

PLYMOUTH BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING- MARCH 11, 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. Kochinsky Mr. Dixon
 ABSENT
 Mr. Mctague

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Petrosky gave the record of police calls for the month: There were 509 calls; 34 non-traffic citations and 3 traffic citations. All other records could not be obtained because the computers were down. The computers in the police department need to be replaced and the network updated, and until this is done, the police cannot do their job efficiently. The police also need three new bullet-proof vests because the ones they are using are outdated. Jim Mahon wanted to know if this is a piece of equipment that the officers might be able to share using. The answer is no, because they need to be form fitted for each individual officer. Bill Dixon asked the mayor to compile a cost and get it to council. The mayor further added that this Thursday and Friday (March 13th and 14th), in accordance with the established and approved firearms policy, there will be classroom and range instruction time for all officers. This is required by law yearly. There is also a stress analysis training course in August, in Berwick, that she thinks might be something that our police can benefit from. Many towns have replace polygraph tests with voice analysis and are having great success. She is hopeful that we can send one officer for the training at a cost of \$1,500.00 plus the cost of the officer's salary for the five days he/she would attend the class.

CITIZENS IMPUT

Mary Jarrett, Plymouth Library, said she needed a letter from council stating that they approve, and will allow the parking lot on Main Street to be used for a Farmers' Market.

Pat Stone, of Church Street, wanted to address the traffic jam on Shawnee Avenue recently when the old Polish Alliance was on fire. "We need an alternative traffic plan for emergencies" he was quoted as saying, "either to direct traffic out of town, or prevent it from coming into town".

Bill Dixon offered that the Mayor could look into such a plan.

Frank Coughlin talked to the "sign crew" for PennDot that evening and they came down and closed streets. Frank also recommended that we get an alternative traffic plan from PennDot, possibly detour traffic elsewhere, and not let outside traffic into town during an incident. He is hopeful that Penn Dot will come back with some sort of workable plan. Frank further added that he was concerned for the safety of those who volunteered to direct the traffic, as some were dressed in very dark clothing and hard to see.

Paul Sims, President of the newly recognized recreation board, along with members George Young, Mary Poremba, and Mary Rittenhouse, held the first meeting last evening (March 10, 2014). The youth leaders of community sports were present and they were informed that the properties they are using are owned by the borough and the board asked these sports leaders to report to the borough all "activities" that occur on these properties whenever they see these them occur.

In the future the recreation board would like to expand their invitation to attend the meetings, not just to the youth of the community, but to everyone. He is hoping they can have programs for the youth as well as the adults. He also invites all input.

Jim Mahon further added that once WWV has St. Stevens finished, it will be open to all residents.

Mary Rittenhouse, President of Plymouth Neighborhood Watch, extended an invitation to the mayor to come to them for help. The group can even organize and run fundraisers to get the necessary money needed to purchase some of the things for the police.

They also want to get some new crime watch signs to hang throughout the town, but added that they would not do anything until they checked with council first.

They still hold a community breakfast at the American Legion on the First Sunday of each month. For the month of April breakfast is on April 6th and the Easter Bunny will be there for pictures. This month's breakfast will benefit the Shawnee Preservation Society and the Plymouth Historic Society.

She again invited everyone to come to the meetings and to become members.

Matt Hornick, Turner Street, wants to know if there is any money left from the gaming funds after the project to tearing down Fainbergs' and putting in the parking lot, and if there are plans to go after any more gaming funds.

Bill Dixon said that they will stucco and paint the wall, finish the fence and add another light to finish the project. That will use the remainder of the money set aside for that project.

Clif Madrak added that they have applied for the money for the next phase.

Matt asked what the next phase was.

Clif was not clear on the whole plan, but he was quite sure that the old Master Market on Main Street, and the Candy Store on Eno Street were to be raised, but he was unclear without re-reading the proposal.

Bill added that as they get closer to the second phase, there would be citizen's input.

Clif reminded everyone that the money for the COG came from gaming funds.

Fran Coughlin added that the COG had put in for one million plus dollars of gaming money. Half of the money is to be used for equipment that we were unable to get the first time, and the second half of the money is to be given to each town. With the \$50,000.00 (fifty thousand) that Plymouth would receive, they would like to buy a skidster, which is similar to a bobcat. The street department feels this would be a valuable piece of equipment. It would also benefit the COG, but only if the COG can get the grant.

Dennis Parulis of Willow Street said that he is concerned with all the buildings being raised and wants to know if there are any plans to build anything to build the tax base so it is not such a burden on the property owners. He said that he hears of towns getting grants for the infrastructure and wants to know if we can apply for any of those possibly to maybe pave the streets and repair the storm drains.

