

**Langhorne Council Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2021**

A meeting of the Langhorne Borough Council was held on December 8, 2021 at 7:30 p.m., both in Council Chambers and virtually via Zoom. President Thomas called the meeting to order and invited everyone in attendance to Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

Present were: President Kari Thomas, Vice President Scott Haldeman, Councilwomen Kathleen Horwatt and Kristen Farry, Councilmen Paul Murdock, Richard Mason, and Anthony Marfia, Mayor Joseph Taylor, Police Chief John Godzieba, Borough Manager/Secretary Christine Schoell, Solicitor Catherine Anne Porter. Absent was: Treasurer Ellyn Schoen.

Announcements and Presentations: Before starting her last meeting as Council President, President Thomas thanked Borough Council and all the Borough residents for their support over the past eight years. She expressed her honor in serving on Borough Council, a position once held by her father, for a town that she grew up in and had lived in all her life. She had learned a lot in the years she had served, and even though mistakes may have been made along the way, she always did what she felt was best for the Borough. She wished all Council members, both returning and new, all the best in the upcoming year.

President Thomas stated that the Woods Services would not be presenting their plans to the Middletown Township Zoning Hearing Board tonight and had deferred their presentation to the end of January. Woods representatives have offered to come to the January 12th Council meeting to discuss the project and would come on another date if that were preferred. President Thomas reminded Council that a meeting held outside of the scheduled meetings would have to be limited to a maximum of three Council members to stay compliant with Sunshine laws. Vice President Haldeman was fine meeting on January 12th. Councilmen Paul Murdock and Rich Mason and Councilwoman Horwatt requested a meeting prior to January 12th.

Public Comment: Lisa Littlefield of 501 Corporate Drive expressed concerns about the proposed Toll Brothers development on S. Bellevue Ave., stating that the area was historic. She asked Council to require strict compliance and to require that any new buildings look historic and fit in with the area. She stated that many Borough residents are strongly opposed to the project. Solicitor Porter stated that no plans had been officially presented by Toll Brothers and that only a rough concept plan was presented. At the meeting of the professionals (Borough Solicitor and Engineer and Toll Brothers attorney and engineer), Solicitor Porter advised Toll Brothers that there were historic homes on the property and that the Shade tree ordinance would impact the scope of development. Toll Brothers indicated that they would draft new plans and seek another consultation. It was their intention to present a “by right” building plan that would require no variances or waivers.

Steve Weng of 145 E. Marshall Avenue and the LMFC Treasurer thanked Kari for her service on Council.

Mayor's Report: Mayor Taylor thanked the LBBA for another successful Dickens Night, the Personnel Committee for their recommendation to increase police wages and President Thomas for all she had done in the last eight years.

Chief's Report: Chief Godzieba thanked President Thomas for her years of service. He reported that there had been complaints of people driving the wrong way on Summit Avenue and that most of the violators were local residents. He is looking to replace the two faded signs at the ends of Summit Avenue. In response to the complaints of speeding on North and South Bellevue Avenue, speed details were put in place. Chief Godzieba received a written complaint from the Mayor concerning the parking of trailers and large pieces of construction equipment on E. Richardson Avenue. The person was cited and the equipment was moved. Officer Kevin Burns attended the "Shop with a Cop" program. Chief Godzieba confirmed that an officer would be present at the Langhorne United Methodist Church during their live nativity on December 22nd, 23rd and 24th and will put out flares to slow people down.

Manager's Report: Manager Schoell thanked President Thomas for her years of service, highlighting the many hours outside of regular Council meetings that the President put in meeting with staff and the residents of the Borough.

Manager Schoell sent a request to the Bucks County Redevelopment Authority to extend three open RDA Grants for Tasers, the Police Vehicle, and the Borough Hall Security System. The police vehicle was currently being outfitted and should soon be ready for Borough use. The security system should be installed by the end of March, 2022. Manager Schoell contacted engineering firms to provide proposals for 2022, with one received and several on their way, which will be distributed before the January meeting. The Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor sent a letter increasing their hourly rate from \$163 to \$175 per hour.

