

Meeting December 1, 2008

The meeting of Mount Pleasant Borough Council was called to order by President Tabita at 7:03pm in Council Chambers at 1 Etze Avenue, Mount Pleasant, PA 15666. The Pledge of Allegiance was said and there was a moment of silence for our deployed troops. President Tabita directed Borough Manager Jeff Landy to take roll. Councilmen, Bauer, Beranek, Crivella, Slater, Tate, Wiltrout and Councilwomen Stevenson and Ruszkowski were present. Mayor Lucia and Solicitor Toohey were present. President Tabita stated we have a quorum.

Reading of Previous Minutes:

A motion was made by Councilman Bauer to dispense with the reading of the minutes of November 17, 2008. Motion seconded by Councilman Beranek. Motion carried 9-0.

Speakers:

Dr. Lynn Springer, Loyalhanna Veterinary Clinic spoke to Council regarding feral cats in the Borough. Dr. Springer addressed the annoyance and public health issues. Dr. Springer said the feral cat issue is a very difficult issue and no matter what program the Borough uses the problem will always exist but it may become manageable. All of the research done around the country indicates that the Catch, Neuter and Release Programs work the best. Over time it will decrease the cat population. When the animals are released they must be released back where they were caught. Taking them out into the country and releasing them is inhumane because they will not be able to feed themselves. Council must decide if they want to vaccinate and de-worm the cats before they are turned back out in order to eliminate some of the health issues. The cats that are trapped and neutered are permanently marked so that they are not anesthetized multiple times. Residents in the Borough would have to be made aware of the program so people with pet cats can keep them inside. If the Borough does nothing the problem will simply escalate.

Mr. Basil Hawanchak, a representative of the Levin family, presented the Borough with a donation of property on Bridgeport Street. The Levin family has made various donations to the Borough throughout the years and President Tabita thanked the family for the contributions and for being an employer in the Borough. Mayor Lucia said that the Levin family donations have benefited the youth in Mount Pleasant.

Solicitor Toohey said the transfer of the property from the Levin family to the Borough should be finalized within the next week. President Tabita said that the County has agreed to help the Borough develop the property.

Public Comment: None

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Lucia read the following Police Report for the month of November 2008:

Report of the Mount Pleasant Police Dept for the month of November 2008

The Department answered Calls during the month as follows;

Complaints	91
Requests for assistance	7
Assist Other Departments	5
Accidents investigated	7
Calls Returned	15
Assist Medic 10	11

The Department made 54 arrests during the month as follows:

Vehicle Code	44
Crimes Code	10

Parking Tickets issued are as follows:

\$1.00 Meter Tickets	12		
\$10.00 No Parking Tickets	3		
Void / Excused	2		
\$1.00 Parking Tickets Paid	10	\$	10.00
\$5.00 Parking Tickets Paid	1	\$	5.00
\$10.00 Parking Tickets Paid	3	\$	30.00

Return from Magistrate Eckels	\$1,671.02
Return from Clerk of Courts	\$ 39.91
Return from Report Fees	\$ 53.00
Return from Parking Permits	\$ 25.00
Return from Soliciting Permits	\$ -
Return from Restitution	\$ -
Total	\$1,833.93
Meter Receipts 1 Collection	\$ -
Total Receipts for the month	\$1,833.93

Mayor Lucia said that he received a request for a streetlight on the 800 block of Washington Street. Normally there is a street light every other pole. On Washington Street they skipped three poles. Residents are requesting one more streetlight on the 800 block.

Mayor Lucia reminded residents to shovel the snow off of their sidewalks as required by Borough Ordinance.

Mayor Lucia also reminded residents about safety during the Christmas Season. Keep live trees watered and be extra careful with extension cords.

President Tabita said that Light Up Night in the Borough was a success again this year. He thanked Cindy Underwood and all of the volunteers who helped.

Solicitor’s Report:

Solicitor Toohey said that the Tax Ordinance on the agenda tonight has been advertised and is ready for adoption as well as the Sewage Rate Increase Ordinance. The necessary documentation for the LST Ordinance adopted at the last meeting has been filed with the DCED.

Solicitor Toohey said that the closing for the transfer of the Levin property on Bridgeport Street to the Borough will be sometime this week.

Tax Collector Report:

Tax Collector Carol Yancosky read the following report for the month of November 2008:

Property Taxes	\$1,241.85
Supplemental	\$ 6.27
Per Capita	\$ 815.00
Total	\$ 2,063.12

President's Report:

President Tabita said that progress is still being made on Phase II of the Main Street Street-Scape Project. Work will have to be stopped any day now because of the weather but they are almost half way done.

