

**Watsonstown Borough  
Council Meeting  
March 2, 2015**

**OPENING:** The March 2, 2015 Watsonstown Borough Council Meeting was called to order by Vice President Ralph Young at 7:30 PM. The meeting was held in Council Chambers.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Vice President Ralph Young, Jack Marshall, Janet Rump, Dan Folk, Harry Hefty, Solicitor Ryan Tira, Mayor David Hontz, Borough Manager Edie Moser, Acting Chief Richard Faux and Secretary/Treasurer Brendi Brooke. President Harriet Miller was absent.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mary Phillips, Barry Bastian, Robin Fisher, Pat Yeager, Ken Hollenbach, Becky Hontz, Kevin Mertz, Sandy Hendricks, Cindy Crozier, Joe Sylvester, Dave Powell, Gary Harmon, Bob Frey, George Myers, Erin Threet, Bill Michael, Virginia Wirth, Jeff Rachau and Vera Young.

**PRAYER & PLEDGE:** Brendi Brooke gave the opening prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**APPROVAL of MINUTES:** Harry Hefty made a motion, seconded by Dan Folk, to approve the minutes from the February 2, 2015 Council Meeting, the February 9, 2015 Special Meeting and the February 23, 2015 Committee Meeting. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

All in favor. Motion carried.

**BILLS & TRANSFERS:** Jack Marshall made a motion, seconded by Janet Rump, to approve the Bills and Transfers in the amount of \$285,277.39. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

All in favor. Motion carried.

**CHIEF WITHERITE SWORN IN:** Rodney Witherite was sworn in as the Chief of Police of Watsonstown by Mayor David Hontz.

**ERIN THREET,  
GEORGE MYERS  
& BILL  
MICHAEL:**

Erin Threet of HRG presented a summary of data from Red Zone. She said the system is in fairly good condition; she presented a color coded map regarding the condition of the sewer system. She said the next step is some of the repair work done with sewer fund monies left from Northern Neighbors and the Borough of Watsontown. The work can be done by change order through the contractor that's still involved with the project. As of February 25, 2015, the Borough has approx. \$146,000.00 left in sewer monies; she asked Council if they'd consider committing that money to the repair project. The project would focus mainly on the structural issues around the Matthew Street pump station area while also correcting some operational issues that could cause MRSA issues in the future. When asked, she mentioned the areas in town in need of repair; they are not concentrated but rather scattered throughout town. The goal is to try and exhaust the Borough's and Northern Neighbors' remaining funds by repairing as much as possible. There was further conversation of various problems and areas of concern in the Borough. Bill Michael said Northern Neighbors has approx. \$900,000.00 to put towards the project; Erin said they are looking to spend around \$1,000,000.00 with this phase of the project. Jack Marshall said residents should be pleased that MRSA is looking to put the money towards capital improvements in Watsontown. George Myers thanked Northern Neighbors for taking this project on versus the Sewer Authority having to undertake the project. He said the Borough's rates will not go up by doing this work through the Northern Neighbors Co-op. If it was something MRSA would have had to take care of, MRSA would have taken out a loan and "we" (Northern Neighbors) would have been responsible to pay that debt service. Erin said it will be called the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Re-Route Project; they don't have a finite scope of what the cost will be at this point; the end goal is to accomplish as much as possible and have a zero balance left over. Solicitor Tira said if Council was comfortable, they could make a motion to authorize the expenditure of the remaining sewer capital funds for this project. Harry Hefty made the motion, seconded by Janet Rump. It was stated that Bill Michaels (Delaware Township Municipal Authority) will continue to oversee the project on behalf of Northern Neighbors. After further discussion, a roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

All in favor. Motion carried.

**CONSTRUCTION  
TO BEGIN:**

Erin Threet said they hope to have drawings to the contractor by late March or early April; the construction work could begin as soon as late April or early May, pending the approved permits and approvals from Penn Dot, the railroad and the Conservation District.

