

RIDGWAY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
Ridgway Municipal Building
108 Main Street, Ridgway, PA 15853
September 16, 2024

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

PRESENT: Council members Brent Kemmer, Steve Lawrie, Steve Caggese (phone), Chris Matheson, Zack Pontious, Abbi Peters, and Ron Burkett.

ABSENT: Officer in Charge Justin Bolden and Fire Chief Scott Pontious.

Also in attendance were Borough Manager Mike Handley, Mayor Ray Imhof, Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone and Recording Secretary Jake Mercer.

Councilman Steve Lawrie made a motion to approve the regular council meeting minutes as scheduled on August 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

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Public Comment

Borough resident Matthew Williams brought forth concerns to Borough Council members about crosswalks in town. He said he was almost struck in the crosswalk at the welcome center crossing over towards CNB Bank over the weekend. Williams is the pastor at the Trinity United Methodist Church, and shared with Council that one of his parishioners was struck in a crosswalk last November. He said this is a major safety concern going forward.

Mayor Ray Imhof said that programming with the intersections and timing sequences are controlled by PennDOT. Council members had a previous discussion about how the signals work, specifically where Williams was concerned. Mayor Imhof suggested to Council to address this issue through the Street Lighting, Parking and Traffic Committee and to have PennDOT come to Ridgway to evaluate the intersections that could cause safety concerns.

Finance Department

Councilman Matheson made a motion to pay the bills. 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

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Mayor

Mayor Ray Imhof thanked Reverend Matthew Williams for the 9/11 memorial service that was held at the Trinity United Methodist Church for emergency service personnel. He said it was well attended. He said that on August 26th, the Civil Service Commission met, and they had to update the current civil service list and extend it for another year. According to Imhof, they voted to do so.

Police Department

Report is included in the Council packet.

Fire Department

Report is included in the Council packet.

Environmental Manager

Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone said that both plants are running well and sed basin number one has been cleaned for the second time this year. Quattrone said for the next two weeks they will be cleaning one set basin. He said everything is rolling smoothly at the plant.

Correspondence/Petitions

Borough Manager Mike Handley shared that they received three letters of correspondence, and he said those will be addressed during the public meeting.

Borough Manager

Handley announced the hiring of Isaac Sidelinger to the public works team and began working on September 9, 2024.

Handley shared that a letter of correspondence was received from the Ridgway Chainsaw Carvers Rendezvous to use the Ridgway Mills property for the event from April 23 to April 26, 2025.

Councilman Burkett made a motion to grant the use of the Ridgway Mills property for the Chainsaw Carvers Rendezvous from April 23 to April 26, 2025. 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
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

A letter of correspondence was received from the Elk County Commissioners requesting Borough Council to sign Resolution 6-2024. The resolution recognizes Pennsylvania's role in America's 250 birthday. This resolution was drafted and presented to Mayor Imhof.

Councilman Matheson made a motion to approve Resolution 6-2024. 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
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Handley said that a time and date for community wide trick-or-treating needs to be approved. Councilman Matheson made a motion to have community wide trick-or treating on October 26 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Councilman Lawrie 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
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

The business trick-or-treating in Ridgway will be held on October 31.

Executive Session

Councilwoman Peters announced that an executive session will be held regarding personnel, property and legal issues and that they would be returning.

Council emerged from this executive session and stated that there was no new information to report from the session and no action was taken.

Committee Reports

Councilman Steve Lawrie shared with Council discussions that took place in the latest Water, Sewer, Refuse & Streets Committee meeting held on Tuesday, August 27. They discussed an amendment for Ordinance 600 (supplementing existing sanitary sewage system ordinances).

Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone provided an overview of existing sewerage system ordinances and described water leak options in calculating equivalent dwelling units (EDU's). He stated the current ordinance does not address high water usage due to a leak or a break when calculating EDU value for the annual assessment.

Quattrone suggested three options to address this issue and may require a change to the ordinance. These options included using the highest usage month regardless of the leak (current ordinance), eliminate the highest month usage, or take the average of 12 months of the assessment year. Handley said this ordinance will be advertised prior to it being drafted for public review. After discussion, the committee made three recommendations. The first is to use the highest usage month to calculate EDU's unless it was determined a leak occurred that month. The second is to no longer waive the SCR fee if the water service is turned off at residences for extended non-occupancy. The third is that SCR reduction requests may be granted by the Borough Secretary or delegate.