Frick Communities is the name chosen for the main street manager program between Mount Pleasant, Scottdale and West Overton. The Main Street Manager should be on board in 2009. The R1A re-zoning program will be moving forward next month with public meetings.

A motion was made by Councilman Crivella for an Executive Session. Motion seconded by Councilman Beranek. Motion carried 9-0.

Executive Session 7:36pm to 8:14pm.

President said that the Executive Session was to discuss real estate.

A motion was made by Councilman Wiltrout to suspend the rules for a special meeting on December 3, 2008. Motion seconded by Councilman Crivella. Motion carried 9-0.

A motion was made by Councilman Wiltrout to advertise for a special council meeting for general purposes at 6:00pm on December 3, 2008. Motion seconded by Councilman Crivella. Motion carried 9-0.

President Tabita wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Borough Manager's Report:

Borough Manager Landy reminded everyone of the Christmas Parade and other events on December 6, 2008. Also, this will be the last Profit and Loss Budget vs. Actual report that Council will see this year. Mr. Landy spoke to the department heads and asked them to be careful not to spend any money over budget for the remainder of the year.

Borough Manager Landy gave the following report to recap 2008 by month. Mr. Landy reminded everyone that it is his report and not necessarily Council's position or opinion.
January:

- Meetings began with discussion about unpaid real estate taxes, cat problems, a new landlord ordinance, rezoning and the Gormley and DiNicola buildings.

February:

- Dr. Jenkins, Frick Hospital was given a special citation for his achievements.
- President Tabita restated the Borough's Mission Statement "To make Mount Pleasant the most livable Main Street Community in Pennsylvania".
- President Tabita announced the Main Street Street-Scape Project is going forward with CDBG funding.
- Budgetary Reserves were set up in the Borough for the first time
- WWT purchased a skid loader.
- Councilwoman Rega returned to Council.
- Alley pavings were discussed and it was decided not to do a paving project in 2008.
- Proposed sewage rate increases were discussed and it was decided that we would explore all possibilities before raising rates for the elderly or the minimum charge.
- Mayor Lucia brought up the storm water issues on Oak Street and Spruce Streets.

March:

- Mayor Lucia announced two big drug busts in the Borough.
- Council met with the BDA to discuss either selling the In Town Shoppes or change how it is operated.
- A new Borough logo was designed.
- 5 recycling locations were chosen in the Borough.

- Borough owned property at 416/418 Smithfield St was sold.
- A moment of silence was observed for long time business owners Pete Cavezza Sr. and Panfield DiNicola Sr. who passed away.
- Councilwoman Stevenson reported significant progress on the Employee Handbook.

April:

- Allegheny Power started installing new bulbs in our streetlights which raised the electric bill for streetlights.
- The Ministerium approached Council about a National Day of Prayer and the use of the Gazebo.
- WWT reported smoke testing and letters being sent to residents regarding downspouts & sump pumps being removed from sewer drains.
- Meetings were held with Medic 10 and Mount Pleasant Township Supervisors regarding dual response.
- Long time resident Anna Jane Walker passed away and was recognized by Council.
- A resident on College Avenue asked the Borough to cite his neighbor for bamboo growth.
- Complaints were received regarding juveniles and offensive language in Frick Park.
- Trees were planted in Veterans Park, completing the earlier commitment by Council.

May:

- Park enforcement, park regulations, cat problems and cleaning up after dogs in the parks dominated the first meeting.
- Concerts In The Park and Movies In The Park were announced.
- The Borough received a 2008 Smart Growth Award for Veterans Park.
- A new business opened in the 10-year vacant Barlock/Sheffler building.
- Email was set up for the Street Department.
- Council appointed Atty Randy Klimchock as Planning Commission Solicitor.
- Additional studies of the Levin Property was authorized by Council.
- A DCED Street Department assessment was approved.
- A growing list of CSO Project complaints were discussed.
- Debate about how to handle the Gormley property dominated a meeting.

