

Borough of Crafton
Council Meeting
Monday, April 8, 2019

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Levasseur called to order the Discussion Meeting of the Crafton Borough Council, Monday, April 8, 2019 at 7:15 PM.

2. FLAG SALUTE

The flag salute was led by Mr. Levasseur.

3. ROLL CALL

Manager Susko recorded seven (7) members of Council present as follows: Mr. Amendola, Mr. Crouse, Ms. Perry, Ms. Glaser (via Skype), Ms. Damits, Mr. Rosario and Mr. Levasseur. Also present were Mayor Bloom, Solicitor Korbel and Public Works Director Kaczorowski.

4. APPROVAL OF THE BILL LIST

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (*Perry/Rosario*) to approve the Bill List dated April 8, 2019 as presented.

MOTION #1 carries by a Unanimous Vote (7-0).

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (*Amendola/Rosario*) to approve the Minutes dated March 25, 2019 as presented.

MOTION #2 carries by a Unanimous Vote (7-0).

6. CITIZEN'S PRESENT TO ADDRESS COUNCIL/Agenda Items Only:

Amanda Argauer, 534 Willard Avenue, inquired about the Borough Council reasoning and decision process behind the motion to hire an additional officer. Ms. Argauer also commented on the status of the cooperation agreement with the City of Pittsburgh in regards to the paving of Ingram Avenue.

Roy Niemann, 102 Haldane Street, spoke regarding the motion to hire a new police officer with respect to crime statistics and the Borough Council's decision process. Mr. Niemann inquired about possible tax increases as a result of hiring an additional police officer.

Dan Cindric, 45 Creighton Avenue, briefed Council members on the process and guidelines of the previous Council that were used to determine if/why the Borough needed an additional officer.

Anthony Saba, 568 Broadhead Avenue, asked Council to provide justification regarding the decision to hire an additional officer. Mr. Saba asked if Council has considered joining Police efforts with Ingram Borough.

Edward Alo, 568 Broadhead Avenue, urged Council to approve the motion to advertise the amendment to the Vehicle and Traffic Ordinance due to public safety issues.

Manager Susko updated Council and the Audience on the status of the cooperative agreement with the City of Pittsburgh. Manager Susko stated that a meeting was held with City of Pittsburgh, Councilwoman, Theresa Kail-Smith, Public Works Director Kaczorowski and herself last week and noted she strongly believed a cooperative agreement will be achieved. Manager Susko stated that if the City of Pittsburgh does not agree Crafton will pave its portion of Ingram Avenue this year.

7. PRESENTATION - 2018 Borough Audit review by Maher Duessel

Brian McCall and Samantha Strejcek presented to Council the findings of the 2018 Financial Audit. Mr. McCall noted that the Financial Statements, Management Letter and the Communication with Those Charged with Government had been submitted for Council review prior to the meeting. Mr. McCall noted that the administrative office continues to implement certain processes to improve management controls within the office adding that the 2018 Audit was completed with no issues. Lastly, Mr. McCall stated that Crafton Borough is in a good financial position at this time.

Manager Susko noted that the Borough does not necessarily have a surplus at the end of the year as most of the remaining funds are reserved for unpaid current expenses such as the final payment for the Road Program.

8. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Levasseur noted that the negotiation process continues regarding the Public Works union contract.

9. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Bloom asked to speak later in the meeting.

10. SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Korbel noted that the Shade Tree Ordinance and the Vehicle and Traffic Ordinance are on the agenda for approval to advertise. Solicitor Korbel stated that the Shade Tree Ordinance will not include a Shade Tree Reserve Fund. Solicitor Korbel added that Gateway has yet to submit the report on the angled parking on E. Crafton Avenue. Lastly, Solicitor Korbel noted that he hopes to advertise the Shade Tree, the Vehicle and Traffic, and the Recreation Board Ordinances at the same time for a lower cost.

11. MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Susko spoke regarding the Shade Tree Ordinance noting that the proposed changes have been reviewed by the Shade Tree Commission and the Code Enforcement Officer, and added that there are still a few areas that will need to be finalized as far as permitting and fee structure.

Manager Susko reminded Council that the Vehicle and Traffic Ordinance includes the following proposed changes; Harris/Clearview stop signs, parking near the Broadhead Avenue on W. Crafton Avenue/Crennell Avenue, E. Crafton Avenue angle parking and one-way traffic, and Johnston Street parking on one side.

Manager Susko summarized the remaining items on the agenda including the 2019 Road Paving Program bid notice, the police hire motion, board appointments, seasonal employment hiring, and the Verizon Cable Franchise renewal public hearing.

