

**RIDGWAY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Ridgway Municipal Building**  
**108 Main Street, Ridgway, PA 15853**  
**January 20, 2025**

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, Steve Lawrie, Brent Kemmer, Zack Pontious, Chris Matheson, Ron Burkett, and Abbi Peters.

Also in attendance were Borough Manager Mike Handley, Mayor Ray Imhof, Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone, Fire Chief Jeff Yeager, Police Chief Ken Hinton, and Recording Secretary Jake Mercer.

Councilman Steve Lawrie made a motion to approve the regular council meeting minutes as scheduled on December 16, 2024. 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

**Public Comment**

N/A

**Finance Department**

Councilman Kemmer made a motion to pay the bills. 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

**Mayor**

Mayor Ray Imhof wished everyone a good 2025 as part of his report and hopes that the Borough will get a lot of hard work done this year.

He also reported as the Emergency Management Director due to the extremely cold weather over the next two days. Imhof said the Ridgway Borough Police Department, Ridgway Fire Department, and EMS crews are ready to go in case anything happens. Imhof said if there are any power failures due to the weather, they will contact him and the appropriate authorities. From there, he said they are prepared to open up the Central Fire Station and the Second Ward Fire Station as warming centers if they have to.

**Police Department**

Chief of Police Ken Hinton shared with Council that an officer participated in the Shop With A Cop program that took place at the St. Marys Walmart during the holiday season that was a great success.

His department also participated in Project Gifts For Kids that was held at the Ridgway High School and over 100 gifts were provided. The police department and Mayor Imhof handed out 18 gift cards that were provided to the police department.

Hinton said three DUI arrests were made in December and that Officer Bridgette Shrefler was assigned as the RASD School Resource Officer on January 2. Hinton added that she will provide monthly reports to him and he will have her report for the February meeting.

**Fire Department**

Fire Chief Jeff Yeager was happy to answer any questions with his report. Mayor Imhof and Borough President Steve Caggese thanked former Fire Chief Scott Pontious, who was present for the meeting, for his long-time service in the Borough.

**Environmental Manager**

Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone said that they had their kickoff meeting with Process and Data Automation who will be doing their distribution SCADA project. Quattrone said Ross DePanfilis has been working hard gathering data points and processes for these people to put together a good project.

Quattrone said they have found replacements for a mechanical seal as they have replaced it with tungsten carbide. He said they were able to replace these seals for approximately \$6,000 versus \$30,000. Quattrone said that they have four pumps that are the same and they have rebuilt motors and pumps. The failure was the mechanical seal. He shared that pumps and motor setups cost \$80,000 apiece, so Quattrone hopes that they will continue to work properly.

Quattrone went over to their White Oak Laboratory as that is their analytical lab in both wastewater systems. That lab is used for all their wastewater testing and Quattrone said there are a lot of tests that they have to take. Councilman Kemmer asked if White Oak is mandating testing forever chemicals and plastics. Quattrone said they cannot do that yet at White Oak and only a handful of labs in the country have the ability to do that. Quattrone said the Ridgway Reservoir has been tested for forever chemicals and there are none.

**Correspondence**

Borough Manager Mike Handley said a letter of correspondence was received from ECCOTA to host the Ridgway Farmers Market at the Ridgway Mills Campsites on West Main Street. No objections from the Council were made about this request.

**Borough Manager**

Borough Manager Mike Handley announced the Ridgway Chainsaw Carvers Rendezvous on April 23 through April 26.

Handley went over the Borough's roadway hazards callout procedure. Typically, they rely heavily on the police department to determine if the roads are hazardous. The Ridgway Borough Police Department then calls county control, and then county control contacts the Borough foreman, and the foreman then dispatches the appropriate crew to clear the roads. Handley said he is pleased with the job the Borough crew are doing with the application of anti-skid to the roads recently. He also reminded the community to encourage people to clear ice and snow from their respective sidewalks if they are able.

Handley said that an unexpected purchase had to be made on behalf of the Ridgway Fire Department. This purchase was due to a recent inspection of the fire department's hoses, and most of them did not pass inspection. The fire department was required to purchase new hoses, and this was an unbudgeted expense. However, there is enough funds in the department's capital reserves to cover these expenses, totaling \$32,800 as a 2024 purchase. Handley made a request to Council to pay for these new hoses out of the fire department capital reserves.