June:

- The Borough Auditor complimented the Borough's fiscal responsibility and how the borough books are kept.
- Westmoreland County approached Mount Pleasant about a Main Street Revitalization Project with Scottdale and West Overton.
- Council accepted a bid for a promotional video for marketing the Borough.
- The Mount Pleasant VFD started meetings about a junior firemen program.
- Recycling education was discussed.
- The Ministerium approached Council about the use of the Gazebo and asked them to revisit the new Parks Ordinance.
- Part-time police were hired to replace part-time police who took full-time employment elsewhere.
- Discussion began on a new hourly wage scale for part-time police.
- Pittsburgh Business Times did a story recognizing Mount Pleasant for its creative way of increasing revenue through gas wells.
- The Borough received a draft of the ordinance re-codification.
- The CSO Project, Phase II of the Main Street Street-Scape Project and the Main Street Manager Program continued to be topics of discussion.

July:

- Council decided not to appeal the WCOG decision on the bamboo property.
- Per Capita taxes were brought up by the Borough Tax Collector and Borough Manager. The school district suggested that they and the borough are not collecting the proper amount of taxes.
- The Levin family sends an agreement to donate property to the Borough and the County supports the idea.
- Fuel costs are stretching the budget and money needs to be transferred.

- Councilman Tate announces that residents can purchase low cost insurance for sewage line backups.
- Feral cats are again a topic of discussion.
- The annual July 3rd celebration was rescheduled due to rain and was remarked about in the local newspaper.
- Some residents challenged the loitering clause in the Parks Ordinance and there is ongoing criticism of the Gazebo and Veterans Park Ordinances.
- Police presence in the parks has been well received but loitering still needs to be looked at.
- Negotiations for the Frick Park gas well were an every day occurrence.

August:

- The Borough took possession of the Gormley building and can now sell or demolish it.
- The lien holder of the DiNicola property gave permission to demolish the building.
- After months of discussions Council agreed to uphold the ordinance concerning functions at Veterans Park.
- The Frick Park gas well agreement was finalized with Kriebel Resources.
- Councilwoman Rega resigned from Council and Susan Ruszkowski was appointed to fill the vacancy.
- A motion was made to allow Medic 10 to hire paid employees.

September:

- The annual 9/11 ceremony was held in two parts. The Ministerium held the first part at the Freedom of Speech Area and the Borough held the second part at the Gazebo.
- The Mount Pleasant Planning commission held a meeting and the rezoning plan moved forward.
- Council voted to contract the Westmoreland Municipal Authority to do the Borough sewage billing and collection.
- Ordinance Re-codification moved forward and should be completed early 2009.
- Paper alleys and right-of-ways became a topic for discussion with Council divided on the subject.
- Discussion started on the purchase of a used aerial fire truck.

October:

- Two new ordinances for a sewage rate increase and for rezoning were discussed.
- Council thanked everyone involved with the Glass & Ethnic Festival that was held in September and was another rousing success with the Old Town Mount Pleasant area and the Sparkle Spectacular Light Show at the Gazebo.
- The gas well at Frick Park was drilled and the reclamation of the field started to take shape.
- A right-of-way issue dominated the work session and a roll call vote was taken. For the first time, Mayor Lucia was called upon to break the tie.
- Mayor Lucia again asked for a written decision on paper alleys and to this day there is still no resolution.
- Re-occurring yard sales were discussed.
- Financing for the new fire truck was worked out, borrowing money from WWT and splitting the purchase price with the Fire Department.
- A preliminary 2009 budget was presented that was approximately \$35,000 over budget.
- A newer street sweeper was purchased for the Street Department with Borough funds.
- Councilwoman Ruszkowski brought up the subject of raising the LST Tax from \$10 per year to \$26 per year to help offset the purchase of the fire truck.
- Councilman Crivella made a motion for the sale of the In Town Shoppes, in order to stop the drain of money on the BDA.

November:

- Phase II of the Main Street Street-Scape Project is progressing but the weather is determining how much is getting done.
- Meetings continue regarding the Main Street Manager program with Scottdale and West Overton.

- The Borough will host the 2008 Christmas Parade on December 6, 2008. Lots of new festivities are planned for that day.
- The Borough signed an agreement with PennDot to purchase salt this winter if we need it.
- M.A.W.C. sent out “Catch-Up” bills for the sewage and the borough office received 100’s of calls with questions.
- Bids were opened for new fencing at Frick Park. The new fence will be installed before the end of 2008.
- Many of the meetings now have speakers addressing Council. Council can now hear from experts in any field. Allied Waste discussed recycling, Veterinarians discussed the cat problems and solutions.
- The 2009 budgets should be approved and passed tonight.

Borough Manager Landy went on to say that not just a lot of good things happened in 2008 but a lot of landmark decisions happened. 2008 has been documented in minute books. This documented history will be what future councils can look back at and surely be impressed. This 2008 Council has made decisions that will set the standard for future Councils and prepare Mount Pleasant for what is most an uncertain and economically tough time ahead.

