

Meeting November 1, 2021

The meeting of Mount Pleasant Borough Council was called to order by President Ruszkowski 7:00pm in Council Chambers at 1 Etze Avenue, Mount Pleasant, PA 15666. The Pledge of Allegiance was said and President Ruszkowski asked for a moment of silence for our deployed troops. President Ruszkowski asked Solicitor Istik to take roll call. Councilpersons present included Barnes, Bailey, Cholock, Phillabaum, Smetak, Lasko, and Stevenson. Solicitor Istik was present. President Ruszkowski stated that a quorum is present. Borough Manager Landy was absent. Mayor Lucia arrived at 7:16pm.

A Motion was made by Councilman Cholock to approve the minutes of October 18, 2021 since Council has been provided with a copy. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Stevenson. Motion carried 8-0.

Public Comment: None.

Speakers: None.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Lucia gave the following report:

- Did not receive a report from the Police Chief since he was off of work. He will have it for the next meeting.
- There has been some activity, young adults causing some havoc in the Borough, that the police have handled yesterday.
- Thanked Council for the wonderful surprise this evening with the Gerald D. Lucia Campus dedication. Mayor Lucia stated he thought he knew everything that is going on in town; however, he did not know that was happening. He truly appreciates it.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Tax Collector's Report:

Borough Manager Landy read the following report for the month of October 2021:

Property Taxes	\$2,867.89
Supplemental Taxes	\$ 0.00
Per Capita Taxes	<u>\$ 350.00</u>
Total Collected	\$3,217.89

Borough Manager's Report:

Council President Ruszkowski gave the following report:

- Met with the Street Department and electricians at the waterway.
- Met with Jacobs Creek Watershed Association regarding getting 6 new trees planted at Frick Park and 4 new trees planted at the waterway at no cost to the Borough.
- Attended a Library Meeting, Medic 10 Meeting, and Safety Meeting
- Met with property committee about the gazebo and the waterway building.
- Applied for County Demolition for Waterway Building.
- Finished budgets and met with Councilwoman Bailey.
- Conference call with Spectrio and Veteran's Park Committee about the digital wall.

- Met with Excelsa C.E.O. with Mayor Lucia.

President's Report: None

Property Report:

A Motion was made by Councilman Smetak to order a title search from Lawyers Abstract in Greensburg and an environmental asbestos testing by Joe Grad for the property given by Dale Walker, tax map no. 21-02-03-0-274, located at the east end of town not to exceed a cost of \$1,000.00. Motion seconded by Councilman Cholock. Motion carried 8-0

A Motion was made by Councilman Smetak to submit a demolition application to the Westmoreland County Demolition Program for the structure located at the property given by Dale Walker, tax map no. 21-02-03-0-274, located at the east end of town. Motion seconded by Councilman Cholock. Motion carried 8-0.

A Motion was made by Councilman Smetak to raise rent an additional \$5.00 per month to all tenants. Motion seconded by Councilman Cholock. Motion carried 8-0.

Councilman Smetak gave the following report:

- Met at the building donated by Dale Walker (formerly Morris Barron car lot) near the waterway project. After looking at the building at the waterway project, they have determined that it would be best to demolish the building.
- Met at the gazebo with Harrer Construction. The cost for what needs to be done come in at approximately \$70,000.00 to \$90,000.00. Waiting on a formal proposal from Harrer Construction.

Councilwoman Stevenson asked at what level of certainty do we have from the County that they will be demolishing the building at no cost to the Borough and how long will the wait be. Councilwoman Bailey stated that with the County, it will take time for grant approval. Councilman Cholock stated that it will most likely be next year.

Stormwater/ MS4 Report: None.

Streets Report:

- Thanked the Street Department for the great work of the installation of the new signs at the corner of Etze Avenue and the new Campus sign and Paul for the electrical work for the lighting on the new sign and flagpole.
- Leaf collection has begun.
- Christmas decorations will be done before Thanksgiving.
- Fountain has been cleaned and closed for the winter.

Councilman Cholock asked when it was approved to purchase the Christmas banners for \$6,700.00. Councilwoman Bailey stated that the cost of \$6,700.00 was not only for the banners, it included the pole lights, ribbons, banners, and hardware. They needed to move on it to get them in time and Council gave verbal approval to order them.

Parks & Recreation: None.

Public Safety Report:

A Motion was made by Councilman Cholock to approve installation of handrail according to design presented by contractor at 309 Washington Street pending to be approved only if homeowner obtains a handicap parking permit through the Borough and passes inspection. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Barnes.