Manager Schoell contacted the County EMS, who had previously asked for specific donations based on their calculations and confirmed that the Borough would give funds specifically to local EMS groups. Vice President Haldeman commented that much of the information on the calculation sheet was incorrect. Councilwoman Horwatt asked to make a motion that the Borough not send money directly to the County EMS, but support the local Pennel EMS in an amount above the millage rate. Councilwoman Farry wanted it made clear that any funds would be sent to the local EMS and not to the County directly. Manager Schoell will notify the County EMS that the Borough will be sending money to the local EMS.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilman Murdock, Council voted unanimously to approve the proposed 2022 Budget.

Motion: On motion of Councilman Murdock seconded by Councilwoman Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to approve the 2022 Tax Resolution.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Farry seconded by Councilman Mason, Council voted unanimously to advertise the proposed 2022 Budget.

Vice President Haldeman asked President Thomas to explain to the residents the budget process. She explained that a committee met and discussed a budget, which was presented to Council and revised over several months, that much more work is done on the budget than it appeared and that the Borough budget is rather small compared to most because most of the work is done by volunteers on committees and on Council.

President Thomas proposed discussing hazard pay in Executive Session. President Thomas reported that police officers working special events were currently paid double time, but with the increase in the base wages, she suggested making it time and a half instead. Mayor Taylor said that double time could serve as incentive for more officers to work special events and that having two 'special rates' would create confusion for Treasurer Schoen. President Thomas suggested that the special events pay be kept as is, but how much the organizations would pay for it would be left undecided for now. Chief Godzieba recommended special duties at time and a half and special events at double time. Councilman Mason favored the Borough contributing a portion of the pay for the coming year. Vice President Haldeman suggested the organizations pay time and a half and the Borough make up the difference to double time. President Thomas suggested that the organizations pay the regular rate and the Borough pays the difference to double time. Chief Godzieba wanted Council to know that there were instances where an entity asking for police assistance paid a rate that covered costs for the vehicle, officer and fuel, etc. Councilman Mason suggested that the officers receive the double pay, but that annual event holders not be charged the double time rate. Councilman Haldeman suggested that event holders pay time and a half and the Borough pick up the other half. President Thomas suggested that the event holder pay regular hourly rate and the Borough pay the other half.

Motion: On motion of Vice President Haldeman seconded by Councilwoman Farry, Council voted unanimously to approve the 2022 Police Department Wage Resolution, with annual event holders paying the hourly rate for the officers and the Borough paying the other half of the double time hourly rate for special events.

Engineer's Report: None.

Approval of the Minutes:

Motion: On motion of Councilman Mason seconded by Vice President Haldeman, Council voted unanimously to approve the November 2021 Council Meeting Minutes as revised by the Solicitor.

Approval of the Treasurer's Report:

Motion: On motion of Councilman Murdock seconded by Councilwoman Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to approve the Treasurer's Report.

Payment of the Bills:

Motion: On motion of Councilman Mason seconded by Councilwoman Farry, Council voted unanimously to approve the payment of the bills.

EAC: Councilman Mason reported that the EAC did not meet, but the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has required the Borough conduct certain stormwater mitigation processes, including a retrofit of a stormwater basin behind Langhorne United Methodist Church. He met with representatives of Middletown Township EAC because some of the drain is owned by Middletown. He needed to know the exact percentage of ownership to determine the costs and aid negotiations. If Middletown owns less than 20% of the basin, it may not be worth trying to get Middletown to pay a portion as its costs probably outweigh our costs. Regardless, the Borough will need to move forward with the retrofit of the basin. Councilman Mason and Manager Schoell will be meeting with a builder to discuss the EV charging stations. The estimates will be higher than expected. Middletown is considering installing an EV station at the Library, which could be used by Borough residents. There may be money for EV charging stations in a Congressional bill that would reimburse the Borough more than the Commonwealth.

HARB: HARB recommended the approval of the following applications:

1. James Regan 152 W. Maple Ave. Paint the exterior of the house with Sherwin-Williams Victorian colors: Body of the house - Westchester Gray; Trim – Classical White; Doors – Rockwood Shutter Green. As per color chart provided.