In 2008 council members worked together and got to know each other better. They needed to because it was a very challenging year.

- Ordinances were challenged.
- The BDA was questioned.
- The cat problem continues.

But as I said, earlier landmark accomplishments highlighted in 2008 will carry us into 2009.

- The Gormley property was given to the Borough and must either be renovated or demolished.
- The In Town Shoppes drained the BDA budget and should be sold soon.
- The employee handbook will be done next year.
- A volunteer recycling program was started and may be expanded in 2009. We are an eco-green community.
- Phase II of our Main Street Street-Scape Project was started and weather permitting will be done soon or in the spring of 2009.
- A Main Street revitalization collaboration between Mount Pleasant, Scottdale and West Overton was started and will continue. Also the east end of Mount Pleasant will be included in some kind of revitalization plan.
- The Levin Family donated property to the Borough and with the County’s help it gives us options we haven’t had in the past.
- An Aerial truck was purchased with the VFD for better fire protection in the Borough and should reduce insurance rates.
- Gas wells were drilled giving the Borough another source of revenue.
- The DiNicola building should be finally demolished in 2009.

There is still more to accomplish but you just heard what this council did. The Borough residents should feel good about who they have chosen for these council seats. Also, the residents and Council should feel good about the Borough Administration. Years past Council did almost everything. Now they can rely on the Administration for centralized government. The Administration has reduced complaints while answering every call personally within 24 hours. They receive no pre-recorded messages when the office is open. New procedures, better documentation and a strong work ethic is common. A priority of money management not seen for a very long time, no tax anticipation loans, budgetary reserve accounts and a mind set for not wasting money is a result of the administration philosophy. The 5% savings philosophy has worked, does work and will continue to work and no one laughs anymore. How many times has Council asked for Jeff Landy to find the money? Our money management plan allows for that kind of request.

It is easy to take all of this for granted. But it takes Council working together with the Administration, it takes passion for this work we are all doing and it takes vision. Many times we meet people from other communities saying very complimentary things about our meetings, our downtown and our special events. But mark my word there is still

more that can be accomplished. And we will accomplish more without raising property taxes and without cutting services. For the 4th straight year. Although we will be raising the LST tax from \$10 to \$26 per year many of the surrounding municipalities are at \$52.00 per year. We still have a much lower tax than others.

The time has come for our Mayor's 2008 nickname. In 2005 he was "The Glue", 2006 "The Godfather", 2007 "The Heartbeat" and now for 2008 he was "The General". He doesn't win all of the battles, but usually wins the war.

Finally, the Borough is in good shape. Property taxes holding steady, a new revitalization plan, no services being cut and more exciting plans for 2009. Mount Pleasant is a great place to live and raise a family.

I am looking forward to 2009 and working with Council and a President and Mayor who have leadership qualities that impress me.

Thank you and "May God bless you and Mount Pleasant".

Waste Water Treatment Report:

Councilman Tate reported that WWT had a good year in 2008. In 2009 WWT will be working on the quarry behind the cemetery and will continue to look for better prices to put up a new garage.

Public Safety, Zoning & Ordinances Report:

Councilman Bauer read the following Fire Report for the month of November 2008:

Total Calls	42
In Town	10
Out of Town	32
10-45's	22
Fires	10
AFA'S	6
Stand-Bys	2
Public Service Calls	2
Total Men Answering	575
Avg Member per Call	13
Total Hours	314

Councilman Bauer read the following Medic 10 Report for the month of November 2008:

Total Calls for the Month	128
Medical	99
MVA	14
Fire	4
Transfers	0
Standby	11
In Town	74
Out of Town	54
Members per Call	3.6

A motion was made by Councilman Bauer to adopt 2009 Tax Ordinance #619 setting the Millage rate at 16.0. Motion seconded by Councilman Tate. Motion carried 9-0.

A motion was made by Councilman Bauer to adopt Sewage Rate Ordinance #620. Motion seconded by Councilman Wilttrout. Motion carried 9-0.

A motion was made by Councilman Bauer to raise part-time police salaries per the following scale:

- 0-16 Hours per pay period \$10.50
- 17-32 Hours per pay period \$11.00

33-48 Hours per pay period \$11.50

49-60 Hours per pay period \$12.00

Motion seconded by Councilman Crivella. Motion carried 9-0.

