

PLYMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING- SEPTEMBER 9, 2014

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY: MR. DIXON

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

ROLL CALL: PRESENT
 Mr. Madrack Mr. Mahon
 Mr. Coughlin Mr. Gerko
 Mr. Kochinski Mr. Dixon
 ABSENT
 Mr. Mctague

CITIZENS IMPUT

Jim Woodruff from Beade Street said that in May of 2014 he turned into council a petition signed by the residents of Beade Street regarding the flood incident in 2011. He wanted to know if there was anything done to follow up on the meeting they had on Beade Street.

Frank Coughlin said that he thinks that everything was being turned over to the engineer. He will check into that for Jim.

Jim said that Clif Madrack told him that it was the responsibility of the residents to install check valves. He does not feel that it's fair. He then asked if anyone on council has talked to the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority.

Clif Madrack believes Tom did, but he's not sure. He will find out before the next meeting.

Jim asked if a full written report from the engineer regarding his investigation and conclusion of the matter be read at the next council meeting.

Frank said it had not yet been done. He will ask Tom to make a follow up call to the engineer to see where he is at with this project and if there is a problem.

Jim added that they don't need anything signed but they want the report read at a meeting so it may be documented.

Frank agreed and said it was no problem to have a member of council or the borough secretary read the report at a meeting. It may not be the next meeting, but when it's ready, someone can read it.

Mark Ruseskas from Powell Street, states that the signs at the lot on Main and Powell Streets were making a difference, but the kids are still there hanging out. There must be a greater police presence.

Clif Madrack said that the borough does not own that lot, but that they are trying to acquire it. Without a letter stating we can patrol the lot, the police are reluctant to enforce the law. He also added that the police are patrolling the lot and doing a good job.

Cheryle Lupher from High Street wants to know if anything can be done about the burnt out house on High Street. The kids are entering the house and people are throwing junk and garbage into it.

Bill Dixon said that the house has been boarded up in the past and that he will have the street department board it up again.

Clif added that the borough is trying to purchase the property so they can tear it down.

Cheryle also wanted to know what the law was regarding the speed limit on High Street. It is not posted.

Mayor Petrosky said that if the speed limit is not posted on a street, the speed limit is 25 mph.

Cheryle states that there are people speeding on her street, and the police never come down High Street.

Mayor Petrosky said that she will address that with the police.

Matt Hornick of Turner Street said that he noticed the gaming funds were distributed and that Plymouth did not receive any of the funds. Did the borough submit an application to receive any of the gaming funds?

Clif Madrack explained that the borough did apply for the funds in December, but we were not awarded any of the money.

Matt asked if the borough is currently going after any grants.

Bill Dixon said that they are looking into a FEMA grant.

Frank Coughlin added that Community grant money goes toward street paving.

Steve Gerko said that he has poured over grant material to see what's available and that he doesn't see any grants currently that Plymouth would qualify for. He will however continue to search for a grant that we can apply for and he will keep the citizens aware of any grants he finds.

Tom Jesso, President of Shawnee Cemetery Committee, wants the borough to cut the overgrown trees and vegetation along Mountain Road around the cemetery. He feels it is a safety hazard to the volunteers who maintain the cemetery as well as blocks the view to the cemetery. When the growth is overgrown it also encourages litter.

Bill Dixon told him that he did not have an answer now, but that council will discuss the matter.

Mickey Goodrich of Eno Street has concerns around the Beade Street Park. There's a loose branch hanging over the swing set. The half wall with no fence is a hazard, the kids are walking on it. Are the park signs going to be put back up? And lastly, what is happening with the mulch issue?

Bill Dixon said they saw the branch and it is being addressed.

Clif said the mulch is OK, it's not toxic. The park signs are currently being made and when they are ready, they will be installed.

Jim Thomas from Church Street wants the run down properties addressed. Rental properties should be brought to code and that the lot belonging to Yachimovich on Main Street "should be cleaned up".

Carlo Telesco, code enforcement, states that he is siting people for those same reasons.

Mary Rittenhouse, President of Neighborhood Watch commends the police on the drug bust, and wants to know what council is doing to help the police do their jobs?

Bill Dixon asked each councilman to add their comments.

Clif Madrack said that he would love to hire more police officers, but we don't have the money. There is money set aside for emergencies. Also council has just this year spent a lot of money on the police department. The money is not there and the way to get it would be to raise taxes.

Mary said the town is dying and that you can't expect people and business to come to a town that has nothing to offer and where crime is out of control. We need more police, juggle the budget or something.

Frank Coughlin said he is all for more police and they are hiring a new part-time officer tonight. They advertise for part-time officers all the time, but most that apply do not pass the background check. He added that he would like to explore getting a part-time clerk for the police to handle paperwork and phone calls, so that when an officer is out on the streets he is not called back to get a report, which is what happens now. There is a Cop Fast Grant that he would also like to pursue. The government pays the salary of a new officer for the first year and then the town pays for it after that, however the town may terminate the officer's employment after two years if they cannot afford to keep the officer.

Steve Gerko said that it is cost prohibitive.

Frank commented on the recent drug bust in town: said that he would like to find a way to have the cost to the various departments involved fall back to the homeowner.

