

Plymouth Borough
Work Session and Rescheduled Meeting
November 26, 2017

The Plymouth Borough work session will begin at 1:00 P.M. and the regular meeting will be immediately called to order by Mr. Gary Kochinski, President of Council.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

ROLL CALL

Mr. Cunningham Mr. Thomas Mr. Kochinski
Mr. Dixon Mr. Peters

Mr. Kytort were excused. Mr. Coughlin was excused due to a death in the family.

CITIZEN'S REQUESTS AND COMMENTS REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS

There were no requests or comments.

CITIZENS REQUESTS AND COMMENTS REGARDING GENERAL ITEMS

Mrs. Mary Jarret of Center Avenue discussed a motion that was called at last month's meeting. She said it was called after the executive session and asked what was the address of the property that was sold. Mr. Kochinski said the information she posted to FaceBook was incorrect. Mr. Kochinski provided the correct information and said that the PNC bank building was sold for the amount of five thousand dollars to KMB Properties, LLC. He said it is the same gentleman that purchased and renovated the poultry market. Mr. Kochinski said he will be renovating the PNC building and discussed many of the structural issues of the property. He said the new owner will be operating a business out of the property. Mr. Thomas said there was a stipulation in the agreement that indicates that the owner must begin renovating within eighteen months of the agreement. He said that if renovations are not made within eighteen months that the property will revert back to the ownership of the Borough.

Mrs. Jarret had some questions regarding the budgets and said she reviewed both budgets and noticed a hundred thousand dollars budgeted in both budgets for capital improvements. Mr. Kochinski confirmed. Mrs. Jarret said last year only fifty thousand was budgeted. Mr. Kochinski said they were

broken down. He said sixty-thousand was for police pension plan and fifty thousand was for the capital improvement loan.

Mr. Kochinski said a meeting is scheduled with AFG to review audit reports and discuss the police pension plan. He stated that the fund was underfunded by three hundred eighty-one thousand six hundred fifty-four dollars (\$381,654.00) in 2015 and that is indicated in the 2016 audit report. He said they are obtaining a more accurate number and that this is a common problem throughout the country. Mr. Kochinski explained the losses since 2006. He said Council will need to take a loan to bring the numbers back up.

Mrs. Jarret asked if any building code citations have been issued and indicated that she did not see that in either budget. Mr. Kochinski said it is under Code Enforcement salaries. Mr. Kochinski explained that fifteen thousand dollars is budgeted under magistrate fines. Mrs. Jarret asked if Council considered using fire drivers to perform outside code enforcement activities. Mr. Kochinski asked where they should pull the money from. He said it is a good suggestion. He said twenty thousand dollars is set aside for the Code Enforcement Officer which is thirteen dollars and hour. Mrs. Jarret suggested to let him do the inside code enforcement and allow code enforcement go by and utilize citations to build up the budget. She said they were told when Council enacted the landlord ordinance that all funds for the code enforcement officer would be generated by citations issued from the landlord and property maintenance ordinances. Mr. Kochinski explained that BHW is the building inspectors for Plymouth Borough and that allows time for the code enforcement officer to go through the properties and issue citations where necessary. Mr. Kochinski said prior to BHW taking on the building inspections the code enforcement officer was solely inspecting properties and did not have time to enforce code. Mrs. Jarret suggested utilizing the full time fire driver to issue code enforcement citations. Mr. Kochinski said they experienced issues in the past with getting a fire truck driver to check fluids in the fire engine and was told that it wasn't in their job description. Mr. Kochinski said it was a good proposal but asked where to pull the money if they want to start investing in the police.

Mr. Thomas asked if any of the fire members were willing to do what she proposed. Mrs. Jarret said she did not know and suggested to ask them.

Mrs. Jarret asked about the elected officials salaries and Mr. Kochinski explained that an ordinance was passed last year to end salaries for the newly elected Mayor and newly elected Council members. Mr. Dixon explained that he and other members of council who still receive their salaries have always and continue to donate their salaries to good causes in Plymouth Borough. He said that they could not expect others to sacrifice if council did not sacrifice. Mr. Kochinski explained that they did discuss this with the solicitor and was told that they could not just stop paying the elected officials. Mr. Kostelanski explained that that were a lot of legal issues including a potential IRS liability to them if they forgo their salary. Mr. Kostelansky said it was researched and found that doing this good deed could have created some legal problems.