Councilman Bauer said that he has been researching the cat programs and he does not feel that the Borough will be able to fund a program. Most of the programs are staffed by volunteers who solicit their own funds. Councilman Bauer said he would like to see any new ordinance regarding cats included in the ordinance re-codification. Councilman Bauer said he received a sample cat ordinance that deals with digging in flowerbeds, licensing, redemption, violation fees and seizure redemption fees.

Councilman Bauer said he has job descriptions for the police and crossing guards that Council could use as an outline.

Streets/Parks & Recreation Report:

Councilman Slater reported that since restrictor plates were installed on the salt spreader the amount of salt used has been reduced.

Councilman Slater said that the fencing at Frick Park will be complete before the end of the year and provided Council with a picture of the scoreboard that Kriebel Resources will be installing at the Softball Field.

Councilman Bauer requested that the Street Department clean the leaves and debris from the steps at Veterans Park and around the Social Walkway.

Finance:

A motion was made by Councilwoman Ruszkowski to adopt the 2009 General Fund Budget with total revenues of \$1,303,374.28 and total expenses of \$1,303,374.28 leaving a net income of 0.00. Motion seconded by Councilman Slater. Motion carried 9-0.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Ruszkowski to adopt the 2009 WWT Budget with total revenues of \$921,332.00 and total expenses of \$921,332.00 leaving a net income of 0.00. Motion seconded by Councilman Slater. Motion carried 9-0.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Ruszkowski to adopt the 2009 Liquid Fuels Budget with total revenues of \$98,277.34 and total expenses of \$196,250.00 leaving a negative income of \$97,972.66 with a total other income of \$100,000.00 leaving a net income of \$2,027.34. Motion seconded by Councilman Slater. Motion carried 9-0.

Property Report:

Councilman Beranek said that Barry Premoshis and the Street Department have started setting up the Premoshis Christmas displays. There are some minor things to be done before they are all set up.

There was no motion to open sealed bids for 537 W Main Street because there were no bids received.

A motion was made by Councilman Beranek to suspend the rules to advertise again for bids for 537 W Main Street. Motion seconded by Councilman Wilttrout. Motion carried 9-0.

A motion was made by Councilman Beranek to advertise again for bids for 537 W Main Street to be accepted at the Borough Office until 4:00pm January 5, 2009 and opened at the Council meeting at 7:00pm January 5, 2009. Motion seconded by Councilman Wilttrout. Motion carried 9-0.

Community Eco-Green Report:

Councilman Wiltout said that he is looking forward to 2009 and hopefully the Borough will have curbside pickup by the end of the year.

Human Resource/Employee Contracts Report:

Councilwoman Stevenson said she will be meeting with Borough Manager Landy to go over 2009 employment contracts.

Councilwoman Stevenson encouraged everyone to visit the Chestnut Log House on Saturday to roast marshmallows and visit.

Councilwoman Stevenson said that the Mount Pleasant Area Historical Society will have its Seventh Annual Holiday Homes Tour on Saturday December 13, 2008 from 2:00pm to 8:00pm. Tickets will be available for anyone who does not purchase one ahead of time at the Chestnut Log House on the 13th.

Community and Economic Development/Grants Report:

Councilman Crivella said that he and Borough Manager are working on several grants. Grant money for the Main Street Manager Program should be available in July 2009.

Councilman Crivella said that there will be openings on the Mount Pleasant Business District Authority to be filled in January 2009. Mount Pleasant Business District Authority is the oldest in Pennsylvania and we are very proud of it. Anyone who is a business or property owner in the Borough who is interested can contact the borough office.

New Business: None

President Tabita said that the concerns regarding the CSO Project are being addressed as quickly as possible. The CSO Project was a Mount Pleasant Municipal Authority project and Council had no control over the project, but President Tabita commended council members for getting involved to try to resolve the problems.

Reading of Communications:

Borough Manager Landy read the following communications:

- PSAB and Smart Growth sent invitations for anyone interested in participating in Webinars in December.

Discussion and Payment of Bills:

A motion was made by Councilman Bauer to pay all authorized and approved bills. Motion seconded by Councilman Beranek. Motion carried 9-0.

Miscellaneous and Adjournment:

A motion was made by Councilman Bauer to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Councilman Beranek. Motion carried 9-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.

Motions from December 1, 2008 Meeting

A motion was made by Councilman Bauer to dispense with the reading of the minutes of November 17, 2008. Motion seconded by Councilman Beranek. Motion carried 9-0.

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