

**Watson town Borough
Council Meeting
October 5, 2015**

OPENING: The October 5, 2015 Watson town Borough Council Meeting was called to order by Vice President Ralph Young at 7:30 PM. The meeting was held at the First Lutheran Church, 400 Main Street. Brendi Brooke gave the opening prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice President Ralph Young, Janet Rump, Jack Marshall, Dan Folk, Mayor David Hontz, Solicitor Ryan Tira, Chief of Police Rodney Witherite and Secretary/Treasurer Brendi Brooke. President Harriet Miller and Harry Hefty were absent.

OTHERS PRESENT: Gladys Klapp, Pat Groover, Connie Criswell, Sherry Dyer, Becky Hontz, Bill Michael, Jim Ranck, Judy Marshall, Vera Young, Stephanie Kilgus, Staci Adam, Mary Phillips, J.M. Sheatler, Earl Sheatler, Linda Reynolds, Rob Brown, Crystal Moyer, Ken Hollenbach, Kevin Mertz, Carolyn Powell, Dave Powell, Angela Salvatori, Aaron Salvatori, Buzz Reynolds, David Plotts, Amy Pitou, Terry Kirchner, Barb Pick, Lisa Davis, Jeff Rachau, Bob Frey, Cindy Crozier, Hall Crozier, Mary Ann Beaver-Everitts, Virginia Wirth, Brent Frey and Erica Frey.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Dan Folk, seconded by Jack Marshall to approve minutes from the September 8, 2015 Council Meeting and September 28 Committee Meeting. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rump	- yes	Miller	- absent
Hefty	- absent	Folk	- yes
Marshall	- yes	Young	- yes

Motion carried by majority vote.

BILLS & TRANSFERS: A motion was made by Janet Rump, seconded by Jack Marshall to approve the bills and transfers in the amount of \$299,148.54. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Marshall	- yes	Young	- yes
Folk	- yes	Rump	- yes

All in favor. Motion carried.

VISITORS: Vice President Ralph Young reminded visitors they'd be held to 5 minutes.

ROB BROWN: Rob Brown spoke regarding the disbanding of the auxiliary police. He asked Council for confirmation as to whether it was true. Vice President Ralph Young said it was true. Ralph allowed Mayor Hontz to read his letter to be entered into the record; in conclusion of his letter, the Mayor said he in fact disbanded the auxiliary police. Janet Rump questioned whether Council had voted to change their uniforms; the Mayor said it had been discussed; she continued to question a vote by Council and the Mayor said “the existence of the auxiliary police rests with the Mayor, not the Council”. The Mayor said for the number of members (4), budgetary and risk reasons, he made the decision to disband the group. The budget for the auxiliary police is \$1200 and \$159 was spent so far this year. Rob Brown asked the Mayor to reconsider his decision. The Mayor said he gave much thought to his decision and the discussions started several months ago. The Mayor said the auxiliary police of 35 years ago versus now are of no comparison, they are not able to protect themselves and it was his decision. He went on to state if they had an upswing in volunteerism and a large enough group to warrant an auxiliary police department, then he would go along with it.

AMY PITOU: Amy Pitou of 500 Main Street spoke on issues related to the petition which she had made at previous meetings. These issues include the suspension of Chief Derr which resulted in the loss of a 33 year employee, a divided community and the Mayor’s pattern of inappropriate behavior. The Mayor interrupted and asked Vice President Young to have Amy Pitou step down from the microphone because she was speaking on things they’d heard before. Amy Pitou said to continue speaking was within her First Amendment Rights. She continued with more reasons including the Mayor acting without authority; she said the citizens are the “watchdogs” of this Borough, not the Mayor. She stated 407 people who have signed the petition do not want a Mayor who doesn’t understand his job. She read quotes the Mayor made in the Daily Item; Amy went on to say it is not the Mayor’s role to point out shortcomings of any Borough employee because he does not have the authority to supervise them. She said, in her opinion, a good leader “praises in public and criticizes in private”; a good leader shows respect for those he works with; a good leader learns the relevant facts before speaking. Amy once again read the petition and requested the Mayor’s resignation; she presented a copy to him as well. The Mayor tore the petition up and threw it in the garbage can; he stated on the advice of his lawyer, it is a useless piece of paper. Many people were shouting and making comments. Janet Rump asked the crowd to be quiet as business continues.

