

RIDGWAY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
Ridgway Municipal Building
108 Main Street, Ridgway, PA 15853
August 19, 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 Brent Kemmer, Steve Lawrie, Steve Caggese, Chris Matheson, Zack Pontious, and Ron Burkett.

ABSENT: Abbi Peters

Also in attendance were Borough Manager Mike Handley, Mayor Ray Imhof, Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone, Officer in Charge Justin Bolden, Fire Chief Scott Pontious, and Recording Secretary Jake Mercer.

Councilman Chris Matheson made a motion to approve the regular council meeting minutes as scheduled for July 15, 2024. Councilman Pontious 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

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Public Comment

N/A

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

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Mayor

Mayor Ray Imhof invited all council members to a remembrance service on September 11th at the Trinity United Methodist Church. Imhof thanked the Ridgway Fire Department, Ridgway Borough Police Department, and the Ridgway Ambulance Service for the commitment and professionalism they showed during a trying weekend in the Borough in light of the tragic fire that occurred over the weekend.

Police Department

Officer in Charge Justin Bolden said he is happy to answer any questions from the Council in regard to his report from July.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Scott Pontious said he is happy to answer any questions from the Council in regard to his report from July.

Environmental Manager

Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone was pleased to announce that Harrison Snyder was hired as an operator to the wastewater plant. His start date was July 1, 2024. Quattrone said they have been through their PFA testing and that they have no detections in their water.

Correspondence/Petitions

Borough Manager Mike Handley said there will be a street closure due to a parade going on at a later date and this information is included in the Council packet. Handley said Officer Bolden will review this.

Borough Manager

Borough Manager Mike Handley announced the start date of Brian Zawatski to public works effective August 19, 2024 and Dan Miller to public works effective September 3, 2024. These two spots have been filled due to a retirement and resignation.

Handley provided the mileage for the three vehicles they are selling as requested by the Council during the previous meeting. The 2016 Ford Police Interceptor has 128,731 miles on it, the 2015 Ford Police Interceptor has 121,494 miles on it, and a 1999 Ford F550 with 35,330 miles on it. Handley said these vehicles will be put on Municibid very soon.

Handley spoke highly of the first annual Rock Valley Revival as a wonderful event and that there was a lot of coordination between public volunteers, Council members, and community advocates. He said a letter will be drafted to the Ridgway Fire Department and the Board of Directors to show their support for next year's event.

Handley said that he would like to reach out to the organizers of the Ridgway Chainsaw Carvers Rendezvous to plan ahead for the April 2025 event at the Ridgway Mills Campground and to get a better scope of the property with contingency plans and emergency access.

Handley then spoke about the Community Heart and Soul Seed Grant which is an opportunity to further strengthen their partnership and collaboration with the Johnsonburg Borough community. Community

and Economic Development Coordinator for the Ridgway and Johnsonburg Boroughs Emma Coppolo provided more details on this grant. She presented this to the Johnsonburg Borough on July 30. Coppolo said the grant is designed to help small towns and is a resident driven process to expand on what they love about their community, what they want for its future, and how to achieve that.

The grant program cost is \$20,000 and each municipality would need to provide \$5,000 each to receive the grant program funding of \$10,000 needed to participate. Coppolo said she will be the point person for the project.

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to commit a \$5,000 match towards the program. Councilman Pontious 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

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Kemmer asked if this is a brainstorming endeavor and Coppolo responded by saying this type of project happens in phases such as brainstorming, community engagement, and implementation. Since taking the job, Coppolo stated she has been active in working with both Boroughs and planning different activities and projects moving forward.

Handley then turned the discussion over to Josh Quattrone to speak upon an equivalent dwelling unit assessment, as this has not been completed since 2008. An equivalent dwelling unit is a unit of measure representative of the demand load contributed to the sewer system from a single-family residence. This assessment will be done Borough and Township wide. He also explained what an SCR charge is, which is a sewer capital replacement charge that is on the Borough utility bill of every Borough resident. Quattrone said three changes are needed to do the assessment fairly and equitably, and these changes include how they handle water leaks, occupancy, as well as equivalent dwelling unit reductions.

