

Borough Council Work Session Meeting

September 21, 2020

A Work Session Meeting of Souderton Borough Council was called to order at 7:00 pm, on the above date, by President Brian Goshow with the following members present:

President Brian Goshow	Councillor Edward Huber
Vice-President Julie Munden	Mayor John R. Reynolds
Councillor Donna Rogers (Zoom)	Junior Councillor Nick Mancini
Councillor Richard Godshall	
Councillor Daniel Yocum	Borough Manager P. Michael Coll
Councillor Matthew Mscichowski	Police Chief James P. Leary
Councillor Daryl Littlefield	Public Works Director Steven Coll

Absent from this meeting was Borough Councillor Ned Leight. Access to the work session was also available through Zoom, which was coordinated through Vice-President Julie Munden. Councillor Donna Rogers participated in the work session through Zoom.

PRESENTATION

Greg Ede, CPA with Styer Associates provided Borough Council with a summary of the 2019 Audit and the General Purpose Financial Statements. Styer Associates specializes in municipal and non-profit audits and they service 20 municipal accounts. Greg Ede noted that this was another clean audit for Souderton Borough, with 2019 being a far better year for the Borough. The Borough had a positive ending in 2019 erasing a negative balance at the end of 2018. All funds performed well during 2019. The stock market was fairly strong through 2019 which resulted in strong pension assets. The Borough should continue to evaluate fiscal policies to increase cash reserves which have improved, but continue to be lower than recommended.

HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

Public Works Director Steven Coll reported that curbside brush collection was again extremely heavy, collecting nearly 90 yards of chipped brush. Souderton Borough will be hauling materials for a Franconia Township paving project. In return, Franconia Township will assist with hauling materials for Borough paving projects.

P. K. Moyer & Sons and Borough forces will pave Wile Avenue, Hillside Avenue, and N. Fourth Street with Liquid Fuels funds before October 15th. Diamond Street will receive base repairs this year with final paving next year. Trout Brothers is currently replacing sections of curb and sidewalk along N. Fourth Street that were removed during the utility construction work.

Borough forces will begin the streetscape project at W. Broad Street and Washington Avenue in September. PPL set a new pole in the correct location, however, they must return to move the wires and remove the remaining pole that was incorrectly placed. The Borough crew started the installation of storm drainage along W. Broad Street.

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Steve Coll noted that Borough forces will be pulling the cover on the upper swimming pool to drain down the water and re-winterize the return lines as a precautionary measure to insure that no water has entered into the lines since it was winterized last season.

Borough Council discussed a potential option to lease the operation of the Souderton Community Pool next season. Borough Council representatives met with a company based in King of Prussia who expressed interest in operating the facility. The company currently operates a number of private swim clubs in the tri-state area. Another meeting will be scheduled to discuss a potential operating lease.

The Community Park Renovation Committee will be meeting on September 30th. The Borough is focused on completing the Bandshell and Pavilion renovations. The Committee is working on the final design for the monument dedicating the concert lawn area in honor of Marcus Rosenberger. Crews will then focus on the removal of the ballfield, swing set and begin preparations for the storm drainage improvements.

POLICE COMMITTEE

Police Chief Leary distributed his monthly statistical report to Borough Council for their review. Chief Leary assembled crossing guards for the 2020-2021 school year.

Borough Council discussed a resident complaint about speeding on Hillside Avenue. Chief Leary will monitor Hillside Avenue on a more regular basis.

Councillor Julie Munden reported that the Police Chief Selection Committee will be observing the final exercises with the six police chief candidates on September 26th. Councillor Munden reported that we have a very strong field of candidates. Following the final exercises, SafeCity and the Committee will develop a final ranking of candidates for interviews and consideration.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Borough Council discussed the proposed Souderton Business Improvement District Re-Authorization Plan. A question was raised on how involved the Borough should be in informing the property owners and business community of the proposed re-authorization. It was determined that the Souderton BID has been doing a satisfactory job in getting the word out and they have posted all information about the plan and process on their website at SoudertonBID.com. Borough Council will begin the Ordinance preparation phase at the October Borough Council with initial authorization to draft and advertise the required Ordinance for formal consideration at the December Borough Council meeting.

Borough Council discussed the annual Holiday Parade and the annual Tree Lighting events that are hosted through Souderton-Telford Main Streets. Main Streets inquired how

Borough Council felt about these events given the current COVID-19 restrictions. Borough Council supported having the events if Main Streets felt they can handle the underlying challenges brought on by the current social distancing requirements.

Historically Souderton Borough has not become involved with Halloween festivities. A question was raised if the Borough should take any action this year given the COVID restrictions. Souderton Borough Council agreed that this should remain as an individual preference among the residents.

Stephen Barth of Barth Consulting Group requested an opportunity to discuss his firm's economic development and downtown revitalization services with Souderton Borough Council. Borough Council expressed interest in a presentation at the October work session.

The Northern Montgomery County Recycling Commission has circulated a proposed policy for investigating and taking possible enforcement action for violations of Act 101 which mandates recycling. The Recycling Commission represents eleven municipalities, all but Souderton utilize private haulers for trash and recycling collection. Souderton Borough utilizes a contracted trash service and generally maintains good compliance with the recycling requirements of Act 101. The Commission is proposing to conduct initial investigations into complaints of non-compliance but will not pursue enforcement without the support of the municipality. Borough Council generally supported the Recycling Commission's proposed policy and will formally consider a motion at the October Borough Council meeting.

The Communications Committee reported that they are working on establishing special Borough Council office hours on one Saturday of each month accessible through a Zoom format. The Committee is now working on a Code of Conduct for these meetings.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Borough Manager Michael Coll reviewed the status of the development plan review for Berkeley Court Phase 2. The Souderton Planning Commission met with the developer on July 29, 2020. Both the Borough Engineer and Montgomery County Planning Commission circulated comment letters from this initial submission. Revised development plans will be reviewed at the October 7, 2020 Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission meeting will be an in-person meeting and will also be available to access through Zoom.

The Borough Manager also reviewed a minor subdivision plan proposed for property at 59/61 Franklin Avenue. The property contains an existing twin dwelling that is currently situated on one parcel. The Zoning Hearing Board formally approved dimensional variances to permit the formal subdivision of the property to convey the twin dwelling units separately. This appears to be the best approach to restore this property, which has been in disrepair for a long period of time. The Planning Commission will formally consider the proposed subdivision plan at their October 7th meeting. Borough Council will formally consider the plan at the November Borough Council meeting.

Borough Council discussed some preliminary improvement plans for the property at 143 N. Main Street which is adjacent to the municipal parking lot. The owner is interested in completing the access connection from the parking lot into this property and will prepare development plans for the proposed improvements. The Planning Commission should review and comment on the eventual plans.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Borough Manager Michael Coll distributed the Minimum Municipal Obligation worksheets for the 2021 Calendar Year for the Souderton Police Pension Plan and the Souderton Non-Uniformed Pension Plan. The 2021 Budget must include the calculated MMO payments to each pension plan. The Borough Manager noted that State Pension Assistance is expected to offset a significant portion of the obligations.

The Borough Manager noted that he will be working on the 2021 Budget through October. A Special Budget Work Session will be scheduled for Monday, October 26 to review the draft Budget prior to presentation at the November Borough Council meeting.

There being no further business, the work session meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

P. Michael Coll
Borough Secretary