

BOROUGH OF GREENCASTLE
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
June 30, 2020
842 S. Washington Street

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Ben Thomas Jr., Council President Steven Miller, Councilmembers: Larry Faight, H. Duane Kinzer, Matthew Smith, Wade Burkholder and Jeremy Layman. Also present was Borough Manager Lorraine Hohl and Finance/HR Manager Emilee Little. Councilmember Joel Amsley was not in attendance.

President Miller called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

An invocation was given by Mayor Thomas.

President Miller led the Council, staff, and audience in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

President Miller noted that the meeting was being recorded by staff.

On a Burkholder/Faight motion the Council voted unanimously to approve the proposed agenda for the June 30, 2020 special Council meeting.

Opportunity to be Heard

President Miller invited Borough citizens to address Council with specific issues of concern, reminding them of the 2 minute public comment policy.

Albert Miller of 171 Apple Drive proposed several mitigation techniques to reduce runoff in the Orchards neighborhood. Miller suggested an ordinance requiring residents to run their downspouts routed to discharge into grass and not onto driveways or roads.

John Henson of 680 Osbourne Avenue stated sump pumps have been a significant issue causing the sewer system to overflow. Henson also questioned wages versus insurance cost and the expenses associated with the Besore Library rain garden project.

Brian Harbaugh, co-owner of JCH Associates, reiterated that the Borough needs to focus on obtaining a complete exemption, stating that the waiver only buys the community 5 years of relief.

Mike Ross with the Franklin County Area Development Corporation thanked Council for their work in obtaining a waiver and granting relief to property owners. Ross stated how potential businesses don't want to see properties in the Borough of Greencastle because of the high Stormwater fees. Ross offered to assist in any way possible.

REGULAR AGENDA

Borough Manager's Presentation

Borough Manager Hohl addressed outstanding questions from the June 23, 2020 meeting including returning funds, means of a rebate, capital transfers, and altering the Besore Library project.

Councilmen Burkholder questioned why a check refund would be more favorable as opposed to crediting customer accounts.

Hohl stated that both the Borough's auditors and legal team recommended the processing of checks for refunds instead of crediting accounts to ensure all funds remain separate.

Mayor Thomas disagreed with staff's recommendation of processing checks and stated that a customer credit and an interfund transfer would be an easier, more cost effective solution.

Councilmen Faight stated that the community needs their money back in the quickest way possible.

President Miller stated the Borough can get checks out and the process will be over. Miller suggested starting with the largest bill payers and prioritizing refund processing based on amount paid.

When polled, Council unanimously agreed to the processing of paper check refunds.

Borough Manager Hohl presented financial options for how Council may choose to proceed with the Stormwater utility. Proposed budgets were displayed to show all remaining and estimated Stormwater Fund costs over a 5 year period. The potential reduced billing rate based on a projected average annual cost of \$215,000 was outlined. Additionally figures were shown displaying the impact of increasing tax millage rates to cover Stormwater costs versus billing customers at a reduced rate through the Stormwater utility. A flat fee schedule was also discussed.

Councilmember Follow Up Discussion

President Miller explained how charging customers through the Stormwater utility and not through taxes, will benefit the vast majority of residents. Miller stated that billing based on impervious square footage fairly charges customers based on their specific contribution to the storm sewer system.

Councilmen Kinzer stated that the tax exempt properties in the Borough need to pay their share of the cost and suggested the Borough work with Antrim Township on the "Fire Tax."

President Miller agreed with staff recommendation of resuming Stormwater fees with the Q4/2020 billing and requested all refund checks be processed before Stormwater billing begins.

Councilmen Layman stated we need to think long term, and with people looking to relocate we don't want to do a disservice to our town.

Councilmen Burkholder stated there was good progress made with this meeting.

When polled, Council unanimously agreed to keep the Stormwater utility and charge a reduced fee versus a tax increase.

Mayor Thomas stated he disagrees with a proposed Stormwater fee and the projected labor costs associated with Stormwater. Thomas discussed the Orchard Circle project and the need for further public education. Thomas suggested eliminating the waterfall policy for payment allocation and recommended crediting accounts instead of refunding citizens with a mailed check. Thomas also proposed the Borough partner with Antrim Township and build the Besore Library rain garden jointly.

President Miller suggested staff elicit proposals from different engineering companies to gain more expertise with Stormwater development.

Second Opportunity to be Heard

Brian Harbaugh, co-owner of JCH Associates, stated that people need money now and cutting checks would get that money back quicker. Harbaugh questioned the timeline of resuming Stormwater fee billing. Harbaugh asked about the next permit cycle timeframe.

Leah Harclerode of 506 S. Carlisle Street stated that as an accountant she agrees that cutting checks is the cleanest method of refunding money. Harclerode stated that crediting accounts and the associated funds transfers is an accounting and auditing nightmare.

Charlie Eckstine of 64 Williamson Avenue stated he would like to see churches, playgrounds, and the library be exempt because they provide an important service to the community. Eckstine said he would pay extra in taxes to allow for the tax exempt properties to not be charged. Eckstine stated that Council should listen to Mayor Thomas's suggestions more.

Albert Miller of 171 Apple Drive stated that administrative costs were diverted to this Stormwater fund and those costs make up the majority of the proposed Stormwater budget. Miller suggested the Borough send out a mailer to inform the public of the five year waiver, outline amounts to be returned, and provide proactive measures to reduce runoff.

Kendra Phiel of 30 Baumgardner Drive questioned why \$215,000 is needed to support the Borough office. Phiel stated she felt like the money wasn't properly spent and that the proposed budget numbers are too high.

Councilmen Faight stated that all budget meetings are open to the public and advertised yet only 2 members of the public attended any of those meetings. Faight stated that all budgeting decisions are scrutinized and clearly explained in those meetings.

Councilmen Kinzer stated the Borough needs to consider combining with Antrim Township, as both municipalities are duplicating too many services.

On a Faight/Kinzer motion the Council unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lorraine K. Hohl
Borough Manager