

**Minutes of the West Pittston Borough Council Meeting of December 4, 2024****PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE****1<sup>st</sup> ORDER- CALL TO ORDER**

The Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President Quinn at the West Pittston Borough Building, 555 Exeter Avenue West Pittston, Pennsylvania.

**2<sup>ND</sup> ORDER- ROLL CALL**

Roll Call was taken by Secretary Kendra-lee O'Brien: Bill Bohn, Mike Bugelholl, Jim Butera, Jared Jordan, Ian Stevenson (via telephone), Toni Valenti, President Ellen Quinn, and Mayor Angelo Alfano. Attorney Bufalino was also in attendance.

**3<sup>RD</sup> ORDER- EXECUTIVE SESSIONS**-none were held**4<sup>TH</sup> ORDER- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**- none was given**5<sup>TH</sup> ORDER- APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion to approve the minutes from November 6, 2024, as prepared, and to place them on file in the Borough Office.

**By: Bohn      2<sup>nd</sup>: Butera      Motion Carried**

**6<sup>TH</sup> ORDER- REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Reports; the Mayor's Report totaling \$568.60; and Code Office's report totaling \$1,126.06 and place them on file in the Borough Office.

**By: Bohn      2<sup>nd</sup>: Valenti      Motion Carried by All**

**7<sup>TH</sup> ORDER- CORRESPONDENCE**

Letters from residents concerning feral cats and the No-nonsense Neutering program

**By: Bohn      2<sup>nd</sup>: Bugelholl Motion Carried by All**

**8<sup>TH</sup> ORDER- SOLICITOR**- Attorney Bufalino

Nothing to report.

**9<sup>th</sup> ORDER-ENGINEER**- Reilly Associates

Nothing to report.

**10<sup>th</sup> ORDER- BOROUGH MANAGER**- Savino Bonita

Borough Manager, Savino Bonita, presented the first reading of the proposed 2025 Budget. \$10,223,394.00, holds the line on taxes, does not include any one-time revenue sources and does not use any funds from the unreserved fund balance. The Borough is functioning within its budget and is a win for the community. The proposed budget is available for the public in the

Borough Office and will be voted on at a special meeting on December 18, 2024, at 6:30pm to consider any proposed amendments from Borough Council and any input from the public.

Borough Manager Bonita then opened to any questions. Councilmember Butera asked about real estate taxes and if they were raised this year. Savino said that some of the discrepancies are from real estate tax appeals.

Borough Manager Bonita also brought up that there is a large issue that is looming over the Borough and that is the Police pension matter that is in the middle of litigation. It could have a severe impact on the Borough going forward, meaning a severe millage increase for the residents. This is because the Borough lost state aid when the police regionalized but the retirees still need to be paid, that total \$240,000-250,000 per year. There is a provision in the Borough Code to accommodate for additional millage to offset that expense. The sooner the Borough can settle that matter the better for the Borough. Bonita then restated that Council has up until the 18<sup>th</sup> for any addendums or changes to the Budget. He also added that since 2014, the Budget has been in the black and will be ending this year with \$251,000. The Borough's largest income is real estate tax, and our 511 taxes are consistent and steady. If the Borough sticks to the Budget, it should be able to end 2025 in the black. Revenues we have less control over, but expenses are what the Borough can control and that is where attention needs to be focused. Since 2017, due to the Borough has not had to borrow tax anticipation loans.

Motion to adopt the first reading of the 2025 Budget between now and December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in which the Budget will be presented at a public meeting on December 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn Motion Carried by All**

**11<sup>th</sup> ORDER- MAYOR- Mayor Angelo Alfano**

Nothing to report.

**12<sup>th</sup> ORDER-ADMINISTRATION**

Motion made to approve Payroll for November 1, 2024, in the amount of \$14,190.75; November 15, 2024, in the amount of \$12,971.57; and November 29, 2024, in the amount of \$10,466.89 totaling \$37,629.21

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Valenti Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to approve the General Fund prepaid bills totaling \$29,846.40 and the General Fund Bills totaling \$0.00

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Valenti Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to ratify Resolution for LSA Statewide grant of \$1,000,000.00 for the 2024 West Pittston Borough Levee Bridge Closure

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to approve the Reilly Associates Project 24026.00 Invoice #2 for September 29-October 26, 2024, \$2,407.17 (sewer survey)

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to approve the Reilly Associates Project 24082.00 Invoice #2 for September 29 to November 16, 2024, \$25,060.00 (sewer separation)

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to approve the Reilly Associates Project 10021.36 Invoice #2 for September 29 to October 26, 2024, \$7,331.02 (paving inspection)

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to table the Notice of 2024 Pension Plan Distress Determination

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to Advertise bid for Sidewalk project funded by American Rescue Plan Funds

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to approve the Gashi bill for tree removal on Borough property \$1,000.00

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to approve the Resolution for street closure for December 8, 2024, for Tree Lighting Event

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to move forward with an agreement with No-Nonsense Neutering for Trap/Neuter/Release program for \$750 for the year 2025, pending clarification of wording and insurance

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Valenti Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to approve the purchase of a steam gas pressure washer to be funded by American Rescue Plan Funds for the Department of Public Works totaling \$5,750

**By: Butera 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn Motion Carried by All**

### **13<sup>TH</sup> ORDER-CODE ENFORCEMENT & ZONING- Barry Isett**

Motion made to approve the Barry Isett & Associates Invoice # WV- 194105 10/1-10/31 totaling \$5,525.00

**By: Bohn 2<sup>nd</sup>: Bugelholl Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to approve the West Pittston Borough Zoning/Floodplain Activity Report for 10/1-10/31 2024

**By: Bohn 2<sup>nd</sup>: Valenti Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to approve the BIU inspections list for 11/1-11/30, 2024

**By: Bohn 2<sup>nd</sup>: Valenti Motion Carried by All**

**14<sup>th</sup> ORDER- PUBLIC SAFETY**

Motion made to accept the Wyoming Area Regional Police monthly report for November 2024

**By: Jordan    2<sup>nd</sup>: Valenti                      Motion Carried by All**

Motion made to accept the West Pittston Hose Company report for 10/1-10/31

**By: Jordan    2<sup>nd</sup>: Valenti                      Motion Carried by All**

Chief Turner of WARP gave a report that WARP responded to 540 calls this past month, 116 in West Pittston. They had numerous calls during the recent storm for down wires and other concerns. He commended West Pittston Hose Company for their work during the storm. Chief Turner also mentioned that they are an approved Toys for Tots drop off spot for any new, and unwrapped toys. He also wanted to mention that OpenStock donated all the outdoor decorations at the new police station.

**15<sup>th</sup> ORDER-PUBLIC WORKS**

Motion made to accept the DPW Monthly report, as submitted by Neil Williams, and place on file in the Borough Office

**By: Butera                      2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn                      Motion Carried by all**

Motion made to Appoint Neil Williams Recycling coordinator and MS4 coordinator for West Pittston Borough

**By: Butera    2<sup>nd</sup>: Bohn                      Motion Carried by All**

**16<sup>th</sup> ORDER- PARKS & RECREATION**

West Pittston Parks & Recreation will be hosting their annual Tree Lighting event on Wyoming Avenue on December 8, 2024

**17<sup>th</sup> ORDER- SHADE TREE COMMISSION**

President Quinn