

**WEST MIDDLESEX BOROUGH
WORK SESSION
JULY 15, 2020
6:00 p.m.**

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Council Present: President Cyndi Gilkey, Vice-President Eric Lucich, Ron Preston, Robert Lark, Maleia James and Mayor Debra Larouche.

Others Present: Police Chief Jason Newton, WMVFD President Adam Garrett, Ray Lucich, Stacey Curry, Leann Williams and Herald Reporter Mike Rognick.

Ms. Gilkey announced she received a letter from Sharpsville Borough Police and asked if everyone would rather wait until the Council Meeting on July 21st to open it. Mr. Preston suggested waiting and Ms. Gilkey confirmed.

Ms. Gilkey asked if anyone had any suggestions for next week's Agenda.

Mr. Lucich stated Nicholas Sohyda reached out to him regarding his Bio along with an Executive Summary. Mr. Lucich read a bit of the Summary with explanation. Ms. Gilkey asked if he would perform his services at no cost to the borough. Ms. Gilkey said if it is for the borough, she doesn't think anyone would disagree. Mayor Larouche asked if anyone met the new fire chief. Mr. Lucich said he has. Mayor Larouche questioned if he would be attending the council meeting to introduce himself. Mr. Lucich said he works and he wasn't sure. Ms. Gilkey suggested he attend a meeting to introduce himself to council.

Ms. Gilkey asked Council's opinions on setting up a Committee to meet with Mr. Sohyda and report back to Council. Ms. James questioned if he would be receiving a fee for his services. Mr. Lucich said on average there would be a \$3,000.00 cost. Council discussed further.

Ms. Gilkey read the PSAB Bidding Thresholds Notice for 2020 for Council's records and information.

Ms. Gilkey presented the Resolution for the purchase of the street department truck which she said can be authorized at Tuesday's Council Meeting. She asked if there was anything they needed to discuss on this subject. Mr. Preston said he spoke with Mr. Asente at FNB regarding documents. Ms. Gilkey said he could present them with a copy of the Resolution for his information. Mr. Preston said he confirmed with Mr. Asente that the borough would be purchasing the truck.

Ms. Gilkey addressed the salt box spreader, snow plow and bed liner for the new street department truck. Mr. Lark said they need to decide what they want to do in regards to purchasing one of these additional items and also if they want to assume these items in the loan or take these from the general fund. Mr. Lark said he sent everyone information in regards to McCandless about a company called Zoresco which has a franchise for said equipment from Western Plow. Mr. Lark said the bidding price for the plow is \$6,137.00 and the spreader cost is \$7,052.00. Mr. Lark said council will need to decide if they want to add these amounts to the loan or borrow the amounts for said items separately.

Mr. Lark said he would go to the bank before Tuesday to see if combining costs on the loan would be acceptable before any approvals and/or any rate changes transpire. Ms. Gilkey questioned if Attorney Tesone should prepare a separate Resolution if not combined. Mr. Lark said that is a possibility so they can vote without delays. Mr. Lark confirmed monies are in the accounts to sufficiently cover these costs.

