

January 4, 2017

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The January 4, 2017 Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Weand in the Council Meeting Room, Pottstown Borough Hall, and 100 East High Street, Pottstown, PA.

ATTENDANCE

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Carol Kulp, Sheryl Miller, Dan Weand, Rita Paez and Joseph Kirkland. Also present were Manager Mark Flanders, Solicitor Charles Garner, Mayor Sharon Valentine -Thomas and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach. Councilor Dennis Arms was absent.

INVOCATION

President Weand requested a moment of silence.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Infrastructure – Councilor Kulp advised there was no meeting.
- b. Economic Development & Business Liaison – Manager Flanders will provide an update in his report.
- c. Transportation – Councilor Kulp reviewed the minutes provided noting that the 12-year plan with the Delta Airport consultants was highlighted. In addition, Delta will provide a preliminary report in early March on an aeronautical study. Councilor Kulp also reviewed guidelines and an internal process regarding the use of drones in the vicinity of the Airport. She also advised that the RFP for Advertising Services on the buses is under review and the new logos will be in place by April or May. The annual Poster contest begins on March 20th.

Manager Flanders added that the Borough has no authority to enforce any rules or regulations regarding drones. It is federal law and under the Federal Aviation Administration.

- d. Ricketts Community Center/OBGC – Councilor Kirkland advised that with a new Director in place, reports will be forthcoming.

- e. Pottstown School Board – Mr. Heidel provided an update of the 2017-2018 school year, noting that the SEL (Social Emotional Learning) Program is being piloted at Barth Elementary School. He added that Dave Miller, has donated \$1,000 to the Save the Lights program and has challenged local businesses to match his donation. The total funding now stands at \$132,000. Mr. Heidel also reported that the Board is working to complete a residency incentive program for teachers. He added that Barth elementary School first grader, Evan Cabiero conducted a recent toy drive for Pottstown Memorial Medical Center.

- f. Ad hoc Zoning – Councilor Procsal advised that there was no meeting.
- g. Ad hoc Animal – Councilor Miller noted there was no meeting.

January 4, 2017

h. Safety – Chief Drumheller reported that new speeding signs have been established along State Street. He also explained the process of removing abandoned vehicles, which can take several weeks.

i. Emergency Services Report – Charlie Pierce was present and provided an update on training and volunteer incentives. He also referred to a new PA House Bill #1683 establishing incentives and discounts to volunteer fire fighters. Mr. Pierce also announced the opening of the Citizens' Fire Academy beginning February 11, 2017, which will run for four weeks and applicants may attend one or all of the sessions.

Miles Feather, Vice President of Phillies, introduced officials of the Fire Company as follows: Joe Groff, Fire Chief; Robert Orr, Assistant Chief and Training Officer; Ashley Reitnauer, Female Recruitment and Retention Officer; Rob Unruh, Mentor Program Advisor; and Brian Kisch, Explorer Division.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Thomas thanked the firefighters for their service and commended their efforts during a recent fatal fire in the Borough. Mayor Thomas also advised that Diana Rivera O'Bryant, recent staff member of the Human Relations Commission, has recently passed away. The Mayor also invited all to the January 15th ceremony at Bethel AME Church honoring the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Flanders announced that Staff has worked with the Police Department for a reacquisition of its budget item of a new police vehicle which will be revisited in mid-year. This allows for the offer to be made to a new police officer, wherein additionally the state will be reimbursing the department for the academy training fees. Mr. Flanders also advised that January 6th is Steven Bamford's last day with PAID and Peggy Lee Clark has been appointed as interim until a new director is chosen.

Mr. Flanders also reminded all of the upcoming Arts Walk scheduled for January 7th in the downtown. He also noted that Borough Hall will be closed on January 16th in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

Presentation – Promotion of Officer Todd Istenes to Rank of Corporal in the Pottstown Police Department

President Weand opened a public hearing at 7:30 p.m. as this item will require Council action and requested public comments.

Mayor Thomas commented that the promotion of Officer Todd Istenes is a compliment to himself and his family and is not always a comfortable position but it is always with prayer.

The public hearing closed at 7:35 p.m.

January 4, 2017

Councilor Procsal moved to approve the promotion of Officer Todd Istenes to the rank of Corporal in the Pottstown Police Department. Councilor Miller seconded the motion.

