

Penndel Borough Council Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2024

Council President John Stratz called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present at the Meeting

Council President John Stratz
Council Vice President Barbara Heffelfinger
Councilman Mark Moffa
Councilwoman Robin Valentis – via phone
Councilman Gary Nickerson
Councilman Bud Murphy - absent
Councilman Bob Winkler
Mayor Tom Sodano

Also present at the meeting

Dave Truelove, Hill Wallack
Chief Sean Perry
Geoff Thompson, Borough Manager
Carol Schuehler, Value Engineering
Marie Serota, Secretary/Treasurer

Council or Borough Announcements - none

Consent Items

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 7, 2024 COUNCIL MEETING AND TO PAY THE FOLLOWING BILLS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER, 2024:

General Fund	\$26,080.32
Refuse Fund	\$22,831.47
Sewer Fund	\$25,868.61
Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 6,677.70
Liquid Fuel Fund	\$ 177.46
Escrow Fund	\$ 80.00
Payroll Fund	\$ 1,294.60

Payroll

General Fund	\$36,503.25
Sewer Fund	\$ 3,547.97
Total	\$40,051.22

Escrow Fund Bills

Schoolhouse Court:
Hill Wallack \$ 80.00

SECONDED BY MARK MOFFA. All ayes, motion carried.

Reports:

President's Report

John Stratz said starting off this week is a major election. He asked everyone to keep their eyes open for anyone acting out of the ordinary, suspicious, or circling the building or parking in the lot if they don't belong. They had some citizens who were not part of Penndel causing problems. There will be no trouble or disruptions to this election.

Borough Manager's Report

Geoff Thompson read his report which is on file in the secretary's office.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Sodano read his report which is attached.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Perry read his report which is on file in the secretary's office.

Solicitor's Report

Dave Truelove reported that there was an Executive Session before the meeting that started at 6:45 pm and ended about 7:20 pm. All council members who are here tonight were attending as well as the Mayor, Miss Schuehler, Mr. Thompson, and himself. Items were regarding litigation and informational items. His partner Barbara Kirk has been very busy with many different things involving code enforcement issues, litigation and ordinance drafting and review.

Engineer's Report

Carol Schuehler read her report which is attached.

Mayor Sodano said her report last meeting mentioned the mid-year reporting of the Chapter 94 information. He said he assumes they hadn't gotten a report back because she usually lists their information broken down. The last one they got was in February. Carol said she will provide a summary for council before the next meeting. Mayor Sodano said the February report listed the last five years, and it appears that their normal gallonage of effluent in the sanitary would be somewhere in the 200,000 and 250,000 gallons average daily flow. Carol said she hasn't looked at the report in a while and has to review that data. Mayor Sodano asked what would be roughly or even exactly the maximum gallonage in their current system, like what they're able to handle. Carol said when they get into that 250,000 range, in any given year of a daily flow over that, that is where they get into trouble. She will review the numbers and get back to him. There's a maximum number with Bucks County Water and Sewer over which the borough might get charged for overages. To the best of her knowledge, since that new sewer line was put in down by the Neshaminy Shore Club, there has not been an overflow or release in Penndel since that time. They are not trying to increase the flow or the capacity. They are trying to limit infiltration.

New Business

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO RATIFY APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING MID-CYCLE INVOICES:

Langhorne Postmaster invoice dated 10/7/2024 in the amount of \$229.52 for 125th Anniversary newsletter

Gettysburg Benefits Administrators invoice dated 9/30/2024 in the amount of \$232.48 for dental insurance premium

Office of Labor & Industry invoice dated 10/1/2024 in the amount of \$1,953.00 for fire department's workers' compensation insurance premium

Ready Refresh Invoice #1410431953892 in the amount of \$88.95 for spring water and cooler rent

Comcast invoice dated 10/2/2024 in the amount of \$287.89 for internet at 790 Neshaminy Street

Independence Blue Cross Invoice #241008484934 in the amount of \$6,524.74 for medical insurance premium installment

PECO-Payment Processing invoice dated 10/7/2024 in the amount of \$41.18 for electric at 790 Neshaminy Street outdoor lighting

Verizon Wireless dated 10/24/2024 in the amount of \$25.02 for M2M Account Share 1 GB

BAI Security Systems, Inc. invoice dated 2/22/2023 in the amount of \$2,114.61 for camera system installation

Comcast Invoice #219532681 in the amount of \$393.21 Business Voice Edge Service

PECO Payment Processing invoice dated 10/15/2024 in the amount of \$1,435.31 for streetlights' electric

SECONDED BY GARY NICKERSON. All ayes, motion carried.