Ms. Gilkey addressed the Braho property pictures which Mr. Preston had and everyone was emailed copies of. Council reviewed them. Mr. Lucich had a question regarding the street department truck, if a bed liner and rust protection would be purchased. Mr. Lark confirmed. Mr. Lucich asked if it would be sent out for bid, Mr. Lark said no. Ms. Gilkey stated with regard to the Braho property and looking at the pictures, that they can discuss this further with Attorney Tesone. Mr. Preston said he sent Bobby to take more pictures for an overall view of the property. Mr. Lark read an Abatement from Jeff Richardson Inspection Services, and on the second page #106.5 Abatement and Violations reads: to correct or abate the violation. Mr. Lark said he also sent this information to Solicitor Tesone which he said may have a different opinion and can be learned on this prior to Tuesday. Mr. Lark said, that Mr. Richardson's opinion was that anything they need to do, and they can undertake an action based on #106.5 and that is, we would vote on next Tuesday's Council Meeting to move forward on this abatement, which will not affect the house. Mr. Lark said there are judgements against the property as he indicated in the memo he sent to all. Mr. Lark said he had Mrs. DeSantis do the research and she found there are forty some properties between Mr. Braho and his activities over the last several years. Mr. Lark said in the research Mrs. DeSantis said he also owns other properties in other Municipalities. Mr. Lark said the property in West Middlesex has a lien with the bank, and if they want the particulars on that, someone would have to physically go to the courthouse to search those records. Mr. Lark said the landscape around the house is more of the issue than the house and he would hope the rest of council would take a look at the property to have some idea besides just looking at the pictures. Mr. Lark explained the property debris. Mr. Lark said that what they discussed with Mr. Richardson is to simply clear the lot, clean it up, cut the grass, etc. Mr. Lark said if they were to act on this on Tuesday, they would set a deadline, it would take typically thirty (30) days, and they would not give Mr. Braho an opportunity to clean it up since he had those opportunities. Mr. Lark said they would give Mr. Braho the opportunity to remove anything that was of financial value and sentimental value too, and then we go in to clean up the mess. Mr. Lark stated this is going to be very expensive and he wants them to know that ahead of time. Mr. Lark said Sereday's do a lot of this since they have a place to dump the junk. Council discussed further. Mr. Lark said Attorney Tesone may say they cannot do this, and then council will have to make a decision whether they go by Mr. Richardson's recommendations. Ms. Gilkey stated they have to be careful since Mr. Braho is to litigious but it may be inevitable no matter which way they proceed. Council discussed further.

Ms. Gilkey addressed the Wesex garbage situation. Mr. Lark said again it is not approved in the order as the same with the gas station on Main Street. Ms. Gilkey said in those cases our remedies would be to just keep citing them. Council discussed zoning issues further along with Chief Jason Newton in regards to parking and speed limits. Ms. Gilkey said instead of issuing citations maybe they should speak with these businesses. Mayor Larouche said she received a call that someone was driving the wrong way on Mill Street and there was almost a head on collision. She also said the Tri-County garbage dump truck was on Mill Street going to Mattson's to retrieve their garbage, which is a narrow street and they do not need heavy equipment on that street. She said all of the alleys need attention, Mr. Lark stated so do the streets. Council discussed further. Mayor Larouche said she spoke with Jason Newton's office and they said they would monitor more carefully and she told everybody that she knew they would be citing people if they were driving the wrong way. Mr. Lucich suggested painting giant yellow arrows stating One Way. Council discussed further.

Ms. Gilkey addressed the FNB 19 Month CD renewal that matures on 7/21/2020. Mr. Lark made a consideration not to renew and to transfer that money into the General Fund to help pay for the truck equipment. Ms. James stated seven (7%) percent was not much, Ms. Gilkey agreed. Ms. Gilkey suggested this if they do not want to finance the street truck equipment. Council discussed further and it will be placed on the Agenda for next week.

Ms. Gilkey addressed Fireworks in the Borough and stated the Fourth of July is over. Mr. Lark said, on Facebook the Borough Council cancelled the fireworks and the Borough Council did not cancel the fireworks, and the Borough Council was criticized for cancelling the fireworks. Mr. Lark said Richard White cancelled the fireworks. Ms. Gilkey said they were rescheduled. Ms. Gilkey stated she wished people would come to the meeting to get the information instead of relying on Facebook but we have no control over that. Council discussed Governor Wolf's guidelines. Ms. Gilkey said the restrictions will go into effect again beginning tomorrow. Council again discussed fireworks and crowd control with an influx of people from other communities. Mr. Lucich suggested if Richard White uses the Borough property for fireworks the borough would not be responsible for it. Mayor Larouche suggested getting advisement from Attorney Tesone regarding a waiver. Ms. Gilkey agreed to get Attorney Tesone's opinion and information to distribute to council. Ms. Gilkey stated, who knows what will be happening in August with the State's Guidelines.

