

RIDGWAY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
Ridgway Municipal Building
108 Main Street, Ridgway, PA 15853
March 18, 2024

The Ridgway Borough Council meeting was called to order by Steve Caggese at 6:00 p.m. at the Ridgway Municipal Building.

PRESENT: Council members Steve Caggese, Brent Kemmer, Steve Lawrie, Abbi Peters, Chris Matheson, Zack Pontious, and Ron Burkett. Also in attendance were Borough Manager Mike Handley, Mayor Ray Imhof, Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone, and Recording Secretary Jake Mercer.

ABSENT: Fire Chief Scott Pontious, Chief of Police Shawn Geci, and Solicitor David Pontzer.

Councilman Steve Caggese made a motion to approve the regular council meeting minutes as scheduled on February 19, 2024. Councilman Burkett seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Public Comment

N/A.

Army Corps of Engineers Presentation

Anthony Schenider from the US Army Corps of Engineers for the Pittsburgh District gave a presentation on flood mitigation projects that included discussion of retention ponds and non-infrastructure specifically surrounding the notification system.

Members from Ridgway Township also attended as the Army Corps of Engineers is asking for a cost share between the two municipalities to go forward with the project.

Finance Department

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to pay the bills. Councilman Matheson seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Mayor

Mayor Ray Imhof said the latest Coffee with the Mayor session went very well and the next one is on April 13 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at The Creative Cup. He said that there has been a lot done regarding the bicentennial celebration and reminded council that the time capsule will be opened on Sunday, June 23rd at 1 p.m.

Police Department

Chief of Police Shawn Geci was not in attendance for this March borough meeting, but Imhof read his report on his behalf.

Imhof reported that his department participated in an active shooter tabletop exercise this past Wednesday at the courthouse annex, along with other emergency service personnel in the county.

There are currently several members enrolled in a 40-hour course called critical incident training, specifically dealing with mental health issues.

In May, the department is hosting a refresher course for standard field sobriety testing as well as a special weapons and risk training in St. Marys.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Scott Pontious's report is in the council packet.

Environmental Manager

Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone shared that the Water, Sewer, Refuse, and Streets Committee took a tour of the wastewater treatment plant. The committee was able to tour the various buildings, pump rooms, generators, the off-station ditch, and other infrastructure to treat wastewater in Ridgway.

Quattrone invited all council members to take a tour of the wastewater treatment plant this summer.

Correspondence

Borough Manager Mike Handley said there were three letters of correspondence received, one from The Salvation Army, a second from the firemen's parade as an invite to attend for council members, and a third from the Ridgway YMCA, which was tabled for further discussion later in the meeting.

Borough Manager

Borough Manager Handley was proud to report to council that the Borough of Ridgway has received the Governor's Award for local government excellence. This was due to the intergovernmental agreement between the borough and the Johnsonburg Borough to create two new full-time positions, one being a code enforcement officer and the second being a community economic development coordinator.

Handley said that it is an honor to the community to receive this prestigious award.

This award will be accepted on Wednesday, April 10 in Harrisburg by Handley and additional members of borough council.

Handley shared that Steve Smith has been hired as a new employee in the public works department, effective February 26, 2024.

Handley had positive things to say about the Senior Junction of Ridgway, Inc. as they already have 111 paid members for the state sanctioned service.

Handley said that plenty of activities are going on at the Second Ward Fire Hall, and 60 Easter dinners are expected to be prepared for Easter Sunday at the senior center.

Handley said that spring cleanup for borough residents will be held the last week of April.

An update on the Ridgway Riverfront Property was given by Handley.

At the previous borough meeting, Lazy River Canoe Rental was awarded to be the concessionaire for the 2024 camping season and have relocated to the Ridgway Mills Campsites area to provide vending services.

Visitors to the campground will be able to rent kayaks, canoes, and inner tubes from Lazy River, as well as purchase firewood and bait for fishing.

Handley also said they are getting ready for the property to host the Ridgway Chainsaw Carvers Rendezvous at the end of April, along with the Ridgway Farmers Market that meets once a week during the summer months.

Committee Reports

Councilman Lawrie shared information with borough council from the Street Lighting, Parking and Traffic Committee meeting held on Tuesday, March 7. Lawrie is the chairman of this committee.

Lawrie said that Mike DePanfilis came into the meeting with concerns about cars being parked on Main Street for an extended period of time in front of storefronts. After discussions with DePanfilis, the committee concluded that it is not within their authority to address this issue.

Lawrie said that more signage will be added to the crosswalk by the Subway to ensure safety in that area and additional intersections that do not have stoplights.

Lastly, Lawrie made a recommendation to borough council to advertise the ordinance to make a “no parking addition” to the lower portion of Hayes Avenue as well as the Osterhout-North Broad Street intersection.

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to advertise this no parking addition to that area. Councilman Kemmer seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Old Business

Handley said that they have received an offer to sell borough owned property located at 575 North Broad Street for \$500.00.

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to sell this property. Councilman Matheson seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Handley asked for a motion to advertise the RFP in regards to the Lyle G. Hall Community Pool Splash Pad Project. Councilman Lawrie made a motion to advertise the RFP for the project. Councilman Burkett seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

New Business

Councilman Caggese shared that two residents complained about borough employees going into homes changing water heater meters without proper identification. Handley said that these employees are required to have their ID badges on and that he would speak to them about this issue.

Councilman Lawrie added his thoughts on the flood mitigation project. He urged Ridgway Township to partner with the borough on this project.

He said that both parties need to work together as a community because in the event of a flood, this affects all functions of the community. There is a cost-share between the borough and the township and is necessary for the project to go forward. Handley said that the township did earmark in their budget for this year the cost-share for this project.

Public Comment

Borough residents that live near the old hospital building returned to this borough council meeting to discuss the status of the old hospital building.

Handley said that he has a meeting next week with a person that represents that building, and he made it clear that any changes to the facility will need to come to the borough first. Information on a change of use needs to be provided to the community especially if it does not comply with the zoning ordinances.

One resident said that the hospital has been “a thorn in their side” for an extended amount of time, especially with their air conditioning unit that has caused a nuisance for residents that live in that neighborhood.

The residents expressed that they hope the property will be turned into something of good use, and Handley ensured that they will be notified when there is a change of use.

Another resident inquired about closing down Main Street in Ridgway for special occasions to drive commerce to local storefronts in town.

Councilwoman Peters said it would be tough to close down Main Street itself, but they are looking into doing pop-up events at alternative properties in town.

Councilman Lawrie added that a matter like this would be similar to the Ridgway Chainsaw Carvers Rendezvous having the event at the Ridgway Mills Campsites. He said this is not a borough function but would aid and assist those who would be in charge if something like this took place.

After no further discussion, the council adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m. before going into executive session.