Discussion on the proposed Event & Block Party Ordinance.

Robin Valentis said she was okay with the ordinance. They don't want to deter them. They want to make the community friendly, and they want people to meet and host their neighbors. She doesn't feel this hinders that at all.

Gary Nickerson said this was developed by Barbara Kirk. She put something together as a jumping off point for council. He doesn't think there's anything too difficult in there. The only thing he wasn't sure about was he thinks the application needs to come 45 days before the event. He doesn't know if they've ever had an application come 45 days before the event. And the permit is issued by the police department. He asked if the application is being made here and transferred over to the police department or if the application is made at the police department and then it's issued by the mayor or the chief of police. Geoff said they would drop it off and it would be given to the chief. Robin thought 45 days might be too much. She and Gary thought 30 days might be better. Mayor Sodano said the wording that the permit is issued by the police department is not necessarily correct because council has the authority to direct if the road gets shut down or not. It would have to be coordinated with the chief, so they would have the personnel and the ability to handle it. The one that someone wanted for Memorial Day was the day of the parade and it put them in a predicament where they did not have personnel that could make sure that they had a safe environment. The second one was in the middle of the borough that was easy to close off and didn't affect any major arteries because it was only one block, and it was easy to schedule personnel because they had lead time. He thinks the 45 days gives council a chance to get it on the agenda and gives the chief time to make sure that he has scheduling. Gary said maybe they straight out say they can't have a block party on the 4th of July or Memorial Day. Mayor Sodano didn't want to restrict anyone from holidays. Chief Perry suggested they include in the verbiage something along the lines of the permit will be denied if it conflicts with another borough event that's going to utilize more police staffing and would like it to be 45 days. Mark Moffa said there's a sentence that says no permit can be revoked within seven days of the block party, except in the case of an emergency. That's where they should put their legal mumbo jumbo and exceptions for the in case of an emergency or other unforeseen events. Mark asked who would be responsible for making sure that 75% of the households in the affected area had signed on and or 90% of the affected households, if they're closing a street. Geoff said staff would because they have all of those records. Mark said there is a line in here about alcoholic beverages that says that they prohibit organized

gaming devices and gaming tables and the sale of alcoholic beverages. He asked what the rule is for people walking around with alcoholic beverages. Chief Perry said it should say all applicable laws and ordinances would be followed. Gary said it says non block party and asked what it meant. Chief Perry said it could be the Spring Fling or Oktoberfest that OLG has where they're selling things. Robin said maybe like a fundraiser or something along those lines where they're selling things. She thinks they're just basically kind of looking at meeting your neighbor and you can have a cooler of beer, but you can't sell the beer. Chief Perry said they would have to be compliant with §112-3 for open containers. Mark thought the wording was a little odd about if any businesses are located on the block the applicant should notify the Borough Police Department to ensure that the closing of the block does not affect the businesses. There are two things wrong with that one. The first is that the borough would know if there were businesses on the block and it wouldn't be up to the applicant to tell them if there were businesses on the block. Number two is to ensure it doesn't affect the business. The wording is just kind of odd like "affects the business." Maybe it would affect them in a positive way and that they'd get more business than they want. He thinks it needs a little tweaking. If they are establishing percentages of households, if there are businesses in the impacted area, they could do 100% of the businesses be on board or 90% or 75%. Bob Winkler asked about where it says no permits for block party or other party. He said it can be misconstrued. Let's say he has a birthday party with three hundred people at his house. Mayor Sodano said the very first line says no block party or other party event shall take place on any street. They're discussing streets, not someone's backyard, front yard, or side yard. For all intents and purposes, it's a borough street and they're requesting the use of borough property, if they ask to close the street, and that's what this ordinance is about. To the point that was made afterwards, the intent of how this was worded was to make sure that if it is one of those craft fair things or something that they don't have people showing up trying to sell alcohol that the borough can't regulate. Gary said they do that at the Blocktoberfest. Mayor Sodano said they have a license, and they are doing it in their parking lot, not on a borough street. Dave Truelove said he took notes and will pass them along to Barbara Kirk. This was just the first pass, and it needs to go to the ordinance committee.