DAVE POWELL: Dave Powell of 506 Main Street spoke of his years in the Borough and as a member of Borough Council. He has attended meetings and has listened as many people speak. He wonders how much people actually know compared to what they read on the internet and social media. He said

there has been animosity from some members of Council for some time; he also claims all members of Council except for Pat Yeager campaigned for Harry Hefty for Mayor. He said not only did Harry lose but he lost by a significant margin to Dave, who was last minute write-in candidate. He spoke of Mary Phillips resignation and Harry Hefty's appointment to Mary's seat. He continued by mentioning some of the Mayor's attributes including the monument at the cemetery and the 8th Street Park, which bares the late Mayor Brown's name. He concluded with his disappointment in the signs along Main Street and our dirty laundry on display during the Watsontown yard sales.

**TERRY
KIRCHNER:**

Terry Kirchner of 500 Main Street said he was born in Watsontown but he has "arrived". He continued by reading an article regarding signing petitions; citizens exercising their basic rights without fear of retaliation.

**8th STREET
LAMP POST:**

Brendi presented Council with the following costs to replace the lamp post at 8th Street:

- 1 = \$2,607.00 each
- 3 = \$1,961.00 each

A discussion ensued between Council members; including the thought of moving the pole back away from the corner. Brendi reminded Council it is strictly a cosmetic fix, the pole is structurally sound. Dan Folk made a motion to purchase 3 poles at a cost of \$1,961.00 each. There was no second. The motion died. There was further talk regarding other types of posts. Many people were talking.

**MID STATE
PAVING:**

Dan Folk said Mid State paving would be in town tomorrow, October 6th and should conclude by Wednesday, October 7th. We have three streets to pave; Vice President Young stated each street involved. He also said next year's paving list is being started.

**POLICE –
SPEED
ENFORCEMENT
AGREEMENT:**

Chief Witherite said the speed enforcement agreement will be voted on at the Delaware Township Meeting tomorrow night.

**NORTHERN
NEIGHBORS
PROJECT:**

Bill Michael spoke on behalf of the Northern Neighbors project. He said the project should be completed by October 14th with the exception of 8th Street. According to the contractors report, the paving on 8th Street should be done the week of October 26th. They are asking the Street Committee to contact Bill with any concerns for specific spots/areas before October 26th. He also asked what the Borough requires to release the balance of the sewer account which they will use to finalize their payment next month. Vice President asked the status of Murray Street; Bill said the

laterals should have been completed today; they will have the manholes filled in and the paving will be done when 8th Street gets paved. He continued to explain the paving schedule.

PUNCH LIST: Janet Rump stressed the need to get things to Bill Michael and included on the punch list; she mentioned damage at the cemetery and ruts in the grass by the monument.

TOWNSHIP MEETING: Bill said the municipal authority meeting starts at 4 pm and the township meeting starts around 4:30 pm.

EMINENT DOMAIN: Bill Michael said the eminent domain could be settled within the next few days; he met with Mr. Foresman late this afternoon and there is a possibility that he will be signing the easement. Solicitor Tira asked if proceeding with the eminent domain should continue to be tabled; Bill said he hated to do that because they have to get the ADA ramps completed by the end of the month. Solicitor Tira said Council would proceed and would be notified if the procedure can be terminated; they are to contact Solicitor Tira's office.

MIKE FORESMAN: Mike Foresman said he stopped by the Borough office to review the eminent domain paperwork. There was confusion regarding the eminent domain. It was concluded that the eminent domain was for the ADA compliant curb work. Solicitor Tira will review.

SPEED ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENT: There were comments regarding the money from fines going to Delaware Township. Solicitor Tira said they cannot enforce the speed limit with the agreement. Others commented on the subject.

SESQUI-CENTENNIAL MEETING: Janet Rump said the next Sesquicentennial Meeting will be held in the Council Chambers on October 13, 2015 at 7 PM.

PENN DOT TRUCK STUDY REQUEST: Brendi said Barry Garverick from Penn Dot asks that requests be in writing, what is wanted, what the exact issue is and what the solution/answer is and lastly, who will pay for it.

BRENT FREY – POLE REMOVAL: Brendi also said the issue with Brent Frey's property needs put in writing as well and submitted to Laura Lapinski of Penn Dot. The letter should possibly be a joint effort between Brent Frey and the Borough.

MORAN: A brief discussion took place regarding the truck study and someone asked if Council has ever met with Moran Industries; he possibility of Council working with Moran.

