



July 10, 2024

PUBLIC Meeting

The Borough council Agenda meeting for July 2024 was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Council President Shaunta Miller. Roll was called, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The following council answered roll call:

Council Vice President Bernice Clark-Dickerson-present

Councilor Douglas Eagar-present

Councilor Bethann Johnson-present

Councilor Michelle Miller-present

Council President Shaunta Miller-present

Councilor Michele Roberts-present

Councilor Walter Stubbs-present

Mayor Amanda Hammock—present

ANNOUNCEMENT – President Miller reported that council met in executive session prior to the public meeting regarding personnel matters.

PUBLIC COMMENT- Council is no longer accepting residents comments not from Morton. Jackie Guy does not agree, and referred to Chris Nelson being able to speak in the borough meetings and he is from Ridley.

Mario Cimino – 46 S Morton Avenue – corrected the record, at least since Dolores Giardina was council president, it has been precedence of council that people were allowed to speak whether they were from Morton or not. He asked if there was no change to the agenda tonight as was published. Solicitor answered, the agenda is the agenda. Mr. Cimino asked as a matter of law, if William Stewart was still the borough manager? – Solicitor Ewald stated that is on the agenda for a vote, a He cited #4 on agenda –under finance and administration –open position- Borough Manager. He felt this was disingenuous and misleading; he encouraged honesty and urged council not to disgrace a good man.

Under public facilities and infrastructure, He asked if council would move to obtain the funds needed to fix the intersection, signaling system.

Michael Lee – 123 W Sylvan - – during the pledge of Allegiance, people should remove their hats. The Morton Rutledge Fire company sent out one donation request per year, he is sure they would accept donations year-round..

Bill Heffner – 571 S. Old Middletown Road – questioned if the open position as borough manager was full time or part time. The position has not been advertised at this time, so there was no answer. He also requested the expenditures for Juneteenth celebration; this would be done at the end of the meeting.

Joe Boylan -23 Althea Lane – Repeated the same question as Mr. Heffner regarding the borough manager position being full time or part time. He was shocked that there was no answer to this. He reminded council that there was no budget for full time for the borough manager position.. He questioned if Mr. Stewart's dismissal will be voted on in public. Mr. Boylan reminded all that the positions were voted on in public.

Lisa Lockley – 114 Harding Avenue – read the first page of Mr. Stewart's reply letter to council. She then read the letter in public.

Jackie Guy – 635 Country Lane– read the 2nd page of Mr. Stewart's reply letter to council- and stated he must be fired by public vote

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Tax Collector Acquarola gave the Tax collection report for the month of June. and explained a difference in the recent report.

Treasurer's report - Ms. Clark-Dickerson gave the Treasurer's report – and stated the beginning balance of \$95,865.69 is still in Citadel interest of \$319.90. The ending balance was \$96,185.59. Ms. Dickerson also gave the bank balances in Republic Bank.

Ms. Dickerson also gave reported on the disbursements journal for June 2024. There were no questions from council on this journal

Open Position for Borough Manager- Ms. Dickerson made a Motion to ratify the decision to terminate the Borough Manager. Ms. Shaunta Miller seconded the Motion. Roll Call: Council Vice President Bernice Clark Dickerson-yes, Councilor Douglas Eagar-yes, Councilor Bethann Johnson-yes, Councilor Michelle Miller-No, Councilor President Shaunta Miller-yes, Council Michele Roberts-no, Councilor Walter Stubbs-Yes – Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PUBLIC FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Johnson had Mr. Catania report on his building code official report. He stated that there were 11 building permits issues, 6 properties inspected and 4 use and occupancies, 6 contractors licenses. Mr. Catania informed council of a grant for DCED –gaming revenue; application due November 30 – for \$150-\$1 million.

2024 Road Program -Ms. Johnson the contract has been executed and roadwork is expected to begin in July and end in August

DCIU project – all plans have been recorded and all agreements have been signed, and the work is expected to begin shortly. Ms. Dickerson added that we have received \$106,000 in permit fees for this work, which came in today.

Woodland Avenue-Signal – Mr. Catania reported two parts- 1st part there is a DCED multimodal grant program available -\$3million, requires 30% match. We brought in traffic consultant to do preliminary work. Cost estimate \$900,000 for signal upgrades, \$2.5million + upgrades to crossing gates. If the borough wishes to proceed we will need to have authorized documents prepared.

We consulted with traffic planning and design, and this also requires PUC approval; the estimated cost is \$85000, and takes up to 8 months to complete. WE are still in the process of getting SEPTA to step up.

Ms. Miller asked if SEPTA was paying the \$85,000. Mr. Catania confirmed that is what we would be asking for.

LIGHTING

Ms. Johnson reached out for a proposal for the led lighting; and when we receive that she will report

Ms. Johnson thanked the fire department for hanging the flag.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Department – Chief Lawless reported for June 7 to July 8th and the decrease in retail thefts, a 300% reduction and a 94% reduction for the year. He gave the report on building checks – 215, slightly down from last report. He also reported that the loss prevention officer at Kohl’s, we want to reduce the thefts, instead of following people around, interacting with people.

Ms. Miller stated that the officer used to have to be tied up with Kohl’s for a theft prior, now it makes more sense to do what is being done. Objective 2 is to reduce accidents – 50% reduction this reporting period with an overall for the year of 51%. 124 Traffic checks and 14 citations and 47 traffic warnings. Benchmark has been achieved.