Mrs. Jarret said she is not seeing any reductions in any of the departments. She asked if they could be guaranteed that Council will not hire someone or make a big purchase. Mr. Kochinski said if they could get free money for something then they would want to take it. He said a lot of the grants require matching funds. He said there are several projects backed up because they are not budgeted for. He said there are issues that DEP has flagged for two years in a row because the concrete at the bottom of the channel has eroded by several inches at the bottom of Wadham's creek where the new channel begins. He said that it is going to cost twenty-five to thirty thousand dollars to repair and it is not in the budget. Mr. Kochinski said he spoke with DEP to see if such projects are eligible for grants and they said that

they usually do not award grants for such small projects and Council would need to budget for these type of projects. Mr. Kochinski said the bottom of Wadham Creek is loaded with sediment and it will need to be removed. He said the county owns some of that but Plymouth owns a lot of that as well. He said these are things that Plymouth is being flagged for but are not in the budget.

Mr. Kochinski said if they go up to Second Street and up Orchard Street and make a left, the old Duffy Run culvert is collapsing which runs beneath homes. He said in 2011, five inches of rain fell and washed the foundation of a property away. He said there was another collapse along the culvert on the corner of First Street and Poplar Street this year. He said if they go up to the back of Barnes Street they will notice a blue house with a big hole in the backyard. He said these are all problems that still need to be addressed and are not in the budget. Mr. Kochinski said the Borough Engineer is working on a plan to apply for a grant. He said they will see if they could re-route the flow where it begins on top of Second Street and have it go over to the top of the outflow of Duffy's Run where they will connect it right back in and allow it to flow that way. He said they are not able to go through Second Street because they found that there are too many utilities and a tunnel that already runs through. Mr. Kochinski explained that they are looking to take a channel across Second Street and over to Orchard Street maybe across First Street and over to the dam. He said this project may be estimated to cost to cost a half a million dollars. Mr. Kochinski explained the process. He said the grant is awarded and then the the engineer's report is provided and say for instance the project costs a million dollars, he said the project is advertised and the lowest bid received is for 1.2 million dollars. He said the Borough is then responsible for overage. He said they either pay the overage or forfeit the grant award. Mr. Kochinski said these are not easy decisions. He said peoples homes are at risk. He said some of the residents of Orchard Street have culverts collapsing and boards covering the holes in their backyards. Mr. Kochinski said there are storm drains that run into the pipe and are utilized when there is an excessive amount of rain.

Mr. Kochinski said the engineer is still going through everything regarding the Beverly Drive project. He said a grant in the amount of around three hundred thousand dollars was awarded and he explained again that the Borough is responsible for the difference of the grant award and the actual project cost. Mr. Kochinski said road paving projects are not included in the budget. He said if money is left over then these are the projects that are taken care of at the end of the year. He said you take into consideration whether or not enough money is there or if there were any costly emergencies throughout the year.

Mrs. Jarret asked whether or not if Plymouth could increase the earned income tax. Mr. Kochinski said they did look into that. He said from what he understood was that Plymouth Borough would have to change its rule of government to home rule. Mrs. Jarret said Kingston just did that last year and operates under a home rule. Mr. Kochinski asked how Kingston was classified. Mr. Kostelansky said they operate as a municipality under the home rule charter so they were able to elect their optional form government and do what was allowed under what they selected and was voted in. Mr. Kochinski asked how Kingston was classified. Mr. Kostelansky said as a home rule charter community municipality. He added that they are not governed by the borough code and that they are governed by the options they selected. Mr. Kostelansky said there are various options to allow them to do certain things different from a borough under the borough code regarding taxes. He said they would have to look into see what options they would have and how they could alter the tax structure.

