

**Watsonstown Borough  
Special Council Meeting  
December 28, 2015**

- OPENING:** The December 28, 2015 Watsonstown Borough Special Council Meeting was called to order by President Miller at 8:30 am. The meeting was held in Council Chambers.
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** President Harriet Miller, Vice President Ralph Young, Janet Rump, Dan Folk, Harry Hefty, Mayor David Hontz, Chief of Police Rodney Witherite and Secretary/Treasurer Brendi Brooke. Jack Marshall was absent.
- OTHERS PRESENT:** Greg Miller, Ken Hollenbach, Pat Yeager, Joshua Fogelman and Chuck Beck.
- QUESTIONED:** The Mayor questioned “what” type of meeting this was. He thought it was advertised as a committee meeting.
- QUESTIONED:** The Mayor questioned President Miller’s lack of knowing who the Chairman of the Hiring Committee was. Janet Rump asked that the meeting move forward. The Mayor admitted it was irrelevant. Brendi offered to get the advertisement and was told it wasn’t necessary.
- HIRING COMMITTEE:** Chuck Back spoke on behalf of the Hiring Committee. He said what he has to say this morning was not what he had intended to say. The Hiring Committee had numerous meetings. He said the committee advertised the position with the Daily Item-Sunbury, Centre Times-State College, Press Enterprise-Berwick, Standard Journal-Milton, Sun Gazette-Williamsport, PSAB website, Career Link website, InDeed.com website and the Watsonstown Borough website. The Hiring Committee also received assistance from Lloyd Hamberg of Waynesboro Borough and Ed Knittle of Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs. We received 40 resumes and conducted 8 extensive interviews; through the process, the committee had 3 candidates that they were prepared to recommend to Council but in each instance the candidate either accepted another position or decided they were no longer interested in the position. He said after all the time and money spent in this process, the committee still does not have a candidate to recommend to Borough Council, Watsonstown doesn’t have a Borough manager, and the employees still have no leadership. With that said, Chuck believes the elected officials and the residents of Watsonstown have a rational discussion on how this committee should proceed. He said the 3 candidates they were ready to recommend to Council had at least 80% of the required qualifications; the others did not but in our

opinion could learn the position if given the opportunity. We need guidance from this Council.

Chuck said it was clearly not what the hiring Committee had intended; they had made a proposal to a candidate and he declined the position stating he was no longer interested. President Miller said everyone would be curious “where” we are lacking as we continue on this journey. Janet said the candidate gave no specifics therefore we are unable to say.

Janet spoke briefly and again asked “what do you guys want us to do?”

Chuck said it’s going to be very hard to find a Borough manager if Council is rigid with the job description and the job requirements. If Council is going to be reasonable and consider a person that has some of the skills but also had the commitment and ability to learn then the committee can proceed forward. He referenced the Borough’s website and said the issues in this municipality need to be dealt with; everyone needs to work together to resolve them. We are asking a person to come here that is an employee at will and with absolutely no job security, it is a very unstable environment that they’d be coming into.

Chief Witherite questioned the lack of a contract for the Borough Manager. Chuck said a Borough manager can now be given a contract every 2 years that will outline the severance package should they be left go during those 2 years; they remain an “at-will” employee.

The Mayor asked about Chuck reference to the Borough’s website and it being a detriment in our search for a Borough manager. Brendi clarified the minutes are on the website and prepared candidates read and researched our Borough; the controversy is there for all to see.

Harry recommended the most qualified yet the best fit for the Borough; not so much on paper but the person; he went further to say there are resources that the right person can learn from. A solid person, good history, ability to work with people and willingness to seek help when necessary. He would compromise for the best fit.

President Miller said the new Council members should have more say than the Council members that will be done.

Janet said Brendi has grown and learned a lot and could be put in with a lot of the people who have applied just as they moved Edie into the position but we had a lot of problems with that according to residents. She thinks the Borough crew wants some help and leadership and someone with knowledge. She said she doesn’t mind continuing to work as a member of the Hiring Committee and do more interviews if that’s what

Council wants. She doesn't want to hire someone that's going to be stumbling for the next year or two; she said that if Council is going to settle for someone less than mediocre then it will take time to get people up on task. She said the committee can go back through the applicants if that is what Council wants done but she feels we need to be careful with who we settle for.

