

Borough Council Work Session

January 17, 2022

The monthly Work Session meeting of Souderton Borough Council, held on the above date, was called to order by President Tracy Burke at 7:00 p.m. Council President Tracy Burke noted that this meeting is also available for the public to access through Zoom to monitor and make public comment. This meeting is being recorded and will be posted to the Borough Website. Secretary P. Michael Coll conducted a Roll Call with the following members and staff present:

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| President Tracy W. Burke | Mayor Daniel L. Yocum |
| Vice-President Edward Huber | Junior Councillor Nick Mancini |
| Councillor Matthew J. DiNenna | |
| Councillor Daryl W. Littlefield | |
| Councillor Julie A. Munden | Borough Manager P. Michael Coll |
| Councillor Donna Rogers | |
| Councillor Richard M. Walczak | Police Chief Brian A. Newhall |
| Councillor Courtney L. Wampole | Public Works Director Steven Coll |

Prior to beginning the scheduled Agenda items, President Tracy Burke inquired if anyone in the audience has questions or concerns relating to the municipal solid waste collection contract and, or, the associated increase in the trash collection fees. Charl Wellener, 18 N. Hunsberger Lane, Souderton questioned whether the change in contractors contributed to the increase in fees and is the optional bag program available for existing customers. President Burke explained that there was only 13 cents difference between the two bidders so the change in contractors did not affect the rate structure. All three bids were consistently much higher than the prior contract. The optional bag program remains available to existing customers but will not be made available to any new customers.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

President Tracy Burke noted that Borough Council will need to consider a number of appointments. Interested candidates have been invited to attend tonight’s work session for a brief interview. Borough Council will further discuss the candidates later in the meeting. A formal recommendation for the appointments will occur at a Special Borough Council meeting next Monday, January 24, 2022 which will begin at 7:00 pm.

The first appointment to be considered is the Souderton Representative to the North Penn Water Authority Board of Directors. Initially there were two candidates that expressed interest in serving, however, Randy Nyce has withdrawn from consideration at this time. The remaining candidate for this position is Amy Cummings-Leight, 334 Madison Avenue, Souderton. Amy Cummings-Leight is the wife of former Borough Councillor Ned Leight. She has attended several annual meetings of the Authority, has read several annual reports and toured the Forrest Park water treatment facility. She has been a

resident of Souderton Borough for 27 years. She has worked and served on the boards of several non- profit organizations and is very familiar with budgets and financial reports.

Borough Council then conducted interviews with five candidates to fill the vacant Borough Councillor position for Ward 1, previously held by Daniel Yocum. President Tracy Burke suggested that he will take the candidates in alphabetical order, as follows:

Stephanie Cross, 373 W. Chestnut Street, Souderton. She has been a resident of the Borough for 25 years. She retired from a thirty year career in healthcare and has time and interest in serving as a member of Borough Council. She has been very active in various community organizations. Her daughter serves as a Junior Councillor.

Richard Detwiler, 220 Franklin Avenue, Souderton. He has lived in Souderton for 30 years, moving to Franklin Avenue in 1991. He worked for IVOC for 16 years in daily service to our multicultural community and was instrumental in acquiring a permanent home for the organization, now known as Keystone Opportunity Center, on Main Street. He volunteers at Generations of Indian Valley, Indian Valley Public Library and Ten Thousand Villages. He noted that he received the third highest amount of votes in the past municipal election.

Thomas R. Miorelli, Jr., 303 Madison Avenue, Souderton. He has been a resident of Souderton Borough since 1991, first living on Main Street and then moving to his current home on Madison Avenue. He was raised in a small coal mining and steel town in western Pennsylvania. A college graduate majoring in Chemical Engineering, entered the Army ROTC and served in the PA National Guard. He worked with the PA Department of Environmental Resources and is now employed by Merck. He has served with community organization and would like to expand his community service as a member of Borough Council.

John Page, 60 W. Chestnut Street, Souderton. He is a thirteen year resident of Souderton Borough. He serves on the Board of the Souderton Charter School Collaborative. His wife was a member of the Souderton pool fundraising committee. He likes the momentum of the Borough and desires to serve as a member of Borough Council to help expand this momentum.

Matthew Sholly, 287 Highland Avenue, Souderton. Matthew Sholly was born and raised in Souderton. A graduate of Souderton School District and has a Bachelor of Science degree from Penn State University in Information Systems and Technology. He and his wife purchased a home on Franklin Avenue and recently moved to their current residence on Highland Avenue. His family has a history of community service, he was affiliated with the Indian Valley Boys and Girls Club. He is interested in serving on Borough Council to help and support Souderton as it continues to develop and grow.

At the conclusion of the interviews, Borough Council took a brief recess from 8:19 to 8:25 pm

Upon return from the recess, President Tracy Burke moved consideration to the position of the Vacancy Board Chairman. Borough Manager P. Michael Coll noted that historically this position has been held by a former member of Borough Council. Former Councillor Daniel Houser has served in this capacity through 2021. There are a number of Borough Councillors that have recently stepped down from Borough Council. Following discussion, the general consensus was to consider the re-appointment of Daniel Houser to this position.