**CONSTRUCTION EFFECT ON JES/VIC RACE:** Sargeant Faux raised a concern with the construction's effect on the Jes/Vic Race on June 6th. He explained the route of the race. Erin Threet asked for contact information to ensure the contractor will not be working in those particular areas on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Edie is to provide Erin with race and contact information. Bill Michael thinks the construction project will take approx. 60 days to complete and advised as to where the contractor may want to start.

**EXCHANGE POOL:** Edie said the Borough received a letter from the Exchange Pool regarding Raise the Region 2015. During the 30-hour event on March 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, donations can be made and a portion is matched by the Blaise Alexander Family Dealership. Donations for the Exchange Pool are to be made under the Northern Montour Recreation Association.

**EAGLE SCOUT:** The Mayor said he received a letter stating Matthew Gummo will become an Eagle Scout and requesting something from the Borough.

**PROPERTY ON PA AVE:** The Mayor received an email from a property owner/contractor on Pennsylvania Avenue regarding the condition of another property on Pennsylvania Avenue. Though some items have been addressed before, there are three autos; one on the street with an expired registration and a trailer is also on the street for the last several months as well as other items that need "our" attention. The Mayor is requesting the Code Enforcement Officer work with the Police Department to resolve this issue. Edie stated she was aware of the property and will provide Sargeant Faux with the information.

**LETTER:** The Mayor and Ken Hollenbach are to discuss the contents of a letter received this week from Hoganaes for EMA.

**INT'L PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE MTG:** There is an International Property Maintenance Code Meeting set for Monday, March 23, 2015 at 7 p.m. Edie said she will advertise the meeting and she will also send Council an email as a reminder.

**3<sup>rd</sup> STREET PAVING – MTG:** Ralph Young said they are working on a Street Committee Meeting regarding the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street paving issue.

**SALT STORAGE SHED:** Dan Folk said he is still working on getting measurements and specs from Penn Dot. Jack Marshall asked if the building will be able to accommodate cinders that the Borough can get for free from PPL. Dan said the building will be made big enough to house cinders and salt. Jack said the cinders could be used in the alleys. Someone mentioned the building could possibly be in the flood zone; Dan & Edie said they were checking into that.

**GENERATOR FOR GARAGE:**

Dan said they are still working on getting information for the generator at the garage as well. Someone needs to look at the wiring, sizes of generator, etc.

**PLOWING of ALLEYS:**

Pat Yeager of 214 Liberty Street asked if Council had come to a conclusion regarding plowing alleys. She said she noticed the cemetery gets plowed; she asked “if there’s enough snow to plow, why wouldn’t we plow everything?” “Why does it have to be 6 inches?” Ralph Young and Dan Folk agreed 6 inches has been the standard rule for alleys ever since Sam Klapp was the Borough Manager. A long, heated discussion ensued regarding whether alleys are/aren’t plowed; whether they were/weren’t plowed in the past or presently. The Mayor stressed that plowing the alleys when it snows is a safety issue and doesn’t need to result in overtime. Other’s voiced concern and opinions on the “6 inch rule” as well. Ralph Young concluded the use of common sense and if the crew has time to plow the alleys then “so be it, let them plow the alleys”. The Mayor claims special plows were bought 3 years ago to plow the alleys. There was talk between Solicitor Tira and the Mayor regarding the union contract and overtime.

**RECOGNITION of CREW:**

Pat Yeager said “for the most part, our guys do a great job on the streets; they are out there; they get it done... the recording became inaudible because of the audience clapping for the crew. Pat said “we just got an increase in taxes because of the electric but we aren’t getting anything back; this is a benefit to people that have alleys beside their house; that can encompass; just make the people happy; if that’s what they want, give it to them; that’s what we’re here for”. Dan Folk said he’s talked with numerous FedEx and UPS drivers and they’ve said Watsontown has the best streets around; Pat agreed. She said the people want the alleys plowed and she doesn’t see a problem with it; it should be done when they plow other things; at some point you have to keep the citizens happy and if that’s what they want, give it to them. Ralph Young said “it’s not that big of a deal”. Harry Hefty agreed; he said “if they have time to plow the alleys, they can do it”.

