

January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Borough Manager Keller explained the format for this evening's meeting, advising that the meeting is a public in-person and a GoTo Meeting and available on-line as well. Public comments are being accepted through email and chat until 7:05 p.m. and will be announced to all. Comments are limited to 300 words to be in compliance with Council's three-minute rule and participants shall be identified accordingly.

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**

January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. with President Weand in the Chair.

## ATTENDANCE

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Lisa Vanni, Donald Lebedynsky, Dan Weand, Trenita Lindsay, Andrew Monastra and Joseph Kirkland. Also present were Mayor Stephanie Henrick, Borough Manager Justin Keller, Solicitor Charles Garner (virtual) and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach and Borough Secretary Alexa Barry

## PRESENTATION – RETIREES

Manager Keller presented the long-term Borough Secretary, Virginia Takach, with her Retirement Resolution, illustrating her extensive accomplishments, as well as the impact she has had on the Borough of Pottstown and those therein.

## ***RESOLUTION 2024-1***

### **RECOGNIZING VIRGINIA L. TAKACH FOR 23 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE BOROUGH OF POTTSTOWN**

**WHEREAS**, Virginia L. Takach has served the Borough of Pottstown as a dedicated employee since 2000; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout her career with the Borough, she has dutifully held the position of Borough Secretary, working alongside and faithfully supporting six different Borough Managers; and

**WHEREAS**, for the past 23 years, Ginny has shown unwavering dedication as the Borough Secretary, consistently embodying exceptional professionalism, precision, and grace in all her interactions. Throughout her tenure, she has provided invaluable assistance on a multitude of topics, surpassing enumeration. Not only has she expertly served as our Borough appointed Right to Know Officer, but she has also meticulously prepared meeting agendas and minutes for both our Borough Council and the Pottstown Borough Authority. Additionally, Ginny's organizational skills have been instrumental in orchestrating seamless meetings and events while providing steadfast support to all our Borough organizations. Her efforts have consistently aimed to ensure that our residents and visitors receive the highest standard of customer service from the Borough.

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**WHEREAS**, Ginny’s role has been pivotal, acting as the glue that unified and fortified the Borough's operations, significantly contributing to its success throughout the past two decades.

**WHEREAS**, Ginny’s presence at Borough Hall will be deeply missed by the people that have worked and served alongside her, as her impact has left an enduring, positive impression on our constituents, elected officials, and staff members alike.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT AND IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Town Council that Virginia L. Takach is officially recognized for the outstanding service she has provided the Borough of Pottstown through 23 years of employment and dedicated service; and further that she is extended best wishes for a happy and well-deserved retirement.

#### SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Infrastructure – The report was not attached to the agenda – to be reported at the Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting.
- b. Transportation – There was no meeting.
- c. Safety Committee – To be reported on the Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting
- d. Efficient Methods Committee – There was no meeting.
- e. Ordinance Review Committee – There was no meeting.
- f. Economic Development & Business Liaison -- To be reported on the Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting.

#### BOARDS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Land Bank Report - To be reported on the Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting.
- b. Human Relations Commission – Marcia Levengood reported MLK Jr. Day is January 15<sup>th</sup>, and January is also National Human Trafficking Prevention month. The minutes from the November 2023 HRC meeting were included in the packet and the next meeting is on Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 6 PM in council chambers.
- c. Library - To be reported on the Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting.
- d. Ricketts Community Center – Councilor Kirkland had nothing to report at this time.
- e. Pottstown School District – There was no report at this time, per Council Lindsay, but she will have a report for February.

#### SOLICITOR’S REPORT

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Solicitor Garner reported to those present the rules on Civil Service requirements. He provides that there are about 24 sections in the Borough code that provide requirements of what the Borough must do when it comes to police departments – this includes hiring, promoting, and disciplining police officers. Everything the Borough does must be in compliance with these sections and provisions. The Borough has a Civil Service Commission that oversees this process.

### MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor briefly reported, and stated she would like to express her thanks to the Parks and Recreation department for organizing the Polar Bear Plunge, the Tree Throwing Contest and bringing the community together on the holiday.

Mayor wanted to reserve her report for Monday.

### MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Keller provided an update on the flooding event from the December 19<sup>th</sup> and relayed there was no significant loss or damage. He went on to introduce the newest Borough employee, Alexa Barry. Manager Keller made grant announcements and informed that grant funding in the amount of \$212,000 from PA Small Water and Sewer for the lower pump house and additionally a grant for \$744,00 for high priority arch repairs. He wrapped up with significant 2023 accomplishments.

### 269 & 305 HIGH STREET – ZONING APPEAL, LASTICK ACQUISITIONS

Solicitor for the applicants Mike Murray was present to answer questions regarding the appeal request, as well as explain the attachments within. The proposal for 305 is for a mixed-use development with ground floor retail fronting on High Street on both buildings and market rate apartment use for the rest of the building. 269 does not require zoning relief, as the request is specifically related to 305 for parking for the residential portion.

### Police Departments Creation of New Corporal's Position on Special Operations

Chief Markovich was present to seek approval to add a new position of Corporal on the special operations unit, highlighting that this was budgeted for in the new budget and will not incur additional spending. He continues this Unit has increased in duties and responsibilities since it was first created 5 years ago.