GRANT: Jack Marshall spoke regarding the Borough's pursuit of a grant through the Greenways Trails and Recreation Program; this project would be located at the lower end of town. This grant is for a maximum of \$250,000.00A resident expressed concern for the grant writing process; it was mentioned that Lynda Culver's office would help the Borough through the process. Lynda Culver's office also has connections in Harrisburg that could help with grant writing as well. There was clarification and a discussion that this project would be separate from the work being done to the boat ramp by the Fish and Boat Commission.

MAYORS REPORT: written

EXECUTIVE SESSION: There will be an Executive Session following tonight's meeting for personnel.

FIRE & AMBULANCE: written

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: The Mayor thanked the Borough crew for their help with sand bags in preparation for the impending hurricane.

CODE ENFORCEMENT: written

DIANE DAWSON'S PROPERTY: Brendi called Council's attention to the last paragraph on Jeff Kanezo's report. It read "would the Borough consider cutting the vegetation at Diane Dawson's property? I was given her daughter's phone number by the District Justice's office and will talk to her about the options. After a brief discussion, Solicitor Tira said due to pending litigation, he suggests this matter be discussed in Executive Session.

BARB PICK: Barb Pick thanked the Mayor and the Borough crew for their work with the sand bags. She lives in a potential flood area and she said it's very satisfying to know that people are looking out for such things.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Solicitor Tira has labor and personnel matters for Executive Session.

MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Brendi provided Council with the proposed schedule of monthly committee meetings. She asked Council to review the list and advise of any changes to the schedule.

BUDGET WORKSHOPS: Brendi presented Council with proposed dates for budget workshops. She asked Council to advise if these dates were ok.

WEBINAR: Janet and Brendi are planning to attend a PSAB webinar on October 14th. It's regarding the reorganization meeting to be held in January. They will meet in Brendi's office from 12 to 1 PM to view the webinar.

MAYOR HONTZ: The Mayor said he wanted to clear up a number of things:

- The Mayor said "you" have the right to petition. He has no problem with that; however, he was advised to tear it up when he got the petition and throw it in the can. It is worthless; they've petitioned; they've spent 3 months circulating this petition and badgering people to sign.
- He continued by reading a statement about "their" assassination of his character as well as his integrity and leadership questioned.
- He said he has been accused of costing the Borough \$60,000.00 in legal fees which is untrue; he named three Borough residents who have cost the Borough to date \$3,528.00 in "Right to Know" legal fees.
- He continued by reading a detailed email from Amy Pitou.
- He spoke of the \$23,875.00 settlement paid to then Chief Dennis Derr. He said the Borough was only liable for the deductible of \$2,500.00. He refuses to speak on the suspension of Dennis Derr as it is a personnel matter.
- The Mayor said according to the August 25, 2014 Council Minutes, Chief Dennis Derr retired after 33 years of service.

People started to interrupt and the Mayor proceeded to address Rob Brown directly. Vice President Young tried brought the meeting back to order.

- The Mayor proceeded to tell the crowd the amount the Borough pays each month for Dennis Derr's health insurance premiums (from monthly bills & transfers). He again stated that Dennis Derr was not fired, he retired.
- The Mayor proceeded to read a personal email from Amy Pitou addressed to him.

Solicitor Tira advised the Mayor that he was on his own if he proceeded. The Mayor advised the press that he had complete copies of his statement that he'd be willing to share. The Mayor questioned whether Solicitor Tira was "infringing on his rights again." Solicitor Tira said this meeting is about Borough business; the Mayor is delving into an argument and the Solicitor was trying to bring the meeting back to order. The Mayor and Amy Pitou proceeded to yell and argue back and forth, at which time the room erupted.

ADJOURNED: At 8:41 PM, the meeting was adjourned to Executive Session by Vice President Ralph Young.

RECONVENE: The meeting reconvened to Public session at 9:08 PM.

EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT – CHIEF of POLICE: Janet Rump made a motion, seconded by Jack Marshall to approve an employment agreement between the Watsontown Borough and Rodney Witherite, Chief of Police. It is a written document with the terms of his salary and the terms of his employment. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Rump	- yes	Marshall	- yes
Folk	- yes	Young	- yes

All in favor. Motion carried.

MEMORANDUM: Vice President Ralph Young read a memorandum promoting Greg Brouse to Lead Foreman and an hourly wage increase of \$3.00 contingent upon Greg remaining in the position. There was also an adjustment to the wages of the employees that perform electrical duties: Mike Messinger to \$16.50/hour and Levi Watson to \$15.00 effective immediately.

Greg Brouse will remain a Lead Foreman Reporting to the Borough Manager. A motion was made motion, seconded by Jack Marshall to approve the memorandum. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Folk	- yes	Young	- yes
Marshall	- yes	Rump	- yes

All in favor. Motion carried.