Frank Coughlin explained that the town uses "community development" money to pave the streets but the amount the town receives has been decreased, and the cost of paving has gone up.

Frank also reminded everyone that in co-operation with the state, last year Main Street was paved and new handicap ramps as well as new storm drains were installed.

Dennis was visibly frustrated because it seems to him that everything is done for Main Street and nothing for the side streets in town. He then asked how much the parking lot cost.

Bill Dixon answered that the cost was close to \$800,000.00 (eight hundred thousand dollars). He then added that 90 % (ninety percent) of the budget goes for salaries and pensions. The town takes in \$1.1 million (one point one million dollars) between property and mercantile taxes. We cannot afford to cut anything because we need the police and the people to do their jobs.

Jim Mahon explained that they are trying to bring new business into town to help take the burden off of the property owners. He also said that they need each and every citizen to be watchful and to help by reporting criminal or suspicious activity to the police.

Jim Thomas questioned why our street department was plowing Main Street when that is the responsibility of the state.

Bill explained that once the state plow goes through, our street department follows up by widening the roadway for safer passage.

Mr. Thomas further suggests enacting a parking ban during snow storms so the state can come and plow right to the curb.

John Frey, vice-president of Citizens Action Committee gave an update on the letter they are compiling to send to the legislator as well as publish it in the newspaper when it is ready. The letter will address the “give aways” the state has in place which he feels is attracting some of the troublesome population into our town. He also hopes to circulate petitions to make the voice of the people heard.

Mary Jarrett would like to know why the town is not pursuing “Hot Boxes” for street repair of the potholes.

Frank Coughlin addressed the question by explaining that it takes several people to operate the hot box and that we only have two full time employees on our street department. The boxes are much more labor intensive than the cold patch. He also hopes that our town can partner with Plymouth Township to get some of the smaller paving jobs done.

Matt Hornick asked what progress was made about the curfew.

Bill Dixon explained that the solicitor has recommended against it saying it is unconstitutional and against the law.

Mayor Petrosky said that she had spoken with the solicitor that afternoon and that he said you need gather information on criminal activity of the town and that such a curfew leaves you open for a law suit. Gary Kochinski has been working on the curfew issue for the last two months.

Mary Rittenhouse wanted to know why the solicitor does not attend the council meetings as in some other towns.

Clif Madrack explained that it would be very expensive to have him sit in on the meetings.

The Mayor stressed again how the computer system for the police is substandard and needs to be replaced.

Dennis Parulis asked why 225 East Willow Street is still standing when for two years council has said they would be tearing it down.

Bill Dixon explained that these things take a lot of time and that sometimes there are liens against these properties that have to be satisfied before the town can move forward.

AGENDA VOTING

*Motion to procure professional services for asbestos inspection services at:

80 High Street
225 E. Willow Street
207-209 Rowe Lane

Motion: Mr. Frank Coughlin

Second: Mr. Steve Gerko

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to accept Brozena Consulting Services for CDBG-DR Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery:

Motion: Mr. Clif Madrack

Second: Mr. James Mahon

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1 of 2014 amending and restating Borough Police Pension effective 1-1-2014:

Motion: Mr. Clif Madrack

Second: Mr. James Mahon

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to adopt Resolution No. 1 of 2014, (a Resolution of council of the Borough of Plymouth of Luzerne County of PA), establishing rules and regulations for Plymouth Borough Civil Service Commission:

Motion: Mr. Gary Kochinski

Second: Mr. Steve Gerko

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to pay West Side COG for insurance and maintenance of street sweeper for 2014:

Motion: Mr. Clif Madrack

Second: Mr. Frank Coughlin

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to accept John Thomas' resignation as Code Enforcement Officer:

Motion: Mr. Steve Gerko

Second: Mr. Gary Kochinski

Vote: 4 YES; 3 NO; Absent 1; *Mayor had tie breaking vote.

*Motion to appoint Mary Rittenhouse as an alternative member for Civil Service Commission:

Motion: Mr. Gary Kochinski

Second: Mr. James Mahon

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

*Motion to pay bills for February-General Fund – 14-111 thru 14-113

March-General Fund – 14-114 thru 14-159

Liquid Fuels – 14-026 thru 14-035

Street Fund – 14-019 thru 14-020

Motion: Mr. Gary Kochinski

Second: Mr. Steve Gerko

Vote: 6 YES – Absent 1

Meeting is adjourned.