Dan Folk said most of applicants appear to be applying for a secretarial job.

Chief Witherite said he's offered to help out but he was rejected. He asked for Chuck's opinion and whether it was a conflict of interest. Chuck said it was not a conflict in the Borough Code. The Chief asked why not hire Chuck part-time, Chuck could train him and they could work together until someone is found. Harry spoke regarding a temporary measure for 2016; a transition or interim Borough Manager.

Pat Yeager suggested waiting for the new Council to make a decision and also questioned what took so long. Dan and Janet both spoke to her concern. Janet stressed the desire to keep things open and transparent.

Joshua Fogelman asked how long the Borough was without a Borough Manager. He agreed with having an interim; possibly if the Chief and Chuck Beck could work together to get us through.

President Miller suggested Polly helping out a few days a week but it is something the new Council will need to decide. Janet reiterated that Polly would be able to help alleviate work from Brendi.

Brendi requested permission from President Miller to speak regarding the reason the meeting was called, why people were asked to be in attendance and the disappointment with no candidate to present to Council. She also stressed transparency.

Ralph Young said 3 of the candidates that were interviewed were not willing to relocate to Watsontown. It was clarified the candidate needed to live within a 10 mile radius. Harry spoke of the possibility of lifting the residency restriction. Chuck Beck said he was the only employee in Milton required to live within the Borough. Other Council members didn't agree with lifting or increasing the radius in the residency requirement.

Chuck said he needs to get his Council's permission to work with Watsontown proceeding December 31<sup>st</sup>. He asked Council's thoughts on reviewing the resumes already received and bringing someone on board and he would be willing to work with that person. The Mayor said to

bring the Chief on as interim Borough Manager; Chuck said that was Council's decision. Janet said she wants someone with knowledge of our Borough Code, the rules and regulations of handling our budget properly. She said she would be comfortable going back through and looking at the resumes. President Miller said if we could get a person that is willing to learn and do whatever it takes to do the job. Chuck said he started as a mechanic at Milton Borough, 40 years ago. Chuck suggested having someone here learning the job and calling on him for help when necessary; if he came on as an interim it would be in the evening. He asked if what Council provided in the job description was etched in stone, Watsontown will be looking for a Borough Manager for a very long time. President Miller doesn't think anything is set in stone and Council may need to concede some things; the candidate must be willing to learn and work with employees to move the Borough forward.

When asked, Greg Miller said look for someone willing to learn, are they going to stay, keep employees comfortable, keep things on an even keel, but be direct and firm with instruction.

Josh Fogelman had nothing to add at this time. Ken Hollenbach agreed that the Borough needs someone. He said possibly Brendi could do it in the interim; hire Polly on a part-time basis until we get someone. We've had no leadership for the Borough since July; in the meantime go back through the resumes.

President Miller said the new President of Council will need to appoint a committee and with Chuck's help, get right back to reviewing the resumes. Pending his Council's approval, Chuck said he was willing to continue working with Watsontown.

Janet made a motion to continue having Chuck consult with a Hiring Committee in the search for a Borough Manager. The motion was seconded by Dan Folk. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

All in favor. Motion carried.

Chuck said the approval would be included on Milton Borough's agenda for Monday night. He also stated he wouldn't want to be the interim Borough Manager but would be willing to work with a person appointed to that position. He said he would like to see the working relationship between Watsontown and Milton continue to get stronger and working together; it would behoove all of us.

Brendi said the best fit versus the best qualified look and cost totally different. If residents want someone they know out on the streets, that may not be the most educated candidate. She asked for patience with the new Borough Manager, she said help and information is available for the right person to learn and use for the betterment of the Borough and its residents. She elated further regarding employment with the Borough.

It was agreed that the new Council President should appoint members to the Hiring Committee to review current resumes and move forward with the hiring process.

In closing, Chuck Beck stressed that not only does the new Borough Manager deserve patience and understanding but also the residents of this municipality are owed the same patience and understanding.

President Miller thanked everyone for coming and bid the new Council good luck.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business to come before Council, a motion was made by Ralph Young, seconded by Dan Folk to adjourn at 9:21 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Brendi L. Brooke  
Secretary/Treasurer