

**WEST MIDDLESEX BOROUGH  
COUNCIL MEETING  
JANUARY 21, 2020  
6:00 P.M.**

**Call to Order**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Council Present:** President Cyndi Gilkey, Vice-President Eric Lucich, Melissa Merchant-Calvert, Robert Lark and Ron Preston. Mayor Debra LaRouche was on conference call from Florida.

**Others Present:** Solicitor Robert Tesone, Secretary/Treasurer Sandra DeSantis, Street Department Senior Laborer Bobby Jo Cochran, Street Department Laborer Scott Haddox, Fire Chief Don Hoover, Assistant Fire Chief Rich Garrett, Fire Department President Adam Garrett, Ray Lucich, Mr. and Mrs. Rip Reed, Maleia James, Nancy McConnell, Thelma Barnes, Harry Kornbau, Herald Reporter Mike Rognick, James Mims, Jacob Unverdorben and Chester Buhl.

**Public Comments:** Mr. Mims (Manager of West Middlesex Dairy Queen) addressed Council in regards to higher than normal sewer bills due to water leaks underneath the Dairy Queen. Mr. Mims distributed paperwork to explain to Council how, when and where the water leaks took place and stated that the water did not go into the sewer system for charges to be incurred. Mr. Mims is requesting a credit on his account of \$2,870.96. Mayor LaRouche noted that there is a great fluctuation between the Winter and Summer months during the Car Cruises per usage. Mr. Mims said he took that into consideration when calculating said bills. Mayor LaRouche thanked him for that. Council and Mayor LaRouche listened and discussed the issue with Mr. Mims. This topic will be on the Agenda for the next Council Meeting on February 18, 2020.

**Minutes:** Mrs. Calvert made a motion to accept the Minutes of December 17, 2019, January 2, 2020 and January 15, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Preston with all in favor.

**Bills:** Mr. Lark questioned the Krown Rust Protection invoice rustproofing the Street Department truck. Mr. Lark said he doesn't remember a vote to have this done and doesn't know when a contract was awarded. Mr. Cochran said he would look into the matter. Mr. Preston said he did not recall. Mr. Lark said he does not remember approving or receiving competitive bids for anyone who supplies this service. Mr. Lark said he makes a motion to accept the Bills other than this one and to have a report on this at the next meeting. Mrs. DeSantis said since the payment has already been paid how would Council proceed. Mr. Lark said a refund would have to be requested. Ms. Gilkey said Minutes can be reviewed. Mrs. DeSantis said from her recollection they were not in the Minutes. Mayor LaRouche said she doesn't remember it either and she believed it to be an annual maintenance on the trucks. Mrs. DeSantis said she does not know how the Street Department determines when this maintenance should be done and is done. Mrs. DeSantis did not know if it was always an annual Street Department maintenance or voted on in the past. Mayor LaRouche stated she thought it was an annual thing and she said it was worth checking on. Mr. Lark again stated there should have been other quotes on said maintenance and competitive bids were not taken. Ms. Gilkey advised double checking the Minutes. Mr. Lark said he would make a motion to pay the bills with the exception of Krown Rust Protection Invoice, seconded by Mr. Preston with all in favor.

**Treasurer's Report:** Ms. Gilkey read the Treasurer's Report. Mrs. Calvert made a motion to accept, seconded by Mr. Preston with all in favor.

**Street Department Report:** Mr. Cochran read the Street Department Report along with orders for Morton Salt for weather conditions.

**Fire Department Report:** Mr. Hoover read the Fire Department Report and Engine One is in need of annual inspection. Adam Garrett questioned thoughts on the merger with Shenango Township Fire Department. Ms. Gilkey asked if there were any comments. Mr. Preston said they need to see the circumstances. Mr. Garrett said they would reach out to Shenango Township. Mr. Garrett questioned the Budget regarding the request for a twelve (12) month C.D. Ms. Gilkey requested information to be gathered and distributed to Council.