Mr. Kochinski said that it would have to be placed on a ballot and voted on. He said that citizens would have to pass that to raise taxes. Mr. Kostelansky said it would have to be placed on the ballot, a study commission would have to be elected and then the study commission would examine the current form of government and options and then they would provide recommendations. He said the study

commission can recommend the borough stay as a borough or they could recommend switching to the other form of government and then the citizens of the community would have to vote on the recommended option. Mr. Kochinski said the borough's EIT is at one percent and it cannot be changed. He said three hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000.00) is budgeted for EIT revenue and added that some years are higher and some are lower but it has been holding steady. Mrs. Jarret said the earned income shares the responsibility of the taxes. She said it would make sense to tax everyone.

Mrs. Jarret had some questions regarding the Liquid Fuel fund expenses. Mr. Kochinski explained that the total expenses equaled the estimated 2018 allotment.

Mrs. Jarret had some questions regarding the fire department hours and Mr. Kochinski explained that the borough currently employs eleven part time fire drivers and two full time fire drivers. He said the one full time driver would be moved to day shift if budget proposal number one passes. He said between the second and third shifts that sixteen shifts would need to be voluntarily filled. Mr. Kochinski said Council would ask that they still provide a schedule and to stay four to five minutes from the station while on duty. Mr. Kochinski said he is not saying this is right or wrong, he said that they are trying to find ways to pull funds to increase the police presence. He said Plymouth is not the first municipality to propose this. He said they are not proposing a full volunteer fire because they would think the day shift would be the hardest to fill. Mr. Kochinski explained that they did not discuss this with the fire companies because if they did they would be pointing fingers at one another and rebelling against the plan. He said they reviewed the statistics and believe it could be done this way. Mr. Kochinski said if someone was to go down Route 11 they would find all volunteer companies and added that he would not know where the next paid fire department is located.

Mrs. Jarret said she spoke with twelve towns and six were in Luzerne County. She said half of them have some paid drivers. She said if you go out of Luzerne County then you see it more often. She said the volunteer fire companies are located in towns that are flat like Berwick. She is concerned that they are going to have a snowstorm and a house on fire on top of Wall Street and an unfamiliar driver that will not be able to make that turn. Mr. Kochinski explained that no one drives the fire engines without sufficient training. He said the Fire Chief or Assistant Fire Chief signs off that they are safe to drive the engine. Mr. Kochinski said there are sixteen shifts and eleven part time drivers. He said the volunteers may split the hours between them however they need and as long as someone responds as needed. He said he wanted to increase funding to twenty thousand dollars each to the two remaining departments to promote and stabilize interest. He said they could decide on their voting body on how that money could be spent.

Ms. Cheryl McMann, 307 East Main Street, asked Council which Fire House was going to be shut down. She said that it stated in the paper that it was going to be No. 2. Mr. Kochinski confirmed. She said Council members have social and regular members at Fire No. 1 and Fire No. 3. She said that it is conflict of interest. She asked how this voting body has the right to shut down No. 2. She said they have the most state certified fire fighters and they are the only ones with the certificates and they get the most money from state grants because of said certificates. She said No. 3 is in need of many repairs.

Ms. McMann asked what is a 21.6% increase in taxes on a home valued at fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00) and what is the 9.4% increase in taxes on a home valued at fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00) and she said that she will tell council what she wants to pay to live in this town. She said she can't sell the property and she can't burn it down and she can't move out to walk away from the property. She asked why the property values continue to decrease. She asked why can't they charge renters. Mrs. McMann began to yell and carry on.

Mr. Kochinski gained order and explained that on an average value of a property in Plymouth is sixty-three thousand four hundred eighty-one dollars. He said the 6.2 mills (which is the 9.4% increase) would mean an increase in taxes of thirty-four dollars and twenty-eight cents (\$34.28) per year. Mr. Kochinski explained the 21.6% increase would mean the mills would increase to 7.18 mills and the annual increase would be ninety-three dollars and ninety-five cents per month (\$93.95). Ms. McMann said it is not much of an increase and said to keep all the fire companies opened.

Ms. McMann recommended a renters fee and Mr. Kochinski said the Solicitor will look into it.

