They are interested in developing car storage. They want to start with one building near the High Rise. The plan is for a total of 4 buildings with parking and roads between. Each building will be around 4,000 to 5,000 square feet. One building may end up being a flex space. The number of cars stored will depend on what people want. Issue is the 2 different zones and in neither is this a permitted or conditional use. Options are to make it a conditional use in both zones, to change the zoning lines to make it one property, or to get a variance. They wanted us to see the whole project that they want to do so Council would be informed on everything they want to do but also to ask about how stormwater management would be handled. Engineer Taylor said that the project will be looked at as a whole for stormwater management. Mr. Pompeo said they could do other storage too. Manager Ulanowicz shared that the building permit process is very different for car storage and other types of storage. The building will have decorative block facing so it will look nice.

- 2) Amend the Zoning Ordinance – Solicitor Dalfonso is going to investigate how this will best be done so for now we will table any changes to the Zoning Ordinance.
- 3) Motion to approve Resolution 2024-01 Appointing John Ruggeri to the Zoning Hearing Board for a 3-year term

Moved: Mr. Simmons

Second: Ms. Palmer

Motion Carried: 6-0

Strategic Planning – Nothing at this time

Public Safety

- 1) If Council wishes, staff will meet with O'Hara Township to begin in depth discussions of the possibility of combining the Blawnox Police Department under the Township of O'Hara Police Department. A Conflict of Interest Waiver will be needed to consult with the law firm of Campbell Durrant, P.C. as they also represent O'Hara Township. Campbell Durrant, P.C., has provided a Conflict of Interest Waiver outlining measures they will implement to prevent conflicts while representing both municipalities. If acceptable, a motion will be needed to authorize meeting with O'Hara Township to discuss in depth, the potential combining of the Police Departments, and to approve the execution of the Conflict of Interest Waiver with Campbell Durrant, P.C.

Motion authorizing In Depth Discussion with O'Hara Township Regarding Possible Combining of Police Departments and Approving the Execution of a Conflict of Interest Waiver with Campbell Durrant, P.C.

Moved: Mr. Stoddard

Second: Ms. Coban

Motion Carried: 6-0

Councilman Stoddard would like to see a merger instead. Chief Goodman shared that O'Hara Township is not interested in a regionalization at this time. This is very early on and nothing specific has been worked out. The discussion now is that everyone will be employed by O'Hara Township. Then Blawnox would contract with O'Hara for police coverage. They want our officers involved in the discussions. There were questions from Council about whether our officers would keep their benefits earned by time of service and that has not been fully worked out at this time. President Laskey wondered if Chief Goodman had talked to other departments that had done this? He has, but not formally.

- 2) Motion to approve the creation and implementation of a 457 Pension Plan for Uniform Officers

Moved: Ms. Laskey

Second: Mr. Stoddard

Motion Carried: 6-0

This is essentially a plan like a 401K for our Police Officers. They do not pay in to Social Security. This plan is meant to supplement our pension plan and fill the gap left by no Social Security. The Borough is not contributing to the plan.

- 3) Motion to approve Resolution 2024-02 457 Pension Plan

Moved: Mr. Simmons

Second: Mr. Stoddard

Motion Carried: 6-0

- 4) Fire Department volunteer recruitment/ incentives for fire fighters, capital improvement budgeting – The Borough and the Fire Department will be meeting with O'Hara Township and their Fire Departments to begin this discussion.
- 5) Lighted Crosswalk Update – Councilman Simmons shared that we had met with the State again and we had gotten approval for our placements. We should have a bid from the company for installation this week.

Public Works

- 1) Water Department Inventory for Capital Improvement Budgeting for Infrastructure – Councilman Stoddard shared that he, Borough Manager Ulanowicz, Assistant Borough Manager McDowell, and Public Works Foreman Belotti have been meeting to go through an inventory of the Water Department.
- 2) Manager Ulanowicz wanted to let Council know that Public Works Foreman Belotti will be off for two weeks.

