

Trafford Borough
Monthly Business Meeting Minutes- September 1, 2020

The Trafford Borough Council held its monthly business meeting on Tuesday, September 1, 2020, at 7:00 p.m., via ZOOM.

Council President, Kris Cardiff, called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence.

Roll Call of Attendance by Assistant Manager Nina Solivan:

(Present)	Kris Cardiff, Council President	Craig Alexander, Solicitor
	Steven Perovich, Council Vice-President	Ed Llewellyn, Mayor
	Christopher Corrales, Councilmember	Ashley Stack, Borough Manager
	Zack Cole, Councilmember	Adam Hlad, Code Enforcement Officer
	Leslie Peters, Councilmember	
	Casey Shoub, Councilmember	

(Absent)	Ralph Deabner, Councilmember	Charles Miller, Emergency Management Coordinator
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Minutes: A motion "to accept the minutes of August 4, 2020, regular council meeting" was made by Councilwoman Peters and seconded by Councilman Cole. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Payment of Bills: A motion "to approve the expense voucher list dated September 1, 2020," was made by Councilman Perovich and seconded by Councilman Cole. The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Public Comment:

Councilman Cardiff read the rules for public comment.

Solicitor Alexander called upon those who wished to provide public comment.

Jason and Noel Stultz 528 Fairmont Avenue: Mr. and Mrs. Stultz came before the council to address the Fence Code Section 103-2 Subsection 2. Mr. and Mrs. Stultz are requesting a change to the code to make the code clearer and to allow residents the opportunity to beautify and protect their properties.

Code Enforcement Officer Hlad stated a working group reviews ordinances, and fences are being looked into. Code Enforcement Officer Hlad stated he is glad that there are individuals in attendance and voicing their concerns for change.

Solicitor Alexander stated he represents several communities and is well acquainted with fence restrictions. Often the restrictions state a fence in the front yard is only permitted to be a certain height for sight distance around a corner. When a property is on a corner lot and fronts two different streets, both yards are considered front yards. Which then the property is held to higher restrictions. Amending the ordinance can be looked at; however, there is the option to apply for a variance. Two things can be applied for; one is an interpretation of the zoning officer's decision to see whose interpretation is correct or variance with the zoning hearing board's decision. The zoning hearing board has the power to alter the strict and literal terms of the zoning ordinance if certain unique hardship can be shown. Fences are more dimensional than use variance and are a more relaxed standard. The zoning hearing board has exclusive jurisdiction over variance requests council does not have a say.

Solicitor Alexander stated the process for revising an ordinance is to replace it with a new ordinance. To fulfill a change or revision, the Pennsylvania Borough Code requires the proposed ordinance to be advertised, brought before council for approval, and if enacted, sent to code360 for codification.

Councilwoman Peters stated her understanding is that once the ordinance has been sent to code360, it takes a while to be published.

Councilman Cole stated the Stultz' fence abuts his property. The fence is beautiful and has made the neighborhood look a lot better.

Councilman Cole disagrees with the decision made that the Stultz's fence impedes the view of traffic. Councilman Cole stated the fence is nowhere near the intersection; it does not impede the view of traffic and a one way. Councilman Cole stated the reason there is a council is to make changes as they see fit. A motion "to amend the fence code to better suit the town" was made by Councilman Cole.

Councilman Cole stated he has two large dogs, and a four-foot fence will not contain his animals. Councilman Cole stated he purchased his home with a six-foot fence already erected on the same side as Mr. Stultz'. Councilman Cole does not feel that it is fair for Mr. Stultz as other properties have fences in violation.

Manager Stack questioned what changes are being proposed because we will need to draft an ordinance. Solicitor Alexander stated that Code Enforcement Officer Hlad was previously looking into changes. Solicitor Alexander questioned what Councilman Cole's proposed changes were. Councilman Cole stated the code needs to be changed; it was drafted in 2006 with no clarity as to why. Solicitor Alexander questioned if Councilman Cole would be okay with Code Enforcement Officer Hlad looking further into this and bringing suggestions to next month's meeting. Councilman Cole, agreed.

Councilman Perovich suggested the work session held in two weeks be used to discuss changes.

Councilman Cole withdrew his motion pending the Code Enforcement Officer's recommendations at the next meeting.