Councilwoman Stevenson called for a roll call vote to approve installation of handrail according to design presented by contractor at 309 Washington Street pending to be approved only if homeowner obtains a handicap parking permit through the Borough and passes inspection:

Councilwoman Barnes	Yes
Councilman Bailey	No
Councilman Cholock	Yes
Councilman Phillabaum	Yes
Councilman Smetak	Yes
Councilwoman Lasko	Yes
Councilwoman Stevenson	No
Council President Ruszkowski	Yes

The Motion to approve installation of handrail according to design presented by contractor at 309 Washington Street pending to be approved only if homeowner obtains a handicap parking permit through the Borough and passes inspection was passed with a vote of 6 Yes 2 Nay.

Councilwoman Stevenson asked Solicitor Istik if someone gets hurt on the railing will the homeowner or the Borough be liable. Solicitor Istik stated that the Borough would be responsible. Councilwoman Stevenson stated she wants to be on record as opposing this and that she understands that she is elderly; however, she believes it sets a bad precedent and puts the Borough at risk. Council President Ruszkowski asked Solicitor Istik if the railing should be inspected once it is installed. Solicitor Istik stated that it should be. Councilwoman Lasko asked if someone would fall in that same location without the handrail being there who would be liable. Solicitor Istik stated that the Borough would still be liable. Councilwoman Bailey asked about sidewalks and Solicitor Istik stated that technically, sidewalks you would sue the homeowner and it should fall under the homeowner's insurance policy or renters' insurance policy. Councilwoman Bailey asked if from the sidewalk to the street curb it is the Borough. Solicitor Istik stated that is correct.

Councilman Cholock read the following Fire Report for the month of October 2021:

Total Calls - 26
10-45's - 7
Entrapments - 1
Fires - 8
AFA's - 4
Public Service Calls – 4
Standby's – 0
Hazardous Calls – 2
Drills – 1
Turnpike Calls – 2
Total Members Answering – 353
Avg. Member Per Call – 13

Councilman Cholock gave the following report:

- Joe Bauer, President of the VFD, would like to meet with Councilman Cholock regarding possibly installing a new floor in the social room at Central Station. Mayor Lucia stated that the room is used for various meetings that are not only for the Fire Department. There are many organizations that use it since they cannot use Council Chambers for any meetings other than Council meetings.

Veterans Park Report:

Councilwoman Barnes gave the following report:

- The new military branch signs are now up on the backside of Veteran's wall and look very nice.
- Names have been engraved on the wall. There are approximately 20 spaces left.

- Spoke with Spectrio, formerly Industry Weapons, and also with Marie Dawson. Ms. Dawson sent Spectrio all of the information that they requested regarding the digital wall. Spectrio lost the former information during the transition from Industry Weapons to Spectrio. They will also be working on the biographies. They will not come up on the screen of the digital wall.
- Veterans Day Parade will be on November 11, 2021 at 10:30am

Human Resources/Ordinances Report:

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Stevenson to approve Updated Covid-19 Policy effective January 2022. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bailey.

Councilman Cholock asked how many days are paid for employee’s time off due to covid in the updated Covid-19 policy. Solicitor Istik stated that the employee is to be off ten (10) days and may return after five (5) days if the employee can provide a negative covid-19 test to the Borough Manager. Solicitor Istik stated if an employee can work from home, they will be paid during their time off. Solicitor Istik went on to say that the time paid off will depend on the CDC recommendations for the time that one is to be quarantined, as an example, if CDC recommended guidelines of quarantine of 7-10 days, the employee would be paid for 7 days and if CDC changes it back to 14 days, employee would be paid for 14 days and that the policy will adjust to the CDC guidelines. Solicitor Istik stated that the Borough will pay for the employee to be off ten (10) days, upon the expiration of that period, if the employee still needs to be off of work, they will have the option of utilizing their sick time, personal time and/or vacation time and the reason for that is if you are a police officer, after that ten (10) day stretch, you can file for heart and lung benefits through the state to compensate you for Covid-19 leave or file for short-term disability if you are a regular employee and not entitled to heart and lung benefits. This way the employee has some sort of recourse after the ten (10) day period and the employee is not missing any type of paid wages if they have to be at home.

