

Borough Council Work Session

January 18, 2021

The monthly Work Session meeting of Souderton Borough Council, held on the above date, was called to order by President Brian K. Goshow at 7:00 p.m. Council President Brian Goshow noted that this in-person meeting is also available for Borough Council and the public to access through Zoom to monitor and make public comment. Vice-President Julie Munden is coordinating Zoom access this evening. The Borough Council meeting was attended by the following members and staff:

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| President Brian K. Goshow | Mayor John R. Reynolds |
| Vice-President Julie Munden | Junior Councillor Nick Mancini |
| Councillor Donna Rogers | |
| Councillor Ned Leight (via Zoom) | |
| Councillor Daniel Yocum | Borough Manager P. Michael Coll |
| Councillor Matt Mscichowski | Police Chief Brian A. Newhall |
| Councillor Daryl Littlefield | Former Chief James P. Leary |
| Councillor Edward Huber | Public Works Director Steven Coll |

BOROUGH ENGINEER

Borough Council held a discussion with Jon S. Tresslar, P. E., Managing Director with Boucher and James, Inc. Boucher and James, Inc., has served as Borough Engineer for many years, working with the Borough to successfully complete a vast number of projects. Boucher and James, Inc. became an employee owned company with four managing directors of equal authority reporting to a Board of Directors. Approximately 5 years ago, Jon Tresslar discovered discrepancies in the billings and confronted the other managers to resolve the issues. After several failed attempts Jon Tresslar reported the incident to the Attorney General who conducted a thorough investigation and audit. The Attorney General reached a settlement with Boucher and James, Inc., reimbursing clients, including Souderton Borough, for a portion of the fraudulent billing practices and they brought criminal charges against individual managing directors, all of whom resigned from the firm. Boucher and James has since restructured their organization and implemented specific accounting and over sight policies to avoid any further inappropriate billing practices. Boucher and James, Inc. desires to retain Souderton Borough as a client and will do everything possible to restore trust. Following this discussion, Borough Manager Michael Coll noted that the Borough has several large projects in various stages of design or construction to complete. He recommended that Boucher and James be retained through 2021 to complete these open projects.

HIGHWAY COMMITTEE

Steven Coll reported that brush and Christmas Tree collections have been completed. An order for salt was delivered and both of our salt bins are full. Borough

forces are working on completing the installation of the granite paver blocks around the Broad Theater.

A resident at 570 E. Garfield Avenue informed the Borough of issues with his sewer lateral. Upon further investigation, we found root issues within the main and the lateral connection. The Borough will make repairs to the sewer lateral, replacement of the sewer main in the 500 block of Garfield Avenue should be scheduled in the future.

Steve Coll also reported that we have received several applications for an open entry level position in the Public Works Department. He will be reviewing the various applicants with anticipation of hiring an employee by spring.

Borough Council discussed the official notification from the State Office of the Budget about the \$1,000,000 RACP grant award for the Public Works facility on Cherry Lane. The award contains significant time constraints which will require prompt resumption of the land development plan through our Borough Engineer and the appointment of an architectural firm to develop plans for the building. The Borough Manager suggested Phillips Donovan, who is very familiar with the RACP grant process and worked on the Train Station renovation project. Borough Council agreed to move forward with the project by sending an acknowledgement and acceptance letter to the State Office of the Budget.

SANITATION COMMITTEE

Borough Manager Michael Coll provided an update on discussion with officials at Leidy's, Inc. concerning a new industrial waste agreement. Our special legal counsel is developing a new Sewer Ordinance based on more current DEP models which will also include an actual discharge permit specific to the Leidy's facility.

RECREATION COMMITTEE

Borough Manager reported that he will continue to plan on the opening of the Souderton Community Swimming Pool for the 2021 summer season. He continues to work with Bennington Pool Services to develop a management services agreement for lifeguard staffing, management and planning services. A revised lease agreement will also be sent out for the concession stand.

Construction work on the Bandshell and the pavilion is nearing completion. The Borough Engineer is answering a series of comments from the Montgomery County Conservation District regarding the storm water improvements. The ballfield will be demolished and we hope to start up the storm water improvements by late winter.

POLICE COMMITTEE

Police Chief Brian Newhall provided a report on police activities over the last week.

Borough Manager Michael Coll reported that he is attempting to establish a meeting with the architect to complete plans for the improvements to the basement and crawl space of the municipal building. He further mentioned plans to create a direct entry to the Council Chambers from the rear parking lot to provide greater flexibility for improvements to the administrative offices which will occur at a much later date. Priority will be given to the completion of the basement level improvements in the coming months. While this work is progressing, plans for the complete renovation of the Police department will be finalized with Police Chief Brian Newhall. Preparations must be made to temporarily house the department while the renovations take place. Further information and a time line will be established. The Borough manager noted difficulty in making progress with the current architect, but hopes to resolve this issue so that the project can move forward in an appropriate fashion.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Borough Council discussed the status of the new organization of the Souderton Business Improvement District. The goal is to create the new Board by March 1, 2021. The new Board is planning on having a Borough Council representative. Councillor Daryl Littlefield is currently serving on the Board as a Main Streets representative, which may also serve to satisfy the Borough Council representation. In the alternative Councillor Donna Rogers has volunteered to serve as the Borough Council representative.

Councillor Daryl Littlefield discussed the final draft of the Code of Conduct for the planned Borough Council Saturday office hours. The office hour will be conducted virtually beginning in February.

The Communications Committee discussed a proposal to implement a series of audio and visual upgraded in the Council Chambers to enhance the PA system, provide for power point presentations and enhance virtual participation by the public through Zoom. Borough Council agreed to implement the first phase of the proposed improvements through East Hill Media of Lansdale.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Borough Manager Michael Coll provided an update on the status of plan review for the remainder of the Berkeley Court land development plan. The developer is nearing completion of all required plan submittals and the Souderton Planning Commission is nearing completion of their review. The next phase of the process will be formal review and approval from Souderton Borough Council.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Borough Manager Michael Coll presented a recommendation from Tax Collector Donald Bergey to establish the annual salary for the elected position for the next four year term starting January 1, 2022. He is proposing a 1% increase in the annual salary each year for the next four year term. He is also suggesting an \$10.00 increase in the tax certification fee. All other fees will remain unchanged. The fee is set by ordinance and must be in place prior to the primary election. Borough Council recommended to move forward with the preparation of an ordinance for formal consideration.

Borough Manager Michael Coll presented Borough Council with a year-end budget comparison report for the 2020 calendar year. Staff is working on providing the auditor will required information to complete the preparation of the general purpose financial statements.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Borough Council adjourned to an Executive Session at 9:12 pm for the purpose of conducting an exit interview with former Police Chief James Leary.

Borough Council convened to public session at 9:40 pm and there being no further business, the meeting was promptly adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Secretary