The council then said further discussions will be had on this matter and more information will be discussed at the next meeting. Borough resident Keith Mader asked if the Township is a customer or a partner during the review process of this. Quattrone said he will be working with the Township to get data that he needs from them to do the assessment.

Committee Reports

N/A

Executive Session

The council went into an executive session to discuss a legal matter and said they would be returning to the meeting. The council returned from this executive session and President Steve Caggese said this was held in regard to the old Ridgway Borough landfill site located in the Ridgway Township.

Old Business

Caggese said the Ridgway Municipal Authority was the party to appeal to the Pennsylvania Environmental Hearing Board (EHB) brought by Lockheed Martin Corporation and Carlisle Company (Appellants) on July 31, 2020 of a Consent and Order Agreement. This was entered into by and between the Department of Environmental Protection, the Authority, and the Borough of Ridgway regarding the landfill site.

The Department, Borough, as well as Authority and Appellants negotiated a resolution of the appeal of the Consent Order and Agreement pursuant to a stipulation of settlement. Caggese said that the total cost to clean up the old landfill amounted to around \$17 million dollars. He said that this action was started eight years ago by the Department of Environmental Protection and the money had been earmarked for this matter for a long time. The landfill has not been active for decades. The area has already been remediated and cleaned out.

He credited Handley, Solicitor David Pontzer, RMA Chair Vic Aiello, and others to reduce the amount to about \$157,000. The stipulation was presented to the Authority and the Borough voted to approve the said stipulation and its filing with the EHB. The Borough signed the Consent and Order Agreement during this meeting after the following approval.

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to sign Resolution 4-2024 which is a consent order agreement related to the matter discussed in executive session. 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

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to go forward with Resolution 5-2024 (CAP 205 Flood Mitigation Risk Management Agreement). 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

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Matheson made a motion to approve Ordinance 689-2024 (Amending Parking Regulations) to address congestion on Hayes and Taylor Avenue during school hours. 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
Councilman Kemmer: Aye

New Business

Councilman Pontious made a motion to extend the recertified civil service list for one year. 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
Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Handley was informed and spoke about a dog kennel in the Ridgway Borough that was recently inspected. It passed inspection but a number of findings needed to be addressed. He said the roofing structure is dilapidated and the structure as a whole needs to be repaired or replaced. He said we do not utilize the kennel often but need to stay compliant. Officer in Charge Bolden said that no dogs were housed there over the past year to his knowledge.

Councilman Burkett made a motion to allocate \$5,000 towards dog kennel repairs. 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
Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Lawrie shared with Council that they may want to think about eliminating some streetlights. He said that this becomes a concern for neighborhoods and the ecosystem as a whole. Handley said that they can talk about this on a committee level if the Council chooses.

Public Comment

Borough resident Sara Anderson shared with Council members that St. Leo School has exciting things going on, including famous psychologist and guest speaker Dr. Ray Guarendi coming to speak at the St. Leo Church on September 17. She also mentioned the school's reverse raffle that will take place on November 9. She also asked for an update on the old hospital building and Handley said there is nothing to report.

Julee Marzella asked for an update on the Ridgway Mills property and Handley said they received their final report as it relates to the Ridgway Riverfront project. Handley said they are closing out their ARC

(Appalachian Regional Commission) grant and they are starting to look for grant opportunities to complete the phases, and this will be referred to a committee level.

Marzella then asked about the prospects of having Mountain Fest for 2025, and Handley said that the Council previously stated that they were open to allowing use of the Ridgway Mills property for the event. Marzella said they would need an indoor facility to do so.

She also suggested that the Borough should have an ordinance put in place to prohibit smoking within 20 feet of public buildings and cited that this is recommended by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

Handley said this was a good suggestion and added when he was on the housing authority board, a perimeter no smoking policy was passed. Borough resident Keith Mader said there are no smoking areas and that it comes down to enforcement. Marzella added that businesses should be given stickers of no smoking signs within 20 to 25 feet of a public building.

Council Discussion

After no further discussion, the council adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m. before going into executive session for a legal matter.