MOTION BY GARY NICKERSON TO APPROVE A 24-MONTH TERM AT 0.0747 FOR A FIXED ENERGY RATE PROVIDED BY STEVE ESPOSITO WITH NEW AMERICA POWER NOT TO EXCEED MORE THAN 10% OF WHAT WAS ISSUED TODAY. SECONDED BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER. All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY GARY NICKERSON TO APPROVE PAYMENT NO. 2 FOR BALL COURT IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT CONTINGENT UPON RECEIPT OF ALL REQUIRED PAYROLL RECORDS. SECONDED BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER. Robin asked how far along they were. Carol explained that they have removed the old pavement and fence and have put down the new pavement. They still need to put up the new fence and gates, backboards and two new benches and stripe the courts. They are supposed to be done in the next two weeks, according to their contract. All work has been inspected. Mayor Sodano asked how many payments total is this project since this is the second payment. Carol said she anticipates there will be one more payment because they've only got two weeks left to finish this project. There might be some punch list items for them to finish up, but she would hope that everything will be done by the December meeting.

All ayes, motion carried.

Preliminary Budget

Geoff said the memo he submitted to council basically gives a quick overview of the budget for the General Fund and where all the money comes from - the real estate tax, earned income tax, transfer tax, services tax and mercantile and per capita. The Finance Committee are recommending a one mill real estate tax reduction for the General Fund for the preliminary budget. One mill equals approximately \$18,700.00. They are adopting the preliminary budget tonight. The preliminary budget needs to be adopted, and they need to recommend advertising of this budget prior to approving the final budget at the first meeting in December. The Finance Committee reviewed the budget Tuesday night for three hours and reviewed it top to bottom. He gave them an overview of the budget and he doesn't think another budget meeting is necessary. The Refuse Fund will have an increase of \$14.98 per quarter to match the contract price they're getting from Leck Disposal for 2025. The sewer will remain unchanged for 2025. The Debt Service Fund, which he put in the memo was financed by 2.5 mills, the real estate tax and for council's information, the outstanding debt that the borough currently holds is \$759,000.00. They're paying a very low interest rate of 1.1%. For the Capital Reserve Fund, the major projects that they're looking at in 2025, is a lot of road work. They're budgeting \$205,000.00 to do road work within the borough, which is a pretty significant number. Those roads are Monroe, Crescent from Monroe to Bellevue, John Dalola Ave., Crescent west of Fairview and Highland Ave. Also, in the Capital Reserve Fund are the traffic signal upgrades on Route 1 and Bellevue and Route 1 and Durham. Both of those have outstanding grant applications. One is the RDA grant, which they just submitted this year, and the other one is the ARLE grant, which was submitted in June of this year. They should hear about that in January of next year and the RDA grant they should hear about hopefully by the end of this month. The other thing in the Capital Reserve Fund is replacing the backstops for fields two and three. They are in very poor and unsafe condition, and he hopes council agrees that they can submit a CDBG grant to replace those backstops. He thinks that grant comes January of next year and they have to have it in by the end of March. They have a big balance in Capital Reserve - \$726,000.00. He's been talking to Carol about some more upgrades for the sewer system. Liquid Fuels they're using \$40,000.00 to supplement the road work, \$40,000.00 from Liquid Fuels Fund and \$165,000.00 from the Capital Reserve Fund. If council has any questions, they can stop in and talk to him, or call or email him.

MOTION BY MARK MOFFA TO APPROVE AND ADVERTISE THE 2025 PRELIMINARY BUDGET. SECONDED BY GARY NICKERSON.

Robin asked about the preliminary budget. Dave said according to the borough code, they have to at least advertise a preliminary/proposed budget and once that's been reviewed, they still have some options, if they want to change it within certain parameters, but that has to be done by the final budget. They have to pass the budget by the end of the year unless there's certain conditions, which might require them to do something with amendment.

Mike Smith, asked how much was in Sewer Capital Reserve and if they were doing any sewer upgrades. Geoff said there's \$746,000.00 and there were no big projects planned.

All ayes, motion carried.

MOTION BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER TO APPROVE REPLACEMENT OF RECREATION FIELD #1 BACKSTOP. SECONDED BY GARY NICKERSON.

Robin said from her understanding, they have a certain amount of money in the budget for that and then they had residual in the budget for the basketball court that was paid for by a grant. She just wanted to point that out.
All ayes, motion carried.

Quotes for snow plowing

John said they requested bids and only KE Seifert gave them a quote. There are certain requirements if they want to use Liquid Fuels. Other companies look at the requirements and don't give them a quote. Seifert checks off all the boxes. MOTION BY GARY NICKERSON TO APPROVE THE QUOTE SUBMITTED BY SEIFERT SUBJECT TO THE TERMS THAT WERE SUBMITTED. SECONDED BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER.

Mark said some of the items have gone up. Robin said she felt it was reasonable with the cost of everything going up. Mark said the front-end loader was the biggest increase, but they really didn't use it because it's only for blizzards when they have to move the snow off the intersections.