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve this purchase. 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

Handley shared with Council an update regarding the foreman truck ordered last year. Handley said there have been some delays. They were unable to provide the Ford Rangers that can maneuver through the streets a bit easier than the full size truck. Handley said he is hoping to receive the vehicle soon to close out this 2024 approved expenditure.

Handley provided an update on the recycling center and acknowledged that it is "difficult" to keep the recycling center open during the winter months. He said there is only one volunteer, Bill Granche, each Tuesday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. to keep it open for the winter hours. The other two days the center is open without supervision. The police department assists to make sure the gate is secure at the end of the scheduled times during the week.

Unfortunately, certain individuals left cardboard and other recyclables in between the containers due to the containers being full. Handley said if this continues, they will either have to find additional volunteers for open hours, or they will have to cut access to the recycling center to once a week during the off season. If there are individual(s) interested in volunteering at the recycling center, they are to contact the Borough office.

Handley announced to Council that the new Borough murals project is beginning to take place as we all planned late last year. Two Borough garage bays have been blocked up, and those will be used to paint the murals. The Borough has scheduled meetings with the Ridgway YMCA, the Ridgway Area School District, and the Senior Junction of Ridgway to discuss ideas on what to paint. They also welcome input on what to paint as well. This mural painting is an agreement between the Borough at the Elk County Council on the Arts' (ECCOTA) PA Made partnership.

### **Executive Session**

An executive session was held regarding personnel matters.

### **Personnel Recommendations**

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the Administrative Assistant Agreement (Police).

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

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the Chief of Police 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

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the Borough Manager Agreement. 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

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the hire of Officer Chris Cella as a full-time patrolman effective January 21, 2025. 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

### **Old Business**

Handley gave an update on the status of the Army Corps of Engineers as it relates to the Flood Mitigation Project. He said that the Borough Council have had previous discussions that they preferred to hire a private engineering firm to conduct the study to assure the actual cost and timeline. Handley said that they do need to get the blessing of the Army Corps of Engineers prior to any major improvements being made at the Ridgway riverfront property. He asked for Council's approval to start looking for firms to take over the study.

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to go forward with the Flood Mitigation 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

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

### **New Business**

Handley shared that the Arbor Day proclamation meeting is set for April 25, 2025, as this will be their fourth year accepted and approved by the Tree City USA program. He said we are now starting their fifth year of participation and support from the Shade Tree Commission. He thanked Councilman Steve Lawrie for his hard work with the Shade Tree Commission and for volunteering his time in getting new trees planted in the Borough.

Handley shared a list of board and commission seats to the Council.

Councilman Matheson made a motion to appoint Tom Buck to the Borough Planning Commission with his term expiring March 2026. Councilwoman Peters 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 Jesse Wolff to the Zoning Hearing Board with a term expiring February 2028. 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

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to extend Jamie Snyder's term on the Shade Tree Commission to February 2030. 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

Councilman Burkett made a motion to extend Frank Rutigliano's term on the Ridgway Municipal Authority Board until January 2030. 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

**Public Comment**

Borough resident Sara Anderson asked about the status of the old hospital building. Handley said he can confirm that it has been sold and transferred but there were no new developments to report.

Anderson asked about the zoning hearing process. Handley provided a general scope of how the process works for all applicants. The first step is to apply for a zoning permit for approval prior to moving forward with the building permit. If the zoning permit is approved, the applicant can proceed to the building permit. If it is not approved, the applicant has the right to appeal to the zoning hearing board. He said the process could draw out to around a month if they are approved and about two months if they are not. Handley added that a zoning hearing has to be advertised in newspapers two separate times and letters have to be sent out to affected property owners within 300 feet of the building.

Borough resident Keith Mader asked if the Borough would consider adding a second dumpster down the recycling center. He also thought that the borough murals project was a great idea.

### **Council Discussion**

Councilman Kemmer asked if there are cameras at the recycling center to monitor activity there. Handley said they are working to get cameras there in spring.

After there was no further discussion, President Steve Caggese adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m. before going into executive session for a legal matter.