Steve Korbel noted that this is an opportunity for residents to communicate their satisfaction with the services provided by Verizon.

Ms. Damits inquired about the status of Hawthorne Avenue/Parke Street. Public Works Director Kaczorowski noted that he has been in contact with the utility company regarding restoration of Hawthorne Avenue adding that it was originally on the 2018 Road Paving Program and the cost will be split between Peoples Gas and the Borough of Crafton. Public Works Director Kaczorowski noted that he recommends paving the section of Parke Street in question since the roadways leading to this section of Parke Street are already paved.

Public Works Director Kaczorowski noted that Highland Avenue is on the 2019 Road Paving Program. Ms. Susko noted that the Road Program was decreased for 2019 in order for the Borough to meet the Green Light-Go Grow Grant fund matching requirements.

Public Works Director Kaczorowski stated that the safety issues on Ingram Avenue are due to a collapsed sewer on the City of Pittsburgh side in which the City plan to repair next week. Public Works Director Kaczorowski added that Crafton has successfully worked with the City of Pittsburgh on numerous occasions where Crafton streets are shared with the City of Pittsburgh. Public Works Director Kaczorowski added that it is better for Crafton financially to piggy back off the City of Pittsburgh as they do approximately twelve million dollars in paving every year.

Public Works Director Kaczorowski commended Manager Susko on her media response regarding the Ingram Avenue paving issue and reiterated that Crafton will pave Ingram Avenue with or without the cooperation of the City of Pittsburgh.

Manager Susko asked that all spring newsletter requests are submitted to the Administrative Office by the end of the week.

Manager Susko announced that the past week a few Council Members and herself attended the A.L.O.M Conference.

12. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Ms. Perry noted that she had received compliments on the newsletter. Ms. Perry added that the Administrative Staff continues to work with the turnKey Taxes software and Jordan Tax Service, Inc., has confirmed that they are receiving live data as it is entered.

B. PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Ms. Damits announced that the Senior Dinner will be held on April 27, 2019.

C. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Mr. Amendola asked Council to confirm receipt of the information packet prepared by the Chief of Police. Mr. Amendola then read a prepared statement highlighting violent crime statistics, property crime statistics, comparison of required number of police officers based on size of the community, culture change, and gun violence within schools. Mr. Amendola stated that if a new officer is not hired the Borough will have to bare the expense of advertising, exams, and physical agility testing again. Mr. Amendola urged Council Members to take action for the safety of the community and its children.

Mr. Amendola stated that, according to the PA Crimes website, Crafton scores very high in regards to affordability, amenities and housing; however, Crafton only scored a D+ for crime.

D. PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr. Levasseur noted that the Engineers had met with Public Works Director Kaczorowski and Manager Susko to discuss the preliminary list of capital improvements at a cost of approximately twenty million dollars. Mr. Levasseur added that the Borough will continue to work with the utility companies for opportunities to work together towards these infrastructure enhancements.

13. BUSINESS AGENDA**A. ADMINISTRATION**

i. MOTION: It was moved and seconded (*Rosario/Perry*) to advertise an ordinance amending Chapter 29 of the Crafton Borough Code of Ordinances, Park and Shade Tree Commission.

MOTION #3 carries by a Unanimous Vote (7-0).

ii. MOTION: It was moved and seconded (*Rosario/Amendola*) to advertise an ordinance amending Chapter 214 of the Crafton Borough Code of Ordinances, Vehicles and Traffic.

MOTION #4 carries by a Unanimous Vote (7-0).

B. POLICE

i. MOTION: It was moved and seconded (*Amendola/Perry*) to hire James Pasqualino as a police officer, per the Civil Service Rules and Regulations, conditional upon completing a successful mental health evaluation.

Ms. Perry stated that Council discussed hiring a new police officer during the 2019 Budget Workshop meetings and the costs are included in the 2019 Budget. Ms. Perry noted that, nationally, Crafton falls below average when comparing population to the number of police officers. She then outlined statistics comparing Crafton Borough to national violent and property crime rates. Ms. Perry added that the monthly police reports, submitted to Council each month, are available in the Borough Office upon request. Ms. Perry read an analysis she prepared based on the Police Reports from 2018 in regards to types of calls and the number of calls that require outside agencies to be called in to Crafton to assist. Ms. Perry added that with sick time, vacation time, personal days, and court time, Crafton has the lowest number of officers, per thousand residents, in comparison to similar sized departments.

Mr. Amendola reminded everyone that when a Police Officer is on duty alone and they make an arrest it can tie the officer up for hours.