BANK ACCOUNT: Brendi spoke regarding the Business Analysis Checking Account we currently have for the electric account versus a Preferred Interest Checking Account that she feels would be more beneficial to the Borough. She met with the bank and was provided with information on the Borough's "service earning account" versus an "interest earning account". After further discussion, she will provide the information to Council for review. No decision for review.

LIQUID FUELS: Brendi said the Borough will receive \$63,605.79 for our 2016 Liquid Fuels allocation.

MUNCY BANK & TRUST: Brendi asked Council whether to leave (2) accounts at Muncy Bank & Trust; a Highway Aid Account and a Sewer Account. Council directed her to provide balance information for Council's review. No decision was made.

EMPLOYEE BONDS:

Dan Folk made a motion, seconded by Jack Marshall to approve Brendi's and Polly's bonding through Gloria Buhl at the Insurance Shop at an approx. savings of \$300.00/employee per year. Lisa's will be renewed next year. After additional information was discussed, a roll call vote was taken as follows:

Marshall	- yes	Rump	- yes
Young	- yes	Folk	- yes

All in favor. Motion carried.

JOSHUA FOGELMAN SIGN MOVED:

Brendi said the sign in front of Joshua Fogelman's property at 108 South Main Street was removed today. The crew put in a One Call and on Thursday, October 8th, once notification is received they will replace the sign. Joshua Fogelman will follow protocol to move forward with his driveway.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH – MEETINGS:

Brendi said she sent a letter to First Lutheran Church requesting the use of their social hall for our Council and Committee Meeting for the remainder of 2015.

GREG BROUSE:

Brendi told Council that Greg Brouse would not be returning to work for at least 2 more weeks. She offered to talk about it with Council in further detail.

LYNDA CULVER'S REP.:

Brendi said a representative from Lynda Culver's office will be in the Borough office on Thursday, October 8th from 9 AM to 11 AM. She mentioned some of the many services Lynda Culver's office can help with and encouraged people to come.

BOROUGH MANAGER:

Brendi reminded everyone that the due date for applying for the Borough Manager position is Friday, October 9th. She said this is an exciting time and looks forward to the Hiring Committee beginning their process of selecting a Borough Manager.

CREDIT CARDS:

Brendi said First National Bank is going to be training Lisa and her tomorrow on taking credit cards for payment. It is another service the Borough will be able to offer to residents.

PART-TIME LABORER APPLICATIONS:

Brendi said she is waiting for direction from Council on which committee is reviewing the applications for part-time laborers.

HIRING COMMITTEE:

The Hiring Committee was undecided on when they will meet to review the Borough Manager resumes.

MEETINGS: Brendi asked Council to consider moving meetings from the first and last Monday of each month to the first and third Monday of each month. This change would allow more time for everyone involved. It was decided to make this change for 2016.

**BREAST
CANCER
AWARENESS DAY:** Brendi thanked the Mayor, Janet and Dan for their participation in Breast Cancer Awareness Day.

**HOMECOMING
PARADE:** Janet reminded everyone of Warrior Run's Homecoming Parade down Main Street on Friday, October 9th.

**FINES
DISTRIBUTED-
FUNDS
ALLOCATED:** Jack Marshall spoke extensively about fines collected during the year being distributed to the police and borough vehicle accounts. He said he would like to start it yet in 2015. Solicitor Tira said they could turn unbudgeted funds into a capital account, which is designated and restricted for a specific purpose and that's all it can be utilized for. He also said it would take a motion from Council to move that money. Jack asked that monies for the vehicle accounts be budgeted for next year; Solicitor Tira agreed that funds should be included for vehicles in the 2016 budget; monies in excess of the budget can be repurposed into a capital account. Brendi asked for further clarification. After much discussion, Solicitor Tira said all this needs to go into the 2016 budget process.

**BUDGET
WORKSHOPS:** November 10th, November 19th and November 25th have been set as the dates for Budget Workshops. They will be held in Council Chambers at 6:30 PM and the public is invited.

**OFFICERS
HIRED:** It was confirmed that (2) new officers were hired; Christopher Snyder and Timothy Kiefaber. One will start on October 7th and the other will start on October 12th. Chief Witherite said they are both veteran police officers with 5-6 years each, both are highly trained, good, solid police officers.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before Council, a motion was made by Dan Folk, seconded by Janet Rump to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Brendi L. Brooke
Secretary/Treasurer