Councilwoman Lasko stated that the Updated Covid-19 Policy that she is looking at states that an employee would be paid for seven (7) days. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that she believes they had agreed on seven (7) days. Councilwoman Bailey stated that an employee must be off at least seven (7) days before they can apply for short-term disability. Solicitor Istik apologized stating that it is seven (7) days of paid leave for Covid-19 according to the new policy.

Councilman Cholock asked the only employees that could work from home would be the Borough Manager and Secretary. Councilwoman Stevenson said that is provided that they were even well enough to work from home. Councilman Cholock asked how you would know if they are well enough. Council President Ruszkowski stated that would be up to the employee. Councilwoman Bailey stated that if they have to be off for covid they could make that they do no work from home and still get paid the seven (7) days. Councilwoman Stevenson asked Councilman Cholock if he was still opposed to this and he replied yes, he was opposed. Councilman Cholock stated he would definitely like a roll-call vote regarding the updated Covid-19 Policy to be effective January 2022.

Council President Ruszkowski stated that the section that states an employee can return after five (5) days with a negative Covid test and at the Borough Manager’s discretion should be changed to the doctor’s discretion and not the Borough Manager as to whether or not an employee can return to work prior to the ten (10) day period. Council agreed with that change.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Stevenson to approve the Updated Covid-19 Policy effective January 2022 with the provision that it will be at the doctor’s discretion to return to the work. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bailey.

Council President Ruszkowski called for a roll call vote to approve the Updated Covid-19 Policy effective January 2022 with the provision that it will be at the doctor’s discretion to return to the work:

Councilwoman Barnes	Yes
Councilman Bailey	Yes
Councilman Cholock	No
Councilman Phillabaum	Yes
Councilman Smetak	Yes

Councilwoman Lasko	Yes
Councilwoman Stevenson	Yes
Council President Ruskowski	Yes

The Motion to approve the Updated Covid-19 Policy effective January 2022 with the provision that it will be at the doctor’s discretion to return to the work was passed with a vote of 7 Yes 1 Nay.

Councilwoman Stevenson stated that there was a motion to advertise the amended Sign Ordinance; however, there is going to be further discussion before taking any action on it. Solicitor Istik stated that she updated the Ordinance to add in the required PennDOT regulations such as anything as to the sign size, illumination of the sign, and setback distance from streets. The only thing that was not put in the Ordinance was discussion regarding LED lights and she has not heard back from Councilman Wojnar regarding this. Councilwoman Stevenson understands that people were worried about outside advertising on digital signs; however, she believes that as long as a business with a digital sign can only advertise for their own business and not be permitted to advertise for another business then it should be permitted. The business owner with the digital sign should not be able to benefit off of the digital sign. Councilwoman Lasko stated that she does not like the idea of digital signs and that it would change the look of the town. Councilwoman Lasko said that everyone looks at Ligonier as the model and they have said that they would never permit digital signage. Councilwoman Lasko said that she is worried about what it will look like and that it is not about the content, it is about the aesthetics. Councilman Cholock stated that he does not believe that many businesses will be purchasing the electronic signs due to the cost of them. Councilwoman Bailey asked if Councilman Cholock believes that we should approve the sign Ordinance and hope that no one purchases one or should they not approve the new Sign Ordinance. Mayor Lucia stated that the fire department has considered putting a digital sign on the building advertising their fundraisers if the sign ordinance was approved for LED signs. Councilman Cholock believes they should approve the sign ordinance with LED signs. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that she would like to see the Borough’s “sign to nowhere” be able to be utilized by putting events and things that the Borough will be having. Council President Ruskowski asked if that sign would be used only for Borough business. Councilwoman Stevenson said that a can of worms could be open by advertising for other events within the Borough that aren’t held by the Borough. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that although she likes them, she would not want the signs all up and down Main Street. Councilwoman Bailey stated that she doesn’t mind seeing the electronic signs in other towns, but she does not believe that they should be in Mount Pleasant. Solicitor Istik stated that other ordinances do have a time of when the signs can be illuminated and must be shut off due to businesses near residents and she did not include that in this Ordinance since she is not certain as to what Council’s wishes are.

A Motion was made by Councilman Phillabaum to hold an executive session. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bailey. Motion carried 8-0.

A Motion was made by Councilman Cholock to reconvene. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bailey. Motion carried 8-0.

Council President Ruskowski stated that the Executive Session was held from 7:31pm – 8:02pm to discuss contracts.