Borough Council discussed the position of the Borough Engineer, which has been held by Boucher and James since 1997. Borough Manager Michael Coll noted that certain former directors of the firm have been indicted on charges relating to the padding of invoices for services mostly related to inspection services for developments. Souderton Borough received a negotiated settlement through the Attorney General's office, but the actual case has not moved in court. A request for proposals was circulated in March, 2021 with eight engineering firms responding. Boucher and James had the most competitive pricing at that time. Borough Council discussed various options, noting that it would be most feasible for Boucher and James to finish some of the projects that are currently active, namely the Community park renovation project and to see the completion of the Towne Gate Commons development. Boucher and James should also complete the storm water management reporting for this calendar year. Other capital projects not affiliated with these projects should be put out for competitive pricing. Borough Council desired to send out another request for proposals for the position of Borough Engineer beginning in 2023. Boucher and James will retain the position of Borough Engineer for the 2022 calendar year.

The Borough Manager noted that we need to move forward on the Chestnut Street parking lot project which has grant funding from the Montgomery County Planning Commission. There is a timeline under the grant agreement to complete the project. A conceptual design was developed for the project by Boucher and James, Inc., but detailed engineering has not been started. A recommendation was made to send out an RFP for engineering services to complete this project.

President Tracy Burke discussed a change in the committee structure of Borough Council. He is proposing to appoint truly working committees of Borough Council. The role of committees is to gather information, facilitate and share work load, solicit input and ideas. Committees should provide Borough Council with reports, conduct options analysis and make recommendations and proposals to Borough Council for formal consideration. Initial committee assignments will be forthcoming for the 2022 calendar year.

POLICE ITEMS

Police Chief Brian Newhall distributed the annual report of police activities for 2021. Chief Newhall summarized police activities, noting that mental health issues seem to be presenting difficult challenges to the department.

Conditional employment letters have been sent to the two full time police officer candidates. The top candidate is currently completing testing. The second candidate is a current part time officer and has all required certifications.

Chief Newhall reported that the old Chevy Tahoe police vehicle is in need of too much repair to pass inspection. The best alternative is to dispose of the vehicle. There are a few pieces of public works equipment that should also be sold or disposed. Chief Newhall and Steve Coll will make preparations to list the equipment on Municibid for sale.

HIGHWAY ITEMS

Public Works Director Steven Coll reviewed public works activities for the month. There were two snow events to date, one required plowing. Both events required salting. Crews are concentrating on fleet maintenance. Preparations are being made to begin the storm water improvements for the Community Park project, pipe and inlet structures will be ordered. Crews will be working in conjunction with Grace Bible Church to address storm water runoff in an adjoining alley that creates ice concerns within their parking lot. Grace Bible retained an engineer to design storm water improvements, the Borough will assist with the installation of inlets and storm drainage in the rear alley behind the East Summit Street dwellings.

CKS Engineers will be formally submitting land development plans to Franconia Township for the Public Works Facility project on the Borough's Cherry Lane property. As the review and approval process moves forward with Franconia Township, work will concentrate on completing a financing plan for the project. The building design is nearly complete. We will be working with the Office of the Budget and their consultants to complete the RACP grant documentation and will be making application to the U S Department of Agriculture for a loan to fund the project.

DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll noted interest in the Freight Building as a microbrewery. We had several discussions with the interested party and they are now working on a conceptual design for the building fit out. The Borough will need to complete the surrounding site work and will also need to participate in the fit out of the building.

The Souderton Planning Commission will be meeting on February 2, 2022 to review the architectural renderings for the townhomes to be constructed in the Towne Gate Commons development. Copies of the renderings have been circulated to Borough Council

for your review and information.

A civil suit has been filed against Souderton Connects in regard to the mural project proposed for 105 N. Main Street. The suit is actually over alleged violations of the Sunshine Act by the board of Souderton Connects. Copies of the suit were distributed to Borough Council. The Souderton Planning Commission is scheduled to discuss regulations and permitting for mural projects, requesting direction from Borough Council.

SANITATION ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll briefly reported that Souderton Borough has received requests for sewer capacity to serve a new planned development on Beck Road in Franconia Township. The Engineer is reviewing the request for capacity.

RECREATION ITEMS

The 2022 Bennington Pool Services management contract for the Souderton Community Swimming Pool has been reviewed. Hours have been added for deck hand positions and ticket window gate keeper positions. Discussions are ongoing to develop a swim lesson program for this summer season. Councillor Edward Huber recommended approval of the management contract for this season.

PROPERTY ITEMS

Work continues on plans for renovations to the Municipal Building, concentrating on HVAC and mechanical details.

FINANCE ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll circulated a Budget Comparison report to Borough Council through December 31, 2021. Staff is now preparing documents for the audit report.

Following completion of the scheduled Agenda items, Borough Council then convened to further discuss the Borough Councillor appointment. The candidates were not present during this discussion. After significant discussion, Borough Council appeared to reach a consensus to consider the appointment of Matthew Sholly. There being no further business, the Borough Council work session was adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Secretary