Ms. McMann brought up a council resignation and asked if the seat would be given to the fifth most vote getter in town. Ms. McMann said Mary Jarret is the fifth most vote getter in town and she deserves a chance. Mr. Kochinski said Mr. Jarret has a lot of suggestions and ideas and asked if she would be willing to take the gavel and lead. Mrs. Jarret said no and said she does not have the experience to be council president. Mr. Kochinski said he would review everything with her. She said she seen what happened to Mr. Dixon. Mr. Kochinski said he would not let that happen. Ms. McMann said a council seat is opened and she was the fifth most vote getter. Mr. Kochinski said Council President seat is the best place to make the most changes. Mrs. Jarret said Council has the experience and most of them have been serving two years or more and they brought them to this point. She said get them out of this and start right. She said she is willing to share the load and share her opinions. Mrs. Jarret said they could not put anyone new in the seat. Mr. Dixon said it happened to him and he stepped up, got crucified but at least he stepped up. He said he came, gripped over conditions and put in over forty years into Plymouth and still gets spit on. Mr. Dixon said he doesn't care. Mr. Dixon said they get killed on FaceBook but yet he doesn't see anyone coming and picking up garbage when needed. He said the Community makes up Plymouth and the Community needs to step up. He said people need to step up and fight. Mr. Dixon said he helped a lot of people in this town and never asked for anything. He said he is going to continue to be here and fight the fight.

Mrs. Mary Rittenhouse, Main Street, asked if anyone else was to be appointed to fill the seat, would they need to take the Council President seat. Mr. Kochinski said he was asking her. He said it would be up to them. Everyone began to yell again. Mr. Kochinski gained control again and explained that this was a budget meeting. Mr. Kochinski answered Mrs. Rittenhouse's question and said it would depend on who it was. Mr. Peters said Mr. Kochinski asked him the same question when he came on council. Mr. Peters asked why this was getting beaten into the ground and said this was a budget meeting and not about elections. He said they all need to work together because it is their borough and everyone needs to find out what they could do to work together.

Mr. Joshua Evans, Lee Street and representative of Goodwill Hose Company No. 2. He said he knows that every single one on council is great and is not there to discredit anyone. He said a meeting was held and it was in regards to closing Goodwill Hose Company. Mr. Evans said no one on council notified them and said they had one week to prepare for this and did not know what they were up against. He said it was totally unfair. He said No. 2 helps everyone in this town and as well as every other fire company. He said no fire company should be shut down because Council does not pay for the equipment from all the volunteers and all equipment that is on the trucks. He said they have a relief association that provides free training to anyone who wants to volunteer. Mr. Evans said no one is volunteering anymore. He said they need the volunteers they do have and by Council doing this, they will lose members. He said no fire house should close and response times will go crazy if there is one guy on day shift. He said people pay taxes and want a fire truck to respond when they call 9-1-1. He said they are guaranteed to have that and it costs sixty-two hundred dollars that council provides which pay utilities. Mr. Evans said they are shutting down a fire hall that has the bazaar grounds. He said they rent out the hall to different organizations and

fund raise. He said each Fire Company is self sufficient. He said he is a part time fire truck driver and that he does not care about the job but the townspeople do. He said there are full time drivers here too that rely on it for their family. Mr. Evans said they were messing with people's lives. He said all volunteers and paid drivers are from this town and put their time and soul into this. He said a lot of funding comes from state grants.

Mr. Evans said they had a good ISO rating for the last couple years. He said fire tax will increase and people are concerned about that. Mr. Kochinski asked if he was talking about homeowners. Mr. Evans said yes and explained that had to do whether someone lived next to a fire hydrant or a fire company. He said they were told they were going to park the fire truck up at the Borough garage. Mr. Evans said that is not fair for members to use their personal vehicles and the fire truck should be on scene first to get to the fire hydrant and then to the house. Mr. Kochinski said these were proposals that were set forth and nothing was set in stone. Mr. Evans said both proposals include No. 2 closing. Everyone asked why. Mr. Kochinski said it was to get down to two fire departments to make it easier to manage a full volunteer base. Mr. Kochinski said if council approached them the finger pointing games would have started and they did not want to tear these fire companies apart. Mr. Evans said this should have been brought up during the summer and Mr. Kochinski agreed. Mr. Kochinski said they are trying to pull funding wherever they can. Mr. Kochinski said they are trying to improve police presence and invest in infrastructure. Mr. Kochinski said No. 1 has fire, ambulance and rescue and No. 3 is the only station out of the flood zone and that was how No. 2 was determined to be closed.