A Ridgway Township Municipal Authority (RTMA) request described in the letter of correspondence was discussed. The letter was reviewed and summarized to the committee. It described the RTMA's intent to install sewer flow meters six months after the mutually agreed upon date of December 31, 2024. Committee discussion continued and noted that this mutually agreed upon time was established during the summer of 2022. As a result, two and a half years have gone by in addition to the original 2008 agreement. More discussions were had about removing the existing \$3.50 SCR fee reduction starting in January 2025 if the sewer flow meters are not installed. It was also stated that usage charges may increase based on an updated sewer rate study and it was stated that the Borough continues to subsidize the Township sewer usage.

Councilwoman Abbi Peters said that the Personnel Committee met on September 13 and said they are working through to find their next Chief of Police. She said there is nothing to report out of the Personnel Committee regarding that.

Old Business

Councilwoman Peters said Council is still working on some due diligence as far as the appointment of Chief of Police and they are planning a special meeting regarding the position on October 10 at 6 p.m. The amendment for Ordinance 600 recommendations was given as part of earlier discussions centering around the Water, Sewer, Refuse & Streets Committee meeting.

The sale of three Borough vehicles was approved.

The highest bid for the 2016 Ford Police Interceptor was received at \$4,100. Councilman Lawrie made a motion to approve this sale. 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

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

The highest bid for the 2015 Ford Police Interceptor was received at \$3,900. Councilman Matheson made a motion to approve this sale. 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

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

The highest bid for the 1999 Ford F-550 dump truck was received at \$10,900. Councilman Caggese made a motion to approve this sale. 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

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Handley said the buyers have 10 days to send the certified checks to pick up the vehicles now that each sale has been approved.

The issue regarding the public sale of Borough owned real property has been tabled to the a future meeting.

Councilman Burkett made a motion to appoint Frank Jovenitti to the Ridgway Municipal Authority to a term ending in January 2029. Councilman Lawrie 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

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Pontious made a motion to approve the Police Pension Minimum Municipal Obligation of \$42,685. 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

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Handley said there was a slight decrease with the obligation because the police department is down an officer currently.

Councilman Caggese made a motion to approve the Non-Uniformed Pension Minimum Municipal Obligation of \$76,043. 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

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Pontious made a motion to approve Resolution 7-2024 (DCED/LSA Grant-Fire Department Apparatus) for a new mini pumper truck for the Ridgway Fire Department. The total cost of the vehicle is \$612,540. The RFD also requested to use \$125,000 to match the funds that are in the fire department's capital reserve fund. Councilman Caggese seconded the motion to submit the grant as well as providing the \$125,000 match. 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

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Public Comment

Borough resident Sara Anderson asked if there was an update with the old hospital building. Although no update was given by Council, Councilman Pontious said that the healthcare coalition that has been formed in Elk County met with the Elk County Commissioners. Members of the coalition asked the Commissioners if they could put an Elk County Healthcare Authority together. Pontious said that the Commissioners said this was a good idea and they will conduct a public hearing to determine if an Elk County Healthcare Authority can be put together.

After Pontious's comments, Anderson shared with Council that Dr. Ray Guarendi will be speaking at the St. Leo Church on September 17.

Council Discussion

Handley said the Ridgway Area School District is interested in hiring a school resource officer and recommended that the matter gets referred to the Personnel Committee. Handley said this would be a shared position between RASD and the Borough.

Handley said the resource officer would work from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for about 180 days of the school year. He said RASD would pay the major portion of the salary and contribute to the benefits as well. Handley said he was requested to present this to Council briefly so they could gather more details and then talk about it collectively on a committee level to make a recommendation if the committee so chooses.

Councilman Lawrie asked why the school wanted the Borough involved, and Councilwoman Peters said the responsibility is shared between the school and the Borough around the position. Handley said it is a "win-win" for both agencies. He said it would offset some of the overtime costs and other associated costs with officers. Councilwoman Peters said the hiring of a school resource officer would go to the Personnel Committee and they will be working on a recommendation on that.

Following these discussions, Councilwoman Peters made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.