Councilwoman Peters questioned if there was an option for the zoning hearing board to make an exception for Mr. Stultz. Solicitor Alexander stated that this is the purpose of a variance, whereas an ordinance affects the entire town. The variance process does involve a fee. Being that the fence is on a hill helps to demonstrate the hardship to be awarded the variance.

Manager Stack stated if Mr. Stultz applies for a variance, it is then out of the council's hands. With what has previously occurred and under the current ordinance MR. Stultz will need to apply for a variance for the fence approval.

Dolores Sutton 601 Brinton Avenue, Apt 2: Mrs. Sutton questioned why there has been a Trafford Police Officer on duty at Trafford Manor and who is paying for the officer's time.

Manager Stack stated the Westmoreland County Housing Authority approached the borough for these services at their expense.

Kimberly Zeek 623 Sixth Street: Mrs. Zeek provided support towards the review of the fence code.

Brandon Lacina 430 Brinton Avenue: Mr. Lacina announced the TBA's power wash and paint event went well. With volunteers' help, a new wooden fence was installed between the travel agency and the old Parente's. The TBA is hoping to continue this event annually. Mr. Lacina stated Larry George was hit with a \$75.00 fence permit fee. There have been discussions related to fees; the TBA would like to offer support on improving fees for residents and business owners. Lastly, Mr. Lacina was approached by Ms. Zeeman regarding Halloween. Mr. Lacina stated he was unsure if Halloween was going to happen due to COVID19. Ms. Zeeman had the idea to work with the businesses to have a Halloween parade if the borough was planning on canceling Trick-or-Treat.

Councilwoman Peters stated the Recreation Board is planning an activity and is always looking for volunteers. Mr. Lacina stated that Mrs. Zeeman was looking for the TBA to support a possible event by providing candy donations, financial donations, or organizing a parade. The TBA was looking at the stance if no one else was going to do something, the TBA will.

Borough Manager's Report: Manager Stack reported we are moving forward in the process of accepting online payments. The PA DCED announced the awards for the PA Small Water and Sewer Grant; the borough was not selected. The borough will need to consider alternate repair options on Meadow Street. Don Glenn, Lou, and I are looking into the most cost-efficient ways. DCED was unsure if the grant will be available next year. The 2019 audit has been completed; the council will receive a copy via email. We did end the year with a surplus of \$500,000.00 in the general fund. Manager Stack stated she anticipates a similar surplus ending 2020, with a portion dedicated to 2021 matching ant funds and infrastructure. Having a surplus is crucial to cover the first quarter of the next year's expenses. The borough is locked in at the rate of 11.2% return for the 2012 bond refinance. The borough will see a total debt reduction of \$262,000.00. Manger Stack stated she and Councilman Shoub worked on an application for Duquesne Light's LED Street Light Program for 14 lights in South Trafford. This is a pilot program. There are certain criteria in order to perform the exchange. The lights must be in a contiguous location. If this installation and program go well, we can look into other areas around town that fit the criteria. The general fund balance is approximately \$698,514.00. The liquid fuel balance is approximately \$113,338.00. The recreation fund balance is approximately \$5,033.00, the sewage fund balance is approximately \$578,583.00, and the Veteran's Memorial Park fund balance is approximately \$8,467.00. Manger Stack stated she has followed up with Port Authority and received the following response, "At this time, I do not have additional information to share; however, I am hopeful that we will have an update in the near future. I look forward to speaking with you soon".

Councilman Cardiff questioned when the last time a tax anticipation loan was taken out. Manager Stack stated prior to her employment. Solicitor Alexander stated its been several years.

Councilman Cardiff stated years ago; the borough would need to take out a loan to pay the first quarter expenses because there was not enough of a surplus at the end of the year, and the tax money does not come in until late March early April.

Mayor Llewellyn questioned how long we were going to allow PAT not to provide an update. Councilman Cole concurred.

Councilman Perovich stated he feels PAT is using the Forbes Road closure as an excuse. Councilman Perovich stated he spoke with a PAT representative, and he indicated that once the Forbes Road project was completed, something could happen.

Mayor Llewellyn stated Shop n Save is closed so now they have a turnaround.

Councilwoman Peters stated the trash can that was anonymously placed on Viaduct Way was overflowed, and the trash is now all over the hillside. Manager Stack stated Public Works removed the trash can and trash on Monday.

Mayor's Report: Mayor Llewellyn reported for August there were a total of one hundred forty-one service calls, with ten criminal complaints filed, and twenty-five citations issued.