Mrs. Jarret said this side of Shawnee Avenue will be included in the flood zone in the new maps. Mr. Dixon said the only reason they did that was to pick up more revenue because the government is in debt.

Sheila Golightly of East Walnut Street, asked if the Code Enforcement was a salaried position. Mr. Kochinski said it was an hourly position at thirteen dollars (\$13.00) an hour. Mrs. Golightly suggested that the code enforcement office punch in and out. Mr. Kochinski explained that he actually works more hours than what he takes. Mr. Kochinski said the Code Enforcement Officer does not do it for the money at thirteen dollars (\$13.00) an hour and that he does it for the town. She said she does not want to see the fire company close.

Mrs. Golightly suggested to Council to not provide overtime to the secretaries but to provide comp time instead. Mr. Kochinski asked the solicitor to respond to Mrs. Golightly's recommendation. Mr. Kostelansky said comp time becomes a problem unless it is taken with in that given year. Mr. Kostelansky said that would mean work would not be getting done because they are off. Mrs. Golightly asked about the sick and holidays. She said when a paycheck is calculated and a day is taken that it is already calculated in your paycheck. Mr. Kochinski said that it comes off the salary off the budget and it is not included in their gross pay. Mrs. Golightly asked how much the secretaries were making and Mr. Kochinski said she would have to look at the contract and add up all salaries, sick, vacation, holiday and personal time. Mr. Kochinski said it is around thirty-one thousand a year. Mr. Kochinski said that it is not a lot of money. Mr. Kochinski explained that this was all contractual. Mrs. Golightly said she believes the police and fire should get paid overtime. Mr. Kochinski said he believes everyone should get paid. Mrs. Golightly does not believe the secretaries are essential personnel. Mr. Kochinski asked her how the government would function.

Mr. Travis Buchanan of Main Street asked about the decrease in properties. Mr. Kochinski explained that a lot of the properties were owned by tax exempt owners which means the properties become non-taxable. Mr. Buchanan asked about unpaid taxes and what steps were taken to push to get the

taxes paid or the properties quicker. Mr. Kochinski explained that properties go to Northeast Revenue Service and they are the actual collection agency and if taxes are not paid on a property then the property goes on for judicial tax sale. If a property goes up for judicial tax sale then the money reverts back to the Borough. Mr. Buchanan explained when a property becomes uninhabited there are no utilities which cause the properties to become dilapidated within a year. He asked if there is something they could start to figure out to get these houses back on the tax rolls quicker so they do not become an issue.

Mr. Buchanan asked if there was any correlation between the decrease in home values versus the increase in taxes. Mr. Kochinski said between 2013 and the current year it is an estimated loss of around thirty-five thousand dollars in revenue. He said eventually an increase in taxes is needed just to compensate that loss. Mr. Kochinski answered Mr. Buchanan's question and said there is a partial correlation. Mr. Kochinski said if the Borough is losing seventy-six hundred dollars a year then they should be increasing taxes 1% a year but there is a lot of controversy when it comes to raising taxes. Mr. Buchanan said Council wants to increase taxes again to recoup the lost money due to the decreasing property values which could be caused by the increase in taxes. Mr. Kochinski said the only way to get rid of it is to not provide any services because that is where all the money goes towards.

Ms. Melissa Federici, 286 Orchard Street, asked about occupancy inspections and Mr. Kochinski explained that BHW Construction Consultation completes the inspections and that it is their fee they charge. He said they handle the building inspections as well. Mr. Kochinski said the Borough receives 40% of all building permit fees and 60% is paid to BHW for their contracted services.