Mayor Thomas, along with Chief Drumheller, presented the decree to Corporal Istenes in the presence of his family and fellow officers.

Motion carried: 6 ayes.

Presentation – Life Saving Awards – Corporal Steven Morrissey and Officer Zachary Robinson

Chief Drumheller explained the situation that occurred on November 12, 2016 wherein an unresponsive citizen was found and through the efforts of Officer Zachary Robinson and Corporal Steven Morrissey that individual was resuscitated. The Chief added that Officer Robinson's uniform will be donned with a life-saving badge and Corporal Morrissey's bar will also have a star in the middle, indicating that he has previously saved a life.

Mayor Thomas presented the awards in the presence of families and fellow officers.

Presentation – Land Banking, Attorney Winifred Branton

Attorney Winnifred Branton was present and provided an outline and the need and costs to establish a Land Bank in the Borough and the process negotiated through the Tax Claim Bureau. She explained the procedures for acquisition and marketing of vacant, abandoned and tax-delinquent properties. Attorney Branton also noted that when the ordinance passes to create the land bank, a volunteer board of directors is selected in accordance with the Pennsylvania Land Bank law. She emphasized that the process has no eminent domain powers.

Vice President Miller suggested that guidelines include deed restrictions and certain criteria for developers including conditions that developers strive for owner occupied properties and not additional rental units.

After discussion among Council, Solicitor Garner commented that he will be seeking input from Councilors and Staff to draft the ordinance.

Presentation – Pottstown FARM, Sheila Dugan

Sheila Dugan was present and explained the request to conduct the Pottstown FARM beginning June 1st and the request to move the market to the south side of the 200 block of High Street. She added that there has been positive feedback from vendors and merchants on High Street and noted that there will be additional fresh food vendors and less crafts. Ms. Dugan also requested a time change for the market to be 5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. and explained the approval of the SNAP program and the POP (Power of Produce) program. She added that the FARM has received a \$15,000 grant from the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation.

President Weand noted that this would be listed for approval at the regular meeting.

January 4, 2017

Master Traffic Ordinance Amendments – One Security Plaza

Solicitor Garner explained the need for an ordinance amendment to accommodate parking at One Security Plaza for the District Courts.

PDIDA Ordinance Amendment

Mr. Flanders also reviewed the request of PDIDA to reduce its board members from nine to seven members. Presently, with the nine members, one wishes to resign and one wishes not to seek reappointment.

These amendments will be listed for consideration at the regular meeting.

Fire Service Agreement Amendments

Manager Flanders requested authorization to provide the Fire Service Agreement Amendments to each of the four fire companies.

Sale of Borough Vehicles

Mr. Flanders advised that the sale of vehicles is scheduled to open on January 6th and will have recommendations for Monday's meeting.

Zoning – Pottstown Area Senior Center, 288 Moser Road

Solicitor Garner explained the variance request of the Pottstown Area Senior Center d/b/a TriCounty Active Adult Center to allow the rental of a portion of the Center to a church and to establish a sign in excess of the permitted ordinance.

Councilor Paez requested additional time to review the application.

This will be listed for further discussion on Monday's agenda.

Board Appointments

President Weand announced the vacancies and term expirations to date and requested that any additional interested parties, send a letter of request to the Borough Manager.

Vice President Miller suggested seeking additional avenues to announce vacant positions.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

None.

COUNCILORS GENERAL DISCUSSION

Councilor Paez noted that she would like to see additional minorities apply for positions in law enforcement.

January 4, 2017

Vice President Miller agreed and mentioned there may be programs to help recruit minorities. She also reminded all of the Arts Walk scheduled for January 7th and advised that the January Boro Buzz will feature the Pottstown Library. Councilor Miller commended the Phillies for the upcoming Citizens' Fire Academy and would like to see it expand to the other fire companies as well.

Vice President Miller also thanked Staff for finding an initiative to not delaying the hiring of a Police Officer.

President Weand on behalf of Council, wished all a Happy New Year and thanked all involved for the positive feedback on the holiday events and the holiday events at Sunnybrook Ballroom.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Attested,

Mark Flanders
Borough Manager