### Police Vehicle Bid Awards

These are police vehicles that were sold and within the description are all the vehicles, the amount, and to whom they were awarded.

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540 West Walnut St. – Waiver Request, Bright Hope Community Play Spaces, Montgomery County Housing Authority

Joel Johnson was present clarifying the total number of waivers they were requesting in regard to this project. Mr. Johnson was requested 3 waiver letters, specifically in relation to not have to show existing topographical information for the entire project site, to not have to show physical features and topographical information for 100 feet beyond the parcel site, and to not plant the required street trees along Myrtle Street.

Property Maintenance Contract Extension

Manager Keller reported that public works would like to execute the option to extend the current contract for 1 more year to keep the 2024 rates the same as 2023.

Resolution – Fee Schedule Amendment

Manager Keller reported that there were several fees within the packet, some dealing with L & I, some with additional swipe cards due to the security gate at the airport, new hangar rates which increase yearly, Parks and Rec needing firewood permits and Smith Family Plaza electric, the Police Department has fee changes, and Public Works has new fees for service equipment expenses.

1 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street – Land Development, David L. Pursel

Solicitor Garner stated this is a minor land development as there is no construction or any change proposed other than drawing a line on the plan so the units can be sold separately in the future. It is compliant with zoning per the decision of the ZHB. There is also a waiver request letter with 3 typical waiver request that come with his type of project.

Memorial Park Bridge Bid Award

Manager Keller reported on this topic and stated that this project has been ongoing in efforts to obtain the right amount of grants, minimizing the Boroughs out of pocket expenses. The Engineers reviewed the bid and recommended that everything is in order and recommend the low bidder and hope to have final approval for Monday.

191-193 Hanover Street, 327 Industrial Highway – Valley Forge Real Estate Proposal

Solicitor Garner stated that there was not a decision to be made for Monday regarding this proposal, but that he wanted members to be aware of it and the various ways available to sell these two parcels.

Mr. Greg Lingo, the applicant, was on hand to answer questions regarding his proposal. He clarified that the money from the sale would be a passthrough, going to the Borough.

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### Pottstown Borough Authority/Borough Articles of Incorporation Amendments

Solicitor Garner stated the authority has moved forward and adopted a resolution regarding the Authority amending the Articles of Incorporation. It would extend the life of the Authority an additional 50 years and clarify the purpose of the Authority. Solicitor Garner requested approval to prepare and advertise the appropriate ordinance.

### Second Supplemental Management Agreement

Solicitor Garner advised there is a management agreement in effect between the Borough and the Authority regarding the operations of the water plant. The proposed modifications to the agreement are to the Boroughs benefit, per Mr. Garner, and provide that the Borough continues to receive funds on an annual basis with a 2% escalator. If agreeable, an agreement would be ready for February.

### Upcoming Board Vacancies

- a. Blighted Property Review Committee – four 1-year terms to expire December 31, 2024. Mr. Procsal is working on compiling an updated list
- b. Environmental Advisory Council – one vacant term to expire August 10, 2024. No action necessary
- c. Land Bank – one vacant term to expire April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026. No action necessary
- d. Planning Commission – 5-year term, February 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, Mr. Hylton requested reappointment
- e. Pottstown Borough Authority – one 5-year term to expire January 1<sup>st</sup> 2029, Mr. Aram Ecker requested reappointment
- f. Zoning Hearing Board –
  1. One 3-year term to expire January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2027 – Mr. Todd Thorne
  2. One 3-year alternate term to expire January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2027 – Richard Bouher

### COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

#### **Sheilla Dugan, 21 N. Hanover St. –**

Ms. Dugan was present this evening to express concerns she had with homelessness in Pottstown affecting both her home and business.

#### **Gene Dugan, 21 N. Hanover St. –**

Mr. Dugan was present this evening to present similar concerns as Ms. Dugan, specifically regarding the sober houses, and how the homelessness is affecting both his home and business negatively.

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**Lyndsey Leh, 29 N. Hanover St. –**

Ms. Leh is a business owner who was present to inform Council how the crime in close proximity to her business is affecting not only her but her clientele.

**Jody Kandy, 53 College Drive –**

Ms. Kandy commented online and stated she felt there needed to be more help and opportunities for the homeless community.

**Brandy Sheriff, 25 N. Franklin St., Apt 205 –**

Ms. Sheriff commented online this evening on the homelessness and stated she believed there is not enough help available.

COUNCILORS' GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mr. Kirkland wished everyone a blessed, Happy New Year.

Ms. Lindsay commended Parks and Rec for their Polar Bear Plunge event and congratulated the new appointees.

Ms. Vanni commented that she acknowledges the complaints regarding trash and fear within the community and that these patrons are not alone in their concerns. She continued by thanking Parks and Rec for their Polar Bear Plunge event.

Mr. Procsal noted he was glad everyone enjoyed the Polar Bear Plunge.

Mayor Hendricks thanked those present for being brave enough to make public comment regarding town concerns.

President Weand wished everyone a happy and healthy New Year.

President Weand adjourned the meeting at 8:59 P.M.