Mr. Gary McKeivich of Franklin Street, said he is a veteran member of Goodwill Fire No. 2 and asked what this closing will do to them as veteran members, the active members and Firemen's Relief. He said the Firemen's Relief is funded by the state and not by this Borough. He said Firemen's Relief owns everything and including parts of the apparatus. He said Station No. 2 spent one hundred five thousand dollars to build a building to house that engine. He said Firemen's Relief was based on the three fire entities. Mr. Kochinski said they would have to research it and explained that the purpose of this meeting was to provide for comments and suggestions.

Mr. John Frey of Shawnee Avenue asked if they knew how many renters are in town. Mr. Kochinski said they think about 50% and said they do not have an exact figure. Mr. Frey asked if there is any mechanism in place to keep track of these people so that they could accurately tax them. Mr. Frey said it relies on the honesty of the landlord. Mr. Frey suggested Council gather some volunteers to go door to door and compile this information. Mr. Kochinski said they have the code enforcement officer watch the property transactions.

Mr. James Miller of Davis Street asked how the Borough can improve the way the public becomes informed. Mr. Kochinski explained paperwork has been handed out since June or July that showed the declining property values. Mr. Dixon said there is a web page that provides information. Mr. Dixon said when he moved to Plymouth many years ago he came up to the borough building and looked around. He said a lot of information is posted and that Mr. Miller could always call the secretaries if he ever had any questions.

Mr. Miller asked if by next March things don't seem to be going as anticipated how much flexibility or reversibility is there when it comes to any of the decisions that are being made. Mr. Kochinski explained the budget is guide and they want to stick to it as close as they can. Mr. Kochinski said they are losing police officers and they are on the verge of a collapse due to staffing levels. He said if they cannot staff with part time officers then they will have to go full time officers.

Ms. Debra Williams of Nottingham Street, asked about employee health insurance plans. Mr. Kochinski explained that insurance is negotiated within the union contracts.

Ms. Williams asked if he knew about the closing of Hose Company No. 2 and the raising of taxes prior to election why it was not brought up. She said she felt as if it deceived the public by not telling them that. Mr. Kochinski said the complaints with the police department increased over the last few months. He said the whole purpose of this meeting was to get input from the public and take the input for consideration before any decisions are made. Mr. Kochinski said they are doing anything they can to pull funding to try to push towards police.

Mr. George Becker of North Street, asked about employee salaries and asked if the Borough was soliciting bids for new police vehicles. Mr. Kochinski said the Borough is trying gather information to apply for grants. Mr. Becker explained that he was at the borough building and came in to file a Right-to-Know request. He said he seen two bids for police vehicles on the desk and asked why are cutting EMS services and looking to spend this money. Mr. Kochinski explained again that they need a grant to pay for these vehicles and they were trying to apply for a Department of Agriculture grant and other grants. Mr. Becker asked additional questions about employee salaries and duties and Mr. Kochinski answered all his questions.

Mr. Scott Lewis of Stephanie Drive, said he lives on probably one of the highest taxed streets in the Borough. He said proposing a tax increase when he is already paying thirty-six hundred dollars is pretty tough to swallow. Mr. Kochinski said that is why they put the two proposals out there and said they might be able to tone it done a bit and discussed some means to do so.

Mr. Carl Coates of Beverly Drive asked why five thousand dollars is being allotted for the dikes. Mr. Kochinski said that it was for dike maintenance for Brown Creek, Wadhams Creek and Duffy Run Debris Dam.

Ms. Kristin Dopko of Davenport St., said Council is doing a great job but they do need more police presence. She said if they have to rely on volunteer fire fighters on a regular basis they are not going to have them. She said she sees other departments that have to rely on volunteers and it takes nine minutes for a response. Mr. Kochinski said they will take it into consideration.

Mr. Fred Murman, Beverly Drive, said they should have State Representatives come to the next meeting. Mr. Kochinski said they could look into it but he doesn't think they get into budget proposal discussions. Mr. Murman said so they could see the dire straits the Borough is in. Mr. Kochinski said the state needs to change the laws some way or another.