Community Events

- 1) Fund Raising – The Centennial Committee needs fundraising. If you have any ideas and would like to help with them, let the committee know. Councilman Simmons shared they will have Centennial Sweatshirts coming up soon.
- 2) Centennial Committee Ornament – The Committee has decided on an ornament that they will be selling. Manager Ulanowicz loves the ornament. The ornament will cost \$20 or \$25. The Borough will need to upfront the cost to get the ornaments made.

Motion to advance \$2,730 to the Centennial Committee for purchasing the ornaments to sell

Moved: Ms. Laskey

Second: Mr. Stoddard

Motion Carried: 6-0

- 3) Veterans Memorial Brick – The Committee is also looking to sell bricks that will be placed in the ground around the Veterans Memorial. They will be for residents to honor other Veterans who are not listed on the Memorial. The bricks will be engraved and can have up to four lines. Solicitor Dalfonso suggests that we add a box on the purchase form for the individual to cover the cost of the brick. A cost for the brick has not yet been decided.
- 4) Councilwoman Coban also wondered if there would be any interest in having a Blawnox Monopoly game created. The businesses (40 of them) could buy a space for advertisement on the board for \$165. This conversation will be continued at the next meeting when we have more information.

Reports (Available Upon Request)

- A. Manager's Report – No Questions**
- B. Engineer's Report – Gordon Taylor**

1. Motion to authorize advertisement for Sanitary Sewer Repair – Phase VIII
Moved: Ms. Laskey Second: Mr. Stoddard Motion Carried: 6-0
2. Motion to advertise the annual sewer televising as required by the consent
Moved: Ms. Laskey Second: Mr. Stoddard Motion Carried: 6-0

Old Business

ALCOSAN Multi Municipal Sanitary Sewer Line Transfer – We are very close to completing the transfer to ALCOSAN. Royston is close to finishing their sanitary sewer redirect and repair.

363 Walnut Street & 933 Cable Avenue Water Meter Replacement – We are down to two properties that have meters that can not be read. Manager Ulanowicz has tried to get them to comply so we can replace their meter and they are not cooperating. Can council authorize Solicitor Dalfonso to send a letter to attempt to gain compliance. Council agreed that Solicitor Dalfonso may send a letter to the property owners.

38 Riverside Ct – This property was condemned a while ago for not having working utilities. The owners have since restored gas and electric, but still have no water so the property is still uninhabitable. The Borough has reason to believe that despite this the property owners are once again living there but they have not been caught so there is nothing that can be done at this time. We do have the property in the Sherriff Sale process but they will take some time.

209 Summit Drive – The Carr property is scheduled for Sherriff Sale on March 4th as long as PNC submits the correct paperwork this time. Marie, who works with the School District on taxes, is on it and making sure that PNC knows what they need to file.

LSA Grants – We received word from the LSA Grant that they are reviewing our submissions but they made two changes to two of our applications. The Engineering for the McKinley Avenue Steps exceeded the allowed amount so they subtracted the extra engineering and decreased our total ask by that much. For the Police Car, they do not cover extended warranties so they subtracted that from our total.

New Business

Social Media Records Retention – Ms. Cunningham shared that the Borough has been looking into Social Media Records Retention because it is also subject to the Right to Know laws. The Borough started a 30 day free trial with Civic Plus, who runs our website. This allows them to archive everything from our Facebook page. If a right to know request were to come in about something we would need to be able to provide results or we could face legal consequences. Civic Plus is working from Local Government through to the White House. It is close to \$3,000 a year for this service. We can't archive ourselves and neither will Facebook. Council felt if we needed to do it, we should.

Councilman Simmons shared that this will be his last Council Meeting because he will be moving to O'Hara Township effective February 28th. He wanted everyone to know it was great to work with them on Council. He will not be totally gone, as he will remain in his position as Deputy Fire Marshall.

Comments from the Public – Non-Agenda Items – No Comments

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

ATTEST:



Kathy Ulanowicz
Borough Manager



Deborah E. Laskey
Borough Council President

