

LEWISBERRY BOROUGH COUNCIL SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2011

The meeting was called to order by David Raugh leading in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

MEMBERS PRESENT

David Raugh, President; Sandra Griffith, Vice President; Matthew Kiner, Mayor; Mark Keener, Nora Sowers, Edward Farr, Daniel Soltis and Mary Pelton

Also Present: Mary Ellen Banks, Borough Manager (outgoing); Mackensie Greene, Borough Manager (incoming)

PUBLIC PRESENT – Robert Smith and Mary Jo Keener, Residents

BUDGET

• 2012 Budget Discussions as follows:

- Discussion ensued as whether or not to raise the pole rentals. There has not been a pole rental increase with Frontier since 1983 to \$5.00 a pole and with Blue Ridge Cable since 1999 to \$10.00 a pole. In 2012 a renewal of the Franchise Agreement with Blue Ridge Cable is due. The Borough could at that time bring in a new cable company. Discussion ensues about the possibility of a twenty percent markup on the pole rentals to increase the Borough's revenue. Mark **KEENER** made a motion which was seconded by Sandra **GRIFFITH** to increase the pole rental by twenty percent. Motion carried, 7-0.
- There are two interested parties for the Electric Biller position. Discussion ensued as to the pay rate and what the average hours for the position are on a per month basis. If the pay rate changes for the Biller to \$440.00 per month and the Meter Reader pay rate is at \$60 per month it would save the Borough \$50 a month. Mary Jo Keener states that she may be willing to stay on as Electric Biller if the borough would hire someone to read the meters. Edward Farr has decided since last being approached to read the meters that he will not be doing so. Mary Ellen Banks states that an insert needs to be done to advertise for the Meter Reader position.
- Software upgrade for the Electric Billing Software. There are some issues with the system. Mary Jo Keener states that the cost for the upgrades could be as much as \$400.00 which will be included in the budget.
- Mary Ellen Banks states that within the past twelve months the Borough has spent \$14,500.00 on attorney fees for the Electric Fund, \$10,000.00 of that was from the Borough of Lansdale on behalf of Charles Wheatley, Esq. However, any billings for the upcoming year from Lansdale should be lower due to the fact that the Borough is not part of the PPL Transmission Grid. Currently there is correspondence between the parties to rectify the error and retrieve the money for paid bills in 2011. Mary Ellen States that budgeting \$7,000.00 for attorney fees is necessary for any agreements that the Borough may enter into in the upcoming year.
- Mark Keener states that the Borough will not see an increase in police protection from Newberry Township. Last month the Borough wrote a letter requesting no increase and it was discussed during the last Township meeting and passed by a vote of 3-2.
- Sandra Griffith states that the committee discussed raising taxes ½ mil. Mark Keener asked if the taxes need to be raised to satisfy the budget. If taxes were raised another ½ mil that would give the Borough \$8,000.00 more in revenue. Mary Jo Keener, resident states her displeasure at the thought of having the taxes raised.
- Discussion ensued about the possibility of increasing the rent of the softball field. Council feels that they could not raise it enough for it to make a difference in the budget.
- Sandra Griffith suggests that we scale back on our correspondence with the attorney to negate some of the fees. Mary Ellen states that emails were only sent if necessary. Mark Keener feels that the bulk of the money is from dealing with the issues of the Fire Company and that without that the attorney fees should decrease in the upcoming year. Mary Ellen also states that the

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Sinsabaugh property issue cost the Borough a considerable amount of money. In addition, the advertising has greatly increased over the last year and the Borough passed numerous ordinances which must be published. Suggestion was made to speak with Steven Miner concerning how the Borough can decrease his fees.

- Mark Keener asked about cutting back on the phone bill asking if the Borough needs a phone and fax line. Mackensie will look into better pricing.
- Sandra Griffith disagrees with the tenants of the Community Building paying a 1/3 of the Lawn Maintenance and snow removal for the parking lots. She also stated the Library has no lease with the Borough; she feels the Library is an extension of the Borough. In addition, her opinion is the Library's percentage of the expenses to maintain the building should be paid by the Borough. Discussion ensued as to whether the Library is part of the Borough or if they are an entity on their own. If they are indeed a part of the Borough then the question was raised as to the feasibility of keeping the Library open. David Raugh requested financial statements for the Library for the Council to review.
- EMA currently is with Newberry Township at this point; however, we may be able to be with Fairview. Mackensie Greene will contact Fairview to see if we can be part of Fairview's EMA.
- Mark Keener brought up the point that it's costing the Borough \$7,000.00 a year to operate the Borough Park Building. Matthew Kiner states that the Borough loses approximately \$9,000.00 a year keeping the building open. Discussion ensued about the possibility of closing the building and using the upper floor of the Fire Company for functions. If the Borough continues to rent the Park Building the water will need to have the ultra violet light installed and other upgrades
- Edward Farr inquired if there is a possibility we could refinance the Fire Company loan for a better rate. Mary Ellen will check this. There are two payments left on the loan.

Daniel SOLTIS made a motion which was seconded by David RAUGH giving permission to the Borough Manager to advertise the proposed budget for adoption during December Council Meeting. Motion carried, 5-2. With Mary Pelton and Sandra Griffith voting no.

ADJOURNMENT

- Edward FARR made a motion which was seconded by Nora SOWERS to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried, 7-0.