Mr. Crouse noted that he had a prepared statement. Mr. Crouse stated that if a school massacre occurred it would not be solely handled by the Crafton Police Department but all surrounding police departments, county police, state police and the FBI. Mr. Crouse expressed his gratitude and support for the Police Department, its Officers and the Chief of Police. Mr. Crouse stated that the Police Department should not be used for political gain and asked Council to wait until after the new contract negotiations to consider hiring another officer. Mr. Crouse spoke directly to Mr. Amendola, Ms. Perry and Mayor Bloom and asked what circumstance changed over the past several years to warrant the need of a tenth officer. Mr. Crouse stated that there are other Borough matters that require attention such as public works, park improvements or storm water remediation. Mr. Crouse noted that hiring a new officer will be a long-term monetary investment. Mr. Crouse stated his displeasure with the budgeting process for the additional officer.

Ms. Perry stated that Mr. Levasseur asked Manager Susko to put the new officer in the budget.

Mr. Levasseur noted that he spoke with Chief Sumpter last year adding that Chief Sumpter suggested that Council should wait to hire an additional officer until after negotiations.

Mr. Amendola stated that Mr. Crouse requested the consideration of a new officer for the 2019 budget adding that all members of Council were in agreeance to add an additional officer.

Mr. Crouse responded by stating that a budget is a guideline that can change.

Ms. Glaser expressed her concern regarding the behavior of certain Council members. She also stated that the Chief of Police and Ms. Perry provided strong statistics in regards to hiring a new officer.

Mayor Bloom stated that the request for an additional officer came from him. Mayor Bloom also stated that information being requested should not be available to the public due to officer safety and added that the changes in culture have made a police officer's job increasingly dangerous. Mayor Bloom spoke regarding the number of crimes and calls that come from the City of Pittsburgh that are not included in the statistics. Mayor Bloom expressed his concern for the safety of the Police Officers when they are on duty alone.

Ms. Perry called for the vote.

Mr. Levasseur asked for a three-minute recess.

ROLL CALL VOTE: *Mr. Amendola (YES), Mr. Crouse (NO) Ms. Perry (YES), Ms. Glaser (YES) Ms. Damits (NO), Mr. Rosario (NO), Mr. Levasseur (NO).*

MOTION #5 fails to pass by a Roll Call Vote (3-4).

C. PUBLIC WORKS

i. MOTION: It was moved and seconded (*Rosario/Damits*) to advertise the 2019 Road Program as presented by the Borough Engineer. Bids will be accepted at the Borough Administrative Office through May 7, 2019 at 10:00 AM, prevailing time.

MOTION #6 carries by a Unanimous Vote (7-0).

D. PLANNING & ZONING

i. MOTION: It was moved and seconded (*Rosario/Damits*) to appoint Kirsten Compitello to the Planning Commission for a term beginning April 14, 2019 and ending April 13, 2023.

MOTION #7 carries by a Unanimous Vote (7-0).

14. DISCUSSION

Manager Susko noted that she had a few requests from the previous pool manager in regards to pool rentals and wage increases. Manager Susko added that she recommends that Council consider increasing the wages for seasonal employees including the seasonal public works employees and restructure the way Council approves the wage resolution.

Public Works Director Kaczorowski noted that the only raises approved last year were for the swim team coaches.

Manager Susko noted that the office has received a few applications for pool manager and asked if Council wished the office to prepare hire listing for the non-management employees. Ms. Damits noted that she will work with the manager on scheduling interviews for pool manager and the hiring list for the next meeting.

Mr. Levasseur agreed with Manager Susko and Public Works Director Kaczorowski regarding a wage increase as an incentive for returning employees.

15. COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Jordan Tax Collection – tax collectors will be in the Community Center
 - April 25, 2019 – 1 PM to 4 PM
 - April 30, 2019 – 9 AM to 12 PM
 - (face value taxes should be paid by June 30, 2019)
- Clean-Up Day – Spring Cleanout/Community Cleanup
 - April 27, 2019 – more info to come.

Mr. Amendola inquired about the financial reports that were handed out to Council.

Manager Susko stated that the financial information was prepared for this evenings meeting.

Mr. Levasseur added that these reports are prepared by most municipal managers.

Council continued discussing the reports in regards to the information pertaining directly to the police officer debate.

16. ADDITIONAL CITIZENS COMMENTS

Anthony Saba, 568 Broadhead Avenue, commented on the transparency of Council regarding public discussion. Mr. Saba also asked Council to review the park ordinance in direct relation to the exclusion of animals.

Roy Niemann, 102 Haldane Street, thanked Council for the statistics presented regarding the police hire motion.

17. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Carissima Kerns, Borough Secretary