Finance / Grants Report:

Councilwoman Bailey gave the following report:

- Everyone has received a copy of the budget for 2022 General Fund, 2022 Liquid Fuels; and, 2022 Medic 10 Budget. They are all balanced. Once everyone has reviewed them and believes they are good, they can be advertised.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Bailey to advertise the 2022 General Fund Budget, 2022 Liquid Fuels Budget and 2022 Medic 10 Budget. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Stevenson. Motion carried 8-0.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Bailey to advertise Ordinance Number 661 setting the millage rate at 17.5 mils for 2022. Motion seconded by Councilman Phillabaum. Motion carried 8-0.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Bailey to accept proposal from Heartland for payroll services effective the 1st pay in January 2022. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Lasko. Motion carried 8-0.

A Motion was made by Councilman Cholock to amend the agenda to approve the transfer of funds to Medic 10. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bailey. Motion carried 8-0.

A Motion was made by Councilman Cholock to approve the transfer of \$100,000.00 from the Medic 10 General Fund Budgetary Reserve Fund to Medic 10 Interfund Transfer, pending approval of the 2022 budget. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bailey.

Council President Ruszkowski called for a roll call vote to approve the transfer of \$100,000.00 from the Medic 10 General Fund Budgetary Reserve Fund to Medic 10 Interfund Transfer, pending approval of the 2022 budget:

Councilwoman Barnes	Yes
Councilman Bailey	Yes
Councilman Cholock	Yes
Councilman Phillabaum	Yes
Councilman Smetak	Yes
Councilwoman Lasko	Yes
Councilwoman Stevenson	Yes
Council President Ruszkowski	Yes

The Motion to approve the transfer of \$100,000.00 from the Medic 10 General Fund Budgetary Reserve Fund to Medic 10 Interfund Transfer, pending approval of the 2022 budget was passed with a vote of 8 Yes 0 Nay.

New Business: None.

Reading of Communications: None.

Discussion and Payment of Bills:

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Bailey to pay all authorized and approved bills. Motion seconded by Councilman Cholock. Motion carried 8-0.

Public Comment: None.

Miscellaneous and Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Bailey to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Councilman Cholock. Motion carried 8-0.

Meeting Adjourned 8:21PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Jeffrey A. Landy,
Borough Manager

BOROUGH OF MOUNT PLEASANT

Susan Ruszkowski, Council President

Motions from Meeting of November 1, 2021

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Councilwoman Stevenson called for a roll call vote to approve installation of handrail according to design presented by contractor at 309 Washington Street pending to be approved only if homeowner obtains a handicap parking permit through the Borough and passes inspection:

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Councilman Bailey	No
Councilman Cholock	Yes
Councilman Phillabaum	Yes
Councilman Smetak	Yes
Councilwoman Lasko	Yes
Councilwoman Stevenson	No
Council President Ruszkowski	Yes

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A Motion was made by Councilwoman Stevenson to approve the Updated Covid-19 Policy effective January 2022 with the provision that it will be at the doctor's discretion to return to the work. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bailey.

Council President Ruszkowski called for a roll call vote to approve the Updated Covid-19 Policy effective January 2022 with the provision that it will be at the doctor's discretion to return to the work:

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Councilman Bailey	Yes
Councilman Cholock	No
Councilman Phillabaum	Yes
Councilman Smetak	Yes
Councilwoman Lasko	Yes
Councilwoman Stevenson	Yes
Council President Ruszkowski	Yes

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A Motion was made by Councilman Cholock to approve the transfer of \$100,000.00 from the Medic 10 General Fund Budgetary Reserve Fund to Medic 10 Interfund Transfer, pending approval of the 2022 budget. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Bailey.

Council President Ruskowski called for a roll call vote to approve the transfer of \$100,000.00 from the Medic 10 General Fund Budgetary Reserve Fund to Medic 10 Interfund Transfer, pending approval of the 2022 budget:

Councilwoman Barnes	Yes
Councilman Bailey	Yes
Councilman Cholock	Yes
Councilman Phillabaum	Yes
Councilman Smetak	Yes
Councilwoman Lasko	Yes
Councilwoman Stevenson	Yes
Council President Ruskowski	Yes

The Motion to approve the transfer of \$100,000.00 from the Medic 10 General Fund Budgetary Reserve Fund to Medic 10 Interfund Transfer, pending approval of the 2022 budget was passed with a vote of 8 Yes 0 Nay.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Bailey to pay all authorized and approved bills. Motion seconded by Councilman Cholock. Motion carried 8-0.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Bailey to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Councilman Cholock. Motion carried 8-0.