All ayes, motion carried.

Public Comment

Dave Cahill, said he submitted a right-to-know request to the Pennel Fire Company, and he got a response back telling him that they're an independent nonprofit and that they do not have to respond to right to know requests. He asked council if the borough pays for their workmen's comp. John said the borough pays 25% and Middletown pays the rest. Dave asked if they had anything written anywhere that would show the legal requirements of a township. Dave Truelove said they will look into that. His suspicion is that because the fire company has performed a public safety function, that that would be related to why they pay for the workers' comp. as opposed to their not direct employees. Dave Cahill said their response was they are an independent nonprofit. Dave Truelove said he thinks that's technically true. Dave Cahill said they got in the business of firefighting. Nobody twisted their arm to make them go into the business and they should be paying for their own and if they're having money problems, then shut the doors. Dave said he noticed that the new police officer is working the same seven to three shift that the chief is working. Mayor Sodano said she's still technically in training that will be ending before Thanksgiving. She's almost finished the official amount of time that she has to log for training. Dave asked if we hired a police officer with no experience. Mayor Sodano said that's not what he said. She has to be trained. They have officers that have many years of experience in other departments. One, for instance, put in over 30 years in Abington and he was on training for a specified amount of time because their systems are not the same. She will be ending her training shortly and will have another shift.

Council Members to be Heard

Mayor Sodano said when they first started having two meetings a month, it was because council did a lot of work. The council committees did a ton of work; hence the work session was designed for the committees to come and make their reports to one another. Information was passed back and forth, and decisions were made. Now they have a borough manager who is doing the lion's share of that work. When committees meet, they meet with him generally and he's already the go between and most of the work done. The amount of work committees do is minimal, so he fails to see it necessary to have two meetings a month every month anymore. They can advertise at the beginning of the year for two meetings a month every month but the second is on an as needed basis and it's quite a cost savings not to have to pay the attorney to be here, not to have to turn the lights on, not to have the heat and the air conditioning on for the

extra meeting, except when needed. Maybe, in the future, it could be discussed, and it might be a way for the borough to save some money and save everybody some aggravation.

Mark Moffa said he agreed with Mayor Sodano that it makes sense to have one meeting a month like other places.

Barbara Heffelfinger reported that the Christmas Tree Lighting will be on December 7th.

Geoff Thompson reported that they will be sweeping the streets on Tuesday November 26th with a rain date of Wednesday November 27th.

MOTION BY MARK MOFFA TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:45 P.M. SECONDED BY BARBARA HEFFELFINGER. All ayes, motion carried.

Submitted by: Marie Serota
Marie Serota, Borough Secretary/Treasurer

November 4, 2024

Mayor's Report, September 2024

In September I attended the general and work session Council meetings.

Mayor's Report, October 2024

In October there was only one Council meeting, which I attended.

I attended the RDA grant proposal meeting on October 18th.

Attended the October 18th and 19th Penndel Borough 125th Anniversary events.

Attended the October 27th Halloween Parade and Trunk or Treat events.

Kudos, and thank you to the parents on Halloween! Great job escorting your Trick or Treaters to ensure a safe and happy Halloween!

Since the end of the Revolutionary War and the formation of our Country, 646,596 Americans have died in battle and another 539,000 service members have died from non-combat causes.

These 1,185,596 heroes made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure your freedom and importantly, your right to vote. The absolute least you can do is exercise the freedom they died for. Tomorrow is election day. Honor their sacrifice and VOTE!



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1578 State Road, Coopersburg PA
1-888-346-8673

November 4, 2024 Engineers Report

Penndel Borough, Bucks County

Memorial Park Ball Court Restoration funded by a CDBG grant

Project work is underway. The new court surface has been installed. The contractor has requested payment for work recently completed, which is on the agenda for Council consideration.

Noeland Avenue Sidewalks

The survey work has been processed and drawn to a base plan of existing conditions so that design may be initiated.

Green-Light-Go

A scoping application has been prepared for submission to the PennDOT Green-Light-Go program. The application is for maintenance and upgrades to the signal at Lincoln and Durham. It generally mirrors the ARLE application submitted earlier this year, to give Penndel Borough another opportunity for grant funding. As with the ARLE scoping form, the preliminarily requested funding amount is \$330,990 with a match of \$85,000. The scoping application is due November 22, 2024, and the full grant application will be due in February 2025.

50 Hulmeville Avenue

Plans depicting restoration and stabilization of the waterway at the back of this property have been approved by BCCD and by the Borough Engineer since late July. We continue to encourage the applicant to obtain a permit from the Borough and get the work underway.