Mr. Lark addressed Street Paving Bids, and that there have been four (4) inquiries at the office about interest in the bids, two (2) actually were serious to the extent they called and wanted to meet at the site. Mr. Lark said he met with JT Paving from Greenville last Wednesday, walked the site, and had the same type of meeting with Kirila Contractors. They will both submit bids on or before next Tuesday. He said they both expressed concerns about major water issues on streets and need to take that under consideration. Mr. Lark explained further and also said an issue may be financial costs. Mr. Lark also said Liquid Fuels Grant monies may be less next year.

Ms. Gilkey addressed a complaint about ground hogs in the borough. Ms. James said she would research numerous products you can put on the ground and would speak with Mrs. Barnes. Ms. Gilkey addressed a complaint regarding Berkheimer Wage Tax prices, council has no control over it and council does not set the rate. Ms. Gilkey said Mrs. DeSantis directed Anne Bean to call Berkheimer's, Mr. Lark agreed. Mr. Lark said it is a state law on who exercises wage tax rates.

Ms. Gilkey stated Governor Wolf's new order states no more than twenty-five (25) people in a gathering which was just issued at 4:00 p.m. today and to begin tomorrow. Ms. Gilkey did a head count and counted at least eleven (11) people and said there would be only fourteen (14) more spots for people. Mayor Larouche suggested having a video and having a screen outside. Ms. Gilkey said we do not have a projector. Council further discussed. Ms. Gilkey suggested a solution, that since we have the internet, she can streamline their meeting on Facebook Live for people. She said it can be posted on Facebook that once twenty-five (25) people are in the hall, anyone else who would like to submit public comments, they should probably do so in writing in the event they are number twenty-six or twenty-seven. Ms. Gilkey stated they do not have a large enough room for social distancing. Council discussed further grants in regards to the coronavirus epidemic and finances. Mr. Lark is exploring those options.

Ms. James addressed PennDOT and flooding on streets. She said PennDOT looked at the sites and are looking into solving the problems. She said the PennDOT budget has been cut and they do not have funding for these roads but will put on their Agenda to be shared. Ms. James said if they do not want to have to wait three years for PennDOT to reconstruct the roads they would have to, but PennDOT said it is a very expensive project. Ms. James stated she checked into radar which was placed on Main Street and she said people seem to like it and would like it in areas on their streets. Ms. James explained further and said the maximum would be a month to have it. Council discussed further.

Leann Williams asked if she could make a statement. Ms. Gilkey said Public Comments were taken at the Council Meeting on Tuesday. Leann Williams asked if she could just make a statement. Ms. Gilkey said yes, but very briefly. Leann Williams said she would like everyone to know, to spread the word, that she built a food charity box with no cost to the borough, and it is for anyone who needs to eat and is welcome to take anything. Mayor Larouche said this should go into the Newsletter. Ms. Gilkey asked that Leann Williams email the information to the borough so that it can be presented in the Newsletter. Stacey Curry said they had a huge fundraiser for their Community Days and presented an offering/ purchases of gifts for the borough, they are willing to sponsor work days to clean up Kiwanis Park, at the cemetery to clean the old headstones, clean up the bleachers, paint the dugouts, cut out stumps and fill with dirt, clean the ballfield, providing new signs for Kiwanis Park, etc. Ms. Curry asked council to work with them in any help needed. Mayor Larouche said she will be posting a sign out on her board regarding this matter.

Mr. Preston stated the Kiwanis Club will be having their Peanut Day September 25, and September 26th of 2020, and he has already discussed this with the Police Department and to post in the Newsletter and Facebook.

Council further discussed street parking issues and ordering signs. Mayor Larouche said she will research signs needed.

Adjournment: 7:35 p.m.