Mr. John Frey of Shawnee Avenue said the legislators got them into this position and there is no non-painful solution. Mr. Kochinski said the guys they have are good and everyone is set for their own section of the state. Mr. Frey said they should all charter a bus and rap on the door of legislators and let them know that the people that are voting for them are unhappy with the fix they got them into. Mr. Frey said the problem is the social programs that are bringing individuals into this town who are messing the town up. He said they are here because of the legislation that made it possible for them to come here and stay here. Mr. Kochinski said it comes down to jobs and what is being offered in the area. He said there are jobs that are paying between eleven and thirteen dollars an hour and asked how does someone survive on that. Mr. Frey said help is needed from Harrisburg and Washington to help solve these problems.

Mayor Petrosky asked if those taxes are just the taxes that are being paid to Plymouth or are they being paid to the school district and the county. The audience said all. Mayor Petrosky then asked how

many in the audience went to school district when after each year the school taxes increase and she asked if anyone went to the County when they increased the taxes. She said for as long as she has been there, Plymouth Borough raised taxes once in seventeen years. Mr. Kochinski said they lost seven thousand dollars with a property mill of 5.7 and the school district is 16 mills. He said they are in that jurisdiction. He said to magnify that seven thousand dollars and imagine what Wyoming Valley West is losing. He said the property value in the whole district is plummeting and it's not just their area. Mr. Kochinski said Pittston did a great job on their Main Street and the values are still decreasing and same for Wilkes-Barre. He asked what could be a possible solution and said that they are all open to suggestions.

Mrs. Jarret of Center Avenue, said once the increase takes effect there will be a lot of reassessments. Mr. Kochinski said it has been non stop. Mrs. Jarret said it will be worse because she will be at the head of the line. She said she will have to find money in her pension to make up the difference. Mr. Kochinski asked what other alternative do they have. Mr. Kochinski said these are the decisions that no one wanted to make in the past twenty years. He said they all knew this was going on. He said in 2011 taxes increased by 143% in one shot. He said in the 1970s and 1980s there were twelve full time street department employees and they are down to three now and will be going down to two. Mr. Kochinski said they had twelve full time police officers at the time. He said in 1998, that number decreased to zero. Mr. Kochinski said that is when everything came flooding in and instead of them holding their staffing levels straight at the police and pulling it from a different area, argue the politics then and correct it. He said they decided to disband the full time police department. He said in 2000 everything began flooding in and the policing wasn't there and that is what caused it. He said it is not the full problem and it would have happened no matter what.

Ms. Alexis Krashnak, 110 Flat Road, stated her family has lived her for over fifty years complained that she can never get in touch with a police officer. She also said it is a terrible idea to close the fire house down. She said she is fine with her taxes increasing a little bit if that means keeping a fire house open.

Mrs. Maryanne Meeker from Beverly Drive, said Forty-Fort had a parking permit program and suggested Plymouth Borough initiate permit parking throughout the Borough. Mr. Kochinski asked Mr. Kostelansky if they could charge to park on a public street. Mr. Kostelansky said that it is set for a certain time frame. Mr. Kochinski thanked Mrs. Meeker for the suggestion.

Mr. Kochinski said Council will take everything said today under consideration and will look to improving both proposals.

Meeting Agenda

1. MOTION: TO ACCEPT MARK KTYTOR'S RESIGNATION FROM COUNCIL.

Mr. Cunningham made the motion.

Mr. Peters called the second on the motion.

Motion was unanimously carried.

2. MOTION: TO PAY NOVEMBER BILLS:

GENERAL FUND: 17-648 – 17-685
LIQUID FUEL FUND: 17-134 – 17-138
RECREATION FUND: 17-054 – 17-058

Mr. Dixon made the motion.

Mr. Cunningham called the second on the motion.

Motion was unanimously carried except for Mr. Thomas who approved all bills except for his supplemental insurances in which he has a personal interest because of contractual agreements.

3. MOTION: TO ADJOURN.

Mr. Dixon made the motion.

Mr. Peters called the second.

Meeting adjourned at 3:12 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Holly A. Spece
Borough Secretary & Treasurer
Plymouth Borough