Community & Economic Development: Councilman Perovich stated he did not have a report this evening.

General Government & Finance: Councilman Corrales stated he did not have a report this evening.

Parks & Recreation: Councilwoman Peters thanked Public Works for the maintenance at BY Park. The Recreation Board is planning a Halloween event that will allow social distancing. Possibly having residents decorate their homes for Halloween or fall to be judged by guest judges for most festive for a prize and treat bag. Councilwoman Peters stated she is in the process of formatting the handwritten memorial brick list to a more legible document for the website. Councilman Perovich stated we should separate the list into categories. Councilman Perovich suggested meeting with Councilwoman Peters to compile lists and categories.

Planning, Property, & Ordinances: Councilman Shoub stated a code review meeting was held between himself, Councilman Deabner, and Code Enforcement Officer Hlad. Additional meetings will be scheduled in the near future.

Public Safety: Councilman Cole stated he did not have a report this evening.

Public Works & Sanitation: Councilman Shoub stated the public works department has been very busy and to please be patient.

Presidents Report: Councilman Cardiff stated Governor Wolf signed a renewal of the COVID19 disaster declaration. Councilman Cardiff thanked public works and Manager Stack for attending to pothole complaints. School is back in session; please be mindful with your speed. Councilman Cardiff announced all financial information, minutes, council emails, forms, etc. can be found on our website.

PMRS Ordinance

A motion "to approve an ordinance amending the non-uniform pension plan administered by the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System" was made by Councilman Shoub and seconded by Councilman Perovich.

Manager Stack stated this ordinance is a formality and is required every few years.

The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Savvy Citizen discontinuation

A motion "to discontinue the borough's Savvy Citizen Membership" was made by Councilwoman Peters and seconded by Councilman Perovich.

Councilwoman Peters stated the memberships have declined, and the service was not being used to its full potential. Councilwoman Peters stated she did not feel renewing was financially responsible.

Councilman Cardiff mentioned looking for other options.

The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Little Free Library

A motion "to Suzanne Brusco to contribute and maintain a Little Free Library near Veterans' Memorial Park" was made by Councilwoman Peters and seconded by Councilman Cole.

Manager Stack stated Mrs. Brusco approached the borough with the idea. Public Works Director Lou Corrales and Manager Stack met with Mrs. Brusco regarding the placement. The proposed placement will allow Mrs. Brusco to keep an eye on it. If all goes well, Manager Stack mentioned placing a bench nearby.

The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Payment to Whitney Construction

A motion "to approve a payment to Whitey Construction in the amount of \$9,100.00 for the insulation and drywall repairs in the municipal building" was made by Councilman Cole and seconded by Councilman Perovich.

Manager Stack stated the project was bid out and delayed due to COVID19. The project has been inspected and is now complete.

The motion carried unanimously 6-0.

Discussion meeting via Zoom

Agenda item "approve holding the Tuesday, September 15, 2020, Trafford Borough Discussion Meeting via Zoom" failed for lack of motion.

New Business

Councilman Perovich questioned the Homewood Avenue disorderly house item listed on the code report. Code Enforcement Officer Hlad indicated the District Magistrate dismissed all charges. Councilman Perovich asked if an issue were to arise at this property again, would we need to start the process over from the beginning? Code Enforcement Officer Hlad stated, yes.

Councilman Perovich questioned the status of the old Caruso building (201-203 Brinton Avenue). Code Enforcement Officer Hlad stated there is a demo company under contract.

Councilman Perovich questioned if anyone had read the new sewage breakdown letter by the Manager and Assistant Manager. It is very detailed; it breaks everything down and provides a history.

Councilman Shoub stated there were a lot of hours put into the letter.

Manager Stack stated Assistant Manager Solivan mostly put it together.

Councilman Cardiff stated the letter is on the website and all the official social media platforms.

Councilwoman Peters stated the information has always been provided; however, this letter is more detailed.

Manager Stack stated the admin office keeps a list of those who were sent a sewage fact sheet when assumptions are made. We decided not to mail them to each property owner due to cost and the letter being four pages.

Adjournment

Councilman Cardiff announced the next regular meeting for Tuesday, October 6, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. the location will be determined at a later date.

A motion "to adjourn" was made by Councilman Cole and seconded by Councilman Shoub. The motion carried unanimously 6-0. The meeting ended at 8:06 p.m.