**PLOWING ON 8<sup>th</sup> STREET:**

Citizens mentioned plowing on 8<sup>th</sup> Street; they are concerned with truck traffic when 8<sup>th</sup> Street is so narrowly plowed.

**LION’S CLUB – EASTER EGG HUNT:**

The Borough received a request from the Watsontown Lion’s Club to use Watsontown Memorial Park for their annual Easter Egg Hunt. It will be Saturday, March 28, 2015 at 1:00 p.m., with a rain date of April 4, 2015. They will provide a copy of their liability insurance. Janet Rump made a motion, seconded by Jack Marshall to approve the Lion Club’s use of the park for their East Egg Hunt. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

All in favor. Motion carried.

**WR AREA FIRE DEPARTMENT BANQUET:**

Edie said the Borough was in receipt of an invitation to the Annual Fire Department Banquet on April 11, 2015 at the Warrior Run Area Fire Department Social Hall in Allenwood. Happy hour begins at 6 p.m. with the meal at 7 p.m. Council is to RSVP by March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**PITNEY BOWES POSTAGE METER:**

Edie spoke regarding our Pitney Bowes postage Meter. We currently have a lease agreement with Pitney Bowes of \$197/month for 63 months but it will expire in another month. We received a proposal from 1<sup>st</sup> Choice Systems and Solutions of West Pittston for a brand new, updated postage meter at \$145/month for 63 months, billed quarterly. This would save the Borough \$50/month. Edie said she called Pitney Bowes to ensure 1<sup>st</sup> Choice Systems was an authorized, legitimate dealer. She requested permission to enter into a contract with 1<sup>st</sup> Choice Systems and Solutions. A motion was made by Jack Marshall, seconded by Dane Folk to approve the new postage meter contract. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

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

All in favor. Motion carried.

**MAYOR:**

nothing

**POLICE REPORT:**

written

**SARGEANT FAUX:**

Sargeant Faux thanked Council for their patience and cooperation during his time as Acting Chief of Police for the Borough of Watsontown. He also thanked his fellow officers and community for the cooperation they gave. On behalf of the department, he welcomed Chief Witherite and said they look forward to doing good things together.

**FIRE & AMBULANCE:**

received last week

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:**

nothing

**CODE ENFORCEMENT:**

written

**SOLICITOR:**

nothing

**BOROUGH**

written

**MANAGER:**

**SAFETY  
INQUIRY:**

The Mayor asked about the Borough Manager's report. It stated she recently met with Jack and Dan relative to safety issues; he asked if they were issues that his committee addressed earlier. Edie said no, they met regarding equipment.

**BOROUGH  
SECRETARY:**

nothing

**STREET SALT  
SHORTAGE:**

Edie said the Borough's salt is through the state contract. The Borough received its last load last week and we've now exceeded our limit. She has called several places including our current supplier American Rock Salt Company. They've advised her to call every week because there is a shortage and we are not alone in need for salt. Edie said they may have to spread salt a little thinner to conserve through this season.

**AMP-OHIO  
RATES:**

Harry Hefty said we received a memo from AMP-Ohio stating that our annual power rates are projected to go down over the next 5 years versus the rates from the last 2 years. Harry also mentioned the "PPA" (purchase power adjustment) on the electric bills. There was further discussion regarding the cost of power, usage, taxes, etc.

**RECOGNITION  
of SARGEANT:**

Mayor Hontz publicly recognized Sargeant Faux's work during the last 6 months since Chief Derr retired. He said Sargent Faux had the interest of this Borough at heart and went above and beyond the call of duty and he wanted everyone here in the audience and the newspapers to know. His statement was followed by a round of applause.

**SIDEWALKS:**

Robin Fisher of 218 East 8<sup>th</sup> Street spoke regarding the condition of sidewalks in the Borough. Ralph Young stated the sidewalks are the responsibility of the property owner. After a long discussion, it was concluded that Robin Fisher would be down to the office in the morning to file a complaint. Numerous discussions took place at this time.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the Council, Janet Rump made a motion, seconded by Dan Folk to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brendi L. Brooke  
Secretary/Treasurer