**Police Department Report:** Mr. Preston said Chief Jason Newton was detained at a ballgame but should arrive soon.

**Appointments of Committees and Boards:** Ms. Gilkey distributed List of Appointments of Committees and Boards for Council's review and read each aloud. Mr. Preston made a motion to accept, seconded by Mrs. Calvert with all in favor.

**Authorized Check Signatures:** Ms. Gilkey stated she and Ron Preston are currently authorized to sign checks and Eric Lucich will be added. Mrs. Calvert made a motion to accept, seconded by Mr. Preston with all in favor.

**Opening of Sealed Bids for Street Department Truck:** Ms. Gilkey opened two (2) sealed bids for a Street Department Truck. The first bid was from Whiteside of St. Clairsville, Inc., St. Clairsville, Ohio in the amount of \$45,000.00. The second bid was from Phil Fitts Ford, New Castle, Pa. – two trucks - both 2018 Ford XLT 4x4 SD Supers in the amounts of \$48,208.88 and \$45,061.34. Solicitor Tesone read the bid packages and stated there were no Bid Bonds included which were required. Council discussed other options to the bid package. Eric Lucich said Chester Buhl from McCandless Ford was present to speak to Council. Mr. Buhl proceeded to discuss with Council different model trucks that would suit the Borough's needs. Solicitor Tesone requested that Mr. Buhl put his proposal in writing for Council to review. Council then rejected the two (2) bids received, first motion by Mr. Preston, seconded by Mr. Lucich with all in favor. Mr. Preston said he requests a pick up truck not a flat bed. Mr. Preston said if the savings were fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00), they could afford to buy a new salt box. Mr. Lark made a motion to table the truck purchase, seconded by Mr. Preston with all in favor.

**Quotes from SignMaster for Borough Signs:** Mrs. Calvert stated since Regenex is to pay for their own signs, she made a motion to pay for the Borough signs only, in the amount of \$327.12. Seconded by Mr. Preston with all in favor.

**Catholic Heart Work Camp:** Council discussed the Catholic Heart Work Camp Project for the Summer of 2020 for one week. Work Orders will be distributed from the Borough Office for residents who are either Senior Citizens, those who are in lower income households, or people who have the resources but could not do the work. There will be no cost to the Borough and the work will be performed by volunteers. Mr. Lark said if the residents could afford it, contributions would be appreciated. Mrs. Calvert made a motion to accept, seconded by Mr. Preston with all in favor.

**Mr. Lark reported recent developments:**

Representative Longietti, in regards to the Redevelopment Authority in the Commonwealth, would help communities such as Greenville and West Middlesex who has fewer than 10,000 people. Mr. Lark said they would have a fund to clean houses up and put them back on the market in the hopes that someone would buy the houses and generate more taxes. Mr. Lark suggested Council give thought to this matter.

Hermitage has a program with rental properties who have inside and outside inspections. Mr. Lark said outside inspections are performed in the Borough but not inside inspections. Mr. Lark said he would like Council to consider Amending the Ordinance on that matter for inside inspections to be able to protect the renters who have complaints. Ms. Gilkey said they had considered that a couple months ago and there were some very unhappy people on the Board regarding that matter. Mr. Lark said there are a lot of unhappy tenants, particularly on the corner of Erie and Main Street and the owners live in New York City. Mr. Lark suggested looking at it again, Ms. Gilkey agreed. Mr. Lark expressed that Hermitage has undertaken said Ordinance and Sharon as well. Mr. Mims spoke up stating he is a landlord in Lawrence County and said it is a violation of the Fourth Amendment for the tenants. He said to go inside of the house while the home is occupied is illegal. Ms. Gilkey stated revisiting this topic and researching what the other communities are doing. Mr. Lark stated in regards to illegalities, what is legal today is illegal tomorrow, what is illegal today is legal tomorrow.

Mr. Lark said there is still a garbage problem at Wessex, that Jeff Richardson cited the property owner but does not know the status.

**Adjournment: 7:10 p.m.**