Jim Mahon is all for more police. He wants a cop walking the streets. Whatever we can do, I'm for it.

Gary Kochinski states that during elections five of them grandstanded for more police and now that they won the election, it's put on the side. It is his opinion that the money is there and that it's hidden throughout the budget, which he will address later in this meeting.

Bill Dixon says that part-time police cannot do investigation and it is a real problem when the state police are called in. They don't want to work with the part-time officer for that because they cannot do the investigation.

Gary added that because some part-time officers only work once a week, that paperwork sits until the officer comes back the next week for his shift. Another downfall is that most part-time officers are straight out of school with no experience.

Mayor Petrosky states that the reason the town is in the shape it's in, is because for many, many years the police have had to fight to get anything from council to do their jobs efficiently. When there's only one officer on a shift, he can't walk the beat. He has to be in his car so he can quickly answer calls. He is often called back to the station to get reports for people while he is out on a call. The officer has to do his own paperwork instead of being out patrolling the streets. All of these issues have to be addressed.

Mary finished by telling everyone that the Neighborhood Watch is having a Car Show/Chili Cookoff on October 13 at the Wyoming Valley West parking lot from 9AM-2PM. She would love for the mayor, the councilmen and everyone else to come and participate. Lastly, she invited everyone to the Neighborhood Watch meetings every third Tuesday of the month here at the borough building, at 7PM.

Wayne Smith of Orchard Street reminded council that many people in this town are on fixed incomes, and that if taxes were raised, they would have to move out.

Gary Kochinski said that council would not be raising taxes.

Dave Bonawits of Academy Street says that he retired from the Plymouth Police force in 1992. He thinks that council is not doing a good enough job protecting the people of the town. He feels that the town needs a detective to follow up on investigations and that the police should have two officers in each car.

Wayne Smith thinks we should disband the police department all together. Have the state police come in.

Mayor Petrosky said the state police will not come.

Frank Coughlin added that unless there is a serious crime, like a murder, the state police will not be coming.

AGENDA VOTING

*Motion to approve minutes from special meeting April 14, 2014 as well as minutes from the regular meetings: May 13, 2014, June 10, 2014 and July 8, 2014:

Motion: Mr. Clif Madrack

Second: Mr. Frank Coughlin

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to hire Nicholas Rieble as a part-time police officer at an hourly rate of twelve dollars and ninety cents (\$12.90):

Motion: Mr. Gary Kochinski

Second: Mr. James Mahon

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to hire Jennifer Rogazinski as a WVW crossing guard at an hourly rate of eight dollars and fifty cents (\$8.50):

Motion: Mr. Clif Madrack

Second: Mr. Frank Coughlin

Vote: 6 Yes - Absent 1;

*Motion to hire Arthur Mann as a WVW crossing guard at an hourly rate of eight dollars and fifty cents (\$8.50):

Motion: Mr. Clif Madrack

Second: Mr. James Mahon

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to transfer funds from line item number 01 410 100 (full time police) in the amount of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00), from line item number 01 410 156 (police health hospitalization) in the amount of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00), the total of which being thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000.00), to line item number 01 410 180 (part-time police salaries):

Motion: Mr. Clif Madrack

Second: Mr. Steve Gerko

Vote: 6 Yes – Absent 1

*Motion to purchase and install a heating system in the Plymouth Borough maintenance garage at a cost of eight thousand nine hundred eighty-five dollars (\$8,985.00):

Motion: Mr. James Mahon

Second: Mr. Frank Coughlin

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to purchase a skid steer for the street department:

*MOTION TO TABLE THIS MOTION WAS MADE FROM FRANK COUGHLIN PENDING THE OUTCOME OF COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS' (C.O.G.) APPROVAL TO PURCHASE THE BOROUGH A SKIDSTER:

Motion: Mr Clif Madrack

Second: Jim Mahon

Vote: 6 Yes – Absent 1

*Motion to accept the 2013 Audit:

Motion: Mr. Steve Gerko

Second: Mr. James Mahon

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to pay September bills:

General Fund – 14-424 thru 14-477

Liquid Fuels – 14-090 thru 14-101

Street Fund – 14-066 thru 14-074

Recreation Fund – 14-023 thru 14-025

Motion: Clif Madrack

Second: Steve Gerko

Vote: *6 YES – Absent 1

* Gary Kochinski & Bill Dixon said yes except Mike Kostelansky's bill and the engineer. They said both are over budget.

*Motion to transfer funds from line item number 01410140 (crossing guards) in the amount of six thousand six hundred ten dollars (\$6,610.00) to line item number 01410180 (part-time police salaries) for the purpose of adding thirty-two hours (32) additional part-time police coverage per week.

Motion: Mr. Gary Kochinski

Second: Mr. Frank Coughlin

Vote: 4 YES / 3 NO

**Mayor tie breaker 1 YES-Motion passed

*Motion to transfer funds from line item number 01410140 (crossing guards) in the amount of five hundred six dollars (\$506.00) to line item number 01410161 (police social security).

Motion: Mr. Gary Kochinski

Second: Mr. Frank Coughlin

Vote: 4 YES / 3 NO

**Mayor tie breaker 1 YES-Motion passed

Meeting is adjourned.