

Plymouth Borough
Special Meeting
December 31, 2017

The Plymouth Borough Special Council Meeting began at 1:00 P.M. and was called to order by Mr. Gary Kochinski, President of Council.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

ROLL CALL

Mr. Cunningham	Ms. Manglaviti	Mr. Peters	Mr. Kochinski
Mr. Dixon	Mr. Thomas	Mr. Coughlin	

CITIZEN'S REQUESTS AND COMMENTS REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS

There were no requests or comments regarding agenda items.

CITIZENS REQUESTS AND COMMENTS REGARDING GENERAL ITEMS

Mr. Scott Cannon said that he presented a non-binding resolution to support independent commission to carve out more fair voting districts for the next census to be voted on by council. He said this is to represent the people to make the voting districts more fair and not to engage one particular party that's in power. He introduced Denise Williams who is the Coordinator of the Luzerne County Chapter and she presented some arguments in favor of the resolution.

Ms. Williams explained that she is asking Plymouth Borough Council to join the effort in ending gerrymandering in the state of Pennsylvania by passing this non-binding resolution. She said the weight of Council's support matters. She said local residents in each municipality are entitled to the protection of their vote and is first and foremost. She continued to explain that no one's vote should be decreased or increased in value by moving district lines to give any party an advantage. She said that every municipality, state house, senate seats and U.S. Congressional representatives are determined by district lines. She said that they must make sure everything is fair regarding how their representatives come to be where they are and do what they do with their positions of authority and leadership. Ms. Williams said they must all advocate for good government. She continued to explain the resolution in great detail. She said seven resolutions were passed by Luzerne County Council, Kingston Township, Dallas Township, Exeter Township, Hazelton City, Plains Township and Wilkes-Barre City. She explained that the resolution calls for the creation of an independent citizens commission to take over the process of

redistricting taking it out of the politicians' hands. She said that there are over two hundred resolutions currently in progress across the state. She said Senate Bill 22 and companion House Bill 722 are the two bills that call for this formation of the independent citizens commission. She said that they are both in their respective government committees not getting the much called for hearings that they deserve, despite ninety-eight co-sponsors in the house and thirteen in the Senate. Ms. Williams said that Representative Gerald Mullery and Senator John Yudichak are both co-sponsors and in support of this change. She urged that Council's help is needed and that the help of every local government is needed as well.

All of Council thanked Ms. Williams. Mr. Cannon asked if the resolution could be passed at the next meeting. Mr. Kochinski said he felt that more public discussion was needed before it could come up for a vote. Mr. Kochinski said that as a citizen that he completely agrees. He said that Council represents the entire community as a whole. Mr. Kochinski said that everyone has seen how the budget talks have gone over the last month and a half and Council tried to go with the lesser increase but the public went against it so they went with the higher tax increase instead. He said that they have to make sure the public supports this resolution before they try to do anything with it. He said that they cannot vote it through because they individually agree with it. Mr. Kochinski said that if the public support is behind it that he would not think it would be a problem. Mr. Coughlin said that he was in favor of this endeavor and Mr. Kochinski said that they would be in favor if the public supported it.

Council and Mr. Cannon discussed forming a petition to demonstrate the public support for the previously mentioned resolution. Mr. Kochinski asked Mr. Cannon to return the petition to the Borough Secretary.

Mr. John Frey of West Shawnee Avenue, asked if gerrymandering was a new concept. Mr. Kochinski said this has been going on for a few years and said that they were just redistricting the area and it favors one party over the other. Mr. Frey said this was a practice for many years by both parties. Mr. Frey asked how this process will eliminate political parties establishing boundaries. Ms. Williams said that Fair Districts is calling for a formation of an independent citizens commission to take over the process of drawing the district lines. Mr. Frey asked how citizens would become a part of this process. Ms. Williams said the commission would consist of eleven members. She said four would be registered from the largest political party, four would be registered with the second largest political party, three who are not registered with either of the political parties. The general assembly which prescribed by law the qualifications to serve as a commissioned member and each commissioned member will possess the following qualifications. Mr. Frey asked if the individuals would be accepted by the general assembly. Ms. Williams said the Secretary of State will receive the applications and will put the application into the three sub groups for the three different parties. Mr. Frey asked if the applicants for these positions would go through a political process in order to become appointed. Ms. Williams said yes. Mr. Frey thanked Ms. Williams. Mr. Kochinski thanked Mr. Frey.

Mrs. Mary Jarret of Center Avenue, asked if the Ordinance Number 7 was advertised. Mr. Kochinski said it was in the paper ten days before the vote. Mrs. Jarret asked if there was a typo that indicated the fiscal year 2017. Mr. Kochinski said that it was a typographic error and that is for the fiscal year 2018.

Mrs. Corrin Borland respectfully requested the 2019 working budget be available for September 1st to avoid the issue of rushing to special meetings. She also requested a copy of the yearly audit be available without a Right-to-Know request. Mr. Kochinski said that it is available at any time. Mrs. Borland asked Council to consider making the police secretary a voluntary position. Mr. Coughlin

explained that the police secretary position was his idea and they did hire someone. He indicated that the position was formed in the hopes that reports would be made readily available and it would allow someone to be there without an officer having to come back in from the road to hand out reports. Mrs. Borland said she is still requesting that Council consider to make that a volunteer position. Mr. Kochinski explained that the position requires the person to handle confidential information and he said they wanted to add another part time officer with a different classification that can do UCR reports and other private reports that the police only see.

Mrs. Borland requested an explanation be posted to the website explaining why the curfew and renters' fees would be unconstitutional. Mr. Kochinski said that it would not be posted to the website because it is a legal opinion from their solicitor. He further explained that the solicitor has provided his explanation as to why it is unconstitutional at public meetings.

Mrs. Borland requested that someone contact the local universities to request student volunteers to write grants or other projects. Mr. Kochinski said that writing grants are not the issue and that it is the matching funds that are an issue. Mrs. Borland stated her support for Mary Jarret to fill any other vacant seats that would possibly become available.

Meeting Agenda

1. ORDINANCE NO. 7 OF 2017: AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF PLYMOUTH, COUNTY OF LUZERNE, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ESTABLISHING THE TAX UPON REAL ESTATE IN THE BOROUGH OF PLYMOUTH FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2018.

Mr. Thomas made the motion.

Mr. Coughlin called the second on the motion.

The vote was unanimously carried except for Mr. Dixon who did not vote favorably to pass the ordinance.

Mr. Dixon said he did not mean any disrespect to any of his colleagues. He said it is something within him because he was elected to represent the public and not just his friends and he has to honor that.

2. MOTION: TO ACCEPT THE 2018 PROPOSED BUDGET.

Mr. Thomas made the motion.

Mr. Cunningham called the second on the motion.

Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Manglaviti, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Peters, Mr. Kochinski voted in favor of the 2018 Proposed Budget. Mr. Coughlin voted favorably with reserve. Mr. Dixon voted no.

Mr. Coughlin said that he will vote for the budget but added that it is hard to vote for a tax increase.

3. MOTION: TO ADJOURN.

Mr. Cunningham made the motion.

Mr. Dixon called the second on the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 P.M...

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Holly A. Spece", is written over a horizontal line.

Holly A. Spece
Borough Secretary & Treasurer
Plymouth Borough