Fire Department

Chief Holstein gave his June Fire report, Company responded to 26 incidents, total response personnel - 182. He gave the detailed report of all the incidents –total report is kept on file.

Fire Marshal report –Mr. Stokes reported that there were no fire investigations, however 2 fire inspections one on Venue on Morton 11-13-15-S.Morton and also at 17 S Morton Avenue. The fire alarm company will be upgrading the fire alarm system and moving the Knox boxes to the front of the apartment building in July 2024.

Civil Service Regulations

Solicitor Ewald stated a copy of the new regulations will be circulated for the meeting in two weeks, council will determine if they want to approve at that time.

PUBLIC HEALTH, SANITATION & RECYCLING

Ms. Roberts reported the June recycling report and the total was 19.48 tons. Stress to the residents to come on board and recycle – Thursday is recycling pick up and we have a container here at the borough.

Ms. Roberts had a long-reach pick-ups for residents who helped at Clean-up Day, and also thanked those that attended. We have a need to teach young people about not littering as they are the future.

Hero Banners – Ms. Roberts is filling in; and commended Mr. Stewart for taking the lead; this should've been under the committee. These banners look good in the community; we utilize Signs by Tomorrow who charge us \$185 per banner, and then we contract someone else to hang them; who charge us \$100+ per hour; so therefore the borough is losing money. We must bring it back to council to increase the charge going forward.

LAW & ORDINANCE

Ms. Miller asked the Chief if he would like to talk about the abandoned vehicle ordinance. Chief lawless added that the reason this came up was at his request as there are an abundance of cars on the street unregistered and uninspected. This allows the police to enforce on the street; if the vehicle remains on the street for 48 hours; allows a sticker and send the owner a letter of compliance before the vehicle gets removed. He was content with the language of the ordinance.

Ms. Miller made a Motion to advertise the Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance. Ms. Roberts seconded the Motion. All voiced approval. No opposition. Motion carried.

Country Lane –Parking – on hold right now, things have been working out with the post office delivering the mail.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Councilor Eagar reported that the website was still under construction

Councilor Eagar reported that Juneteenth was a big success – and we had a great turnout.

Blood Drive – Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled to be held Tuesday, 9-17-24 from 2-7 p.m.

Morton 5K Run – This event is scheduled for October 5, at 9:00 a.m. at Morton Borough Hall.

PARK AND RECREATION

Councilor Stubbs reported that the 2025 National Fitness Campaign –Fitness Court- Jacobs Park Revitalization – Master Plan Phase 3 grant was awarded. This is a \$30,000 grant with \$170,000 to be committed by June 2025 with matching funds.

MAYOR REPORT

Mayor Hammock reported that water and Gatorade donations are needed for the Morton-Rutledge Fire Department.

Mayor also announced National Night out would be held August 21 from 6-8 p.m. at Scoscia field. She also announced congratulations to the three recent graduates; Hammock, Holstein, and Bemke.

ACTION ITEMS

Motion to approve the disbursement journal for June 2024; Motion made by Councilor Dickerson, seconded by Councilor Roberts and all council voted in favor; no one opposed. Motion carried.

The list of upcoming meetings and events was discussed.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Michael Lee – 123 W Sylvan Avenue – commented on the reason for the removal of Mr. Stewart and stated it won't be long until we will be getting rid of the chief and Catania and Mr. Stokes. If he had his way, Ms. Miller would still be council president.

Bill Heffner – 571 S. Old Middletown Road-

Mr. Heffner commented on \$4373 that was on the Community Policing budget-in the general fund. He also questioned the mulch situation at the park.

Joe Boylan – 23 Althea Lane

Also questioned the Community policing budget. He suggested that information regarding recycling be added to the bills with MuniBilling.

Mr. Boylan spoke of the 10% of healthcare costs for the police department – the CBA provides a plan at 90% of cost; the broker had provided.

Mr. Boylan questioned where we were with Portnoff and suggested the 9% penalty be included.

Heile Hodnett – 231 Walnut Street

Expressed her sadness about the borough manager. Spoke about the website needing updates, and speed bumps on Walnut Street-when will that be accomplished?? Mr. Ewald stated he would reach out to Wawa for an update.

Jackie Guy – 635 Country Lane – questioned who was handling the manager's job at this time. Council President Miller stated that for now, Ms. Dickerson is stepping in.

Cecilia Todd – 110 Althea Lane

thanked Bill Stewart.

Miss Todd was concerned that on the agenda there were no extra reports or disbursements, and wants to disagree with Mr. Boylan – people do put out recycling.

She did thank all those that came out for the food trucks. There is a car wash on Saturday July 20 from 10-1. In September would be a Cornhole Tournament for Dan Clemente, and reminded council that the Morton Rutledge Fire Department is 100% volunteer. She reminded all that July 28th is the Morton Summer jam.

Lisa Lockley – 114 Harding

Questioned the dead trees at Jacobs Park; who will be taking care of these? Council will get back to her on this question.

Charles Lillicrapp- 114 Locust Rd

Questioned the situation on the scooters that people are riding around and asked if they were covered under motor vehicle laws.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Roberts made a Motion to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. and Councilor Johnson seconded the Motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Preston, Secretary