

**STOCKERTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 24, 2014**

THE BOROUGH OF STOCKERTOWN HELD A BUDGET MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2014, AT 7:30 PM AT BOROUGH HALL.

Attendance

- Council Members present were: Council President Amy Richard, Vice President, Kathleen Zdonowski, Rosemarie Wenzelberger and Carl Zito, Robin Davis and Cindy Hower. Joe Gosnell was unable to attend and sent his regrets.
- Mayor Charlie Davis and Secretary/Treasurer, Anita Caughy, were in attendance.

The Meeting was called to order by Council President, Amy Richard, at 7:30 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

- No Comment

Agenda

- Amy Richard handed out the marked-up Budget report from last budget meeting and explained all the changes which were made to Council.
- Amy Richard stated that the Sewer Fund Budget now balances due to changes in the percentages to payback the General Fund from the Sewer Fund for wage reimbursements. Legislative and Executive reimbursement went from 25% to 20%; Public Works reimbursement went from 40% to 20% due to the fact that not as much time needs to be spent at the sewer plant because it is now running smoothly.
- Amy Richard advised that PennDot conducted a traffic study at the Rt. 33 ramp and Rt. 191. The change in sequences of the lights by Signal Service will cost a substantial amount. We have suggested waiting until the interchange is complete to see if that makes a difference with the traffic backup.
- Carl Zito questioned why the amount budgeted for grass mowing was higher than what was spent in 2014. Amy Richard stated it was to cover any additional mowing if the season is extended for 2015.
- The proposed budget includes a 2 mill increase in taxes. This increase is necessary to cover the expenses of the Borough because of the lowered assessment of one of the larger companies as well as other properties in the Borough.
- Amy Richard reiterated that she requested Council to consider a minimal increase of .25 or .50 mills for the last several years to cover any unforeseen expenditures in the Borough. A small increase would have been easier for the residents to absorb over the years. Council had repeatedly voted it down. The Budget has been cut to a minimum, and no more cuts can be made. Now the Borough is forced to increase the taxes.

- Amy Richard stated that she would like to see the employees receive a raise. She stated that the Borough is a business and that raises are part of a business expense like fuel and electricity. The Public Works' crew is out plowing snow in the middle of the night for the residents, the police department is out protecting the Borough and the administrative work is getting done. Some hours have been reduced and the Police Chief stated that he would be willing not to receive a raise in order for his officers to receive one.
- Robin Davis stated that she feels everyone deserves a raise and that if we could budget it we should do it.
- The investment fund and CD information was put up on the screen and each item explained.
- The Sewer Fund Investment is \$503,974.90. Approximately \$30,000 will be needed for a feasibility study for the DEP. Approximately \$129,000 will be needed to pay Notice of Violation penalties from the DEP. Over \$100,000 will be needed to complete the appeal from the DEP's regulations and penalties. Several upgrades at the plant need to be done. Realistically the sewer fund will have about \$200,000 left.
- The General Fund has \$384,798.91. Approximately \$80,000 will be needed to pay back taxes from the tax appeals for 2013 and 2014.
- Kathleen Zdonowski stated that 2015's budget is not much different than the 2014 budget. The tax increase will only replace what is being lost from the lower tax assessments of the properties. Her opinion is that we should not punish the employees that work here. They have done their jobs and continue to do their jobs. This budget would be a near "0" increase to the taxpayers if it wasn't for the tax appeals.
- Amy Richard did have a meeting with Hercules' representatives and is trying to work out some arrangement concerning the reduction and pay back amounts. They will get back to her with their decision.
- Carl Zito asked if someone gave a donation to the Borough towards the fruit baskets, what the Borough would do. Amy Richard stated that we would then purchase and give out the fruit baskets and state that they are from an anonymous donor.
- Amy Richard asked whether everyone was comfortable with the changes that have been made to the budget. Everyone was agreeable with them.
- Amy Richard stated that the White Dump truck needs new tires for the winter. She had several estimates for new tires. The plan is to put the new tires on for the winter and then switch them back to the old tires in the summer to use up their tread.
- Robin Davis stated that if we give raises, she feels we should factor something in for Chief John Soloe because he has not received a raise for years

- Eric Wenzelberger asked what the percentage of a 50 cent raise was. Amy Richard stated that it was slightly under a 3% increase. Eric Wenzelberger felt that was a fair increase based on the cost of living.
- Robin Davis asked Mr. Kocher of Old Easton Road, as a resident, what his opinion was for giving the Borough employees a raise. He stated that he is on a fixed income but he does get a raise. Everyone who is working for a living is looking for a raise. He feels the employees should receive a raise if they are doing a good job. Everyone needs a cost of living increase.
- Discussion of the raises continued. Amy Richard stated that the previous public works employees were being paid more than what the current employees are being paid now. Giving the employees raises is not the reason for the increase in taxes. The only reason taxes are being raised is because of tax assessments in the Borough and the loss of tax revenue.
- Amy Richard is pleased that they have not raised taxes in 7 years despite her belief that they should have been raised minimally before this, but it has been posted in every newsletter that eventually taxes will need to be raised.
- Kathleen Zdonowski stated that residents will be upset if they don't have their roads plowed and the police coverage is not there. She stated that you can't please everyone in town. No matter what is decided, there will always be someone who is not happy with the decision. Other Boroughs in the area have hit their residents with increases every year.
- Amy Richard stated the decision for the new budget and raises should be tabled until the next meeting. This will give Joe Gosnell the opportunity to also review the information. Hopefully a decision can be made at the next meeting.
- Amy Richard asked for a Motion to order new tires for the white dump truck.
- Motion by Carl Zito, Seconded by Kathleen Zdonowski to order new tires for the white dump truck at a cost between \$1,000 and \$1,300. Motion carried unopposed.

Adjournment

- **Motion** by Robin Davis seconded by Carl Zito to adjourn the meeting at 9:11 PM. Motion carried unopposed.

The next regular meeting of Borough Council will be held on Monday, December 1, 2014 at 7:30 PM.

The foregoing was approved the 1st day of December, 2014.

President of Council

Attest: _____