2. Anthony Marfia 224 S. Bellevue Ave. Install 12’x12’ patio in the rear of the house using gray concrete pavers.

3. Ernest Padovani 124 E. Maple Ave. Replace slate roof with architectural asphalt shingles, solid gray or black shingles.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilman Mason, Council voted unanimously to approve HARB Applications 1 and 3.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilman Mason, Council voted 5-0-1 to approve HARB Application 2, with an abstention from Councilman Marfia.

Farm/LOSI: Pat Carr reported that a window restoration in chicken coop was approved at the Heritage Farm. He also reported that the Christmas Tree Sale was a resounding success this year.

Planning Commission: Brian Smiley thanked President Thomas for her dedication and wisdom over the years. Brian Smiley stated that the Planning Commission met in November and discussed possible alternatives for the proposed US Route 1 Interchange project. He sent a request for information from Brian Keaveney and he was awaiting a response.

Brian Smiley asked for approval to send out an e-mail regarding updates on the US Route 1 interchange from the October Planning Commission meeting. While Mr. Smiley understood that the Borough would like future correspondence to go through Council, he would like to follow up with the residents that attended that meeting. Councilwoman Horwatt agreed that it was important to send a follow up to those who attended the meeting and provided their email information so they could be kept in the loop. Councilman Murdock did not agree with the wording in the proposed notice as it included sensitive information. President Thomas was also concerned about the extent of the disclosures. Councilman Murdock felt that PennDOT was not willing to discuss the matter further nor to help the Borough with any of its recommendations due to the cost. Councilwoman Farry agreed, but also felt that communications with PennDOT were not handled well. She asked that the bullet points be removed and asked if other municipalities had been contacted in advance of the meeting. President Thomas did not recall being asked to check with other municipalities. that information. While Councilwoman Farry appreciated all of Brian Smiley's efforts, she felt that some of his comments at the meeting were adversarial and that she received feedback from other municipalities that felt the Borough took over the meeting and was adversarial at times. She thought a general response should be given to the public that the Borough would continue to negotiate and advocate on behalf of its residents. Councilman Mason stated that any project can be beneficial to one Borough and not another and that it was understandable that Langhorne Manor Borough would be for the project as it took traffic from their roadways and funnels it into the Borough's.

Council went over the notice and asked that certain bullet points and sentences be removed. After lengthy discussion, Council decided that the edited notice be sent to PennDOT and JMT for their final approval. Since PennDOT had previously stated in writing that there would be no changes to the project, Brian Smiley felt the November PennDOT meeting was not set up to negotiate any items with the Borough. Brian Smiley asked Manager Schoell to send an e-mail following up on questions raised at the November PennDOT meeting. Councilwoman Horwatt asked Council to stand up and fight for the Borough. Councilwoman Farry wanted it noted that she supported the Borough and its residents on opposing the interchange project, but felt that Council should change its strategy on how to accomplish its goals. Councilman Murdock asked Council if it was willing to go to court to try to accomplish its goals. Councilman Mason felt there was a middle ground and that the Council should continue to let PennDOT know in a professional manner that the project was not good for the community. Councilman Murdock advised that PennDOT believes this project predates the PennDOT Connects program because it was started many years ago and handled in sections. Councilwoman Farry asked Mr. Smiley if he felt the PennDOT Connects Program would be something the Borough could follow up on or use to help make changes with the project. He advised addressing it now. President Thomas recommended an informal follow up request to PennDOT for the PennDOT Connects program information and its applicability to this project.

Recreation Board: None.

Shade Tree Commission: None.

Public Comment: Betsy Carr of 240 N. Green St. thought it was very important for the Borough to follow up on the interchange project because it will affect property values and cause safety issues for all residents. She emphasized that the Borough should be resolute in stating that we care about our residents and our community and how they will be impacted by these projects.

Solicitor's Report: None.

President Thomas reminded Council that the Reorganization Meeting would be held on January 3, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. and the next Council meeting on January 12, 2022.

President Thomas requested an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

Executive Session Start: 9:08 p.m.

Executive Session End: 9:40 p.m.

Adjournment: With no other business, on motion of Councilman Murdock seconded by Councilwoman Farry, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the December 2021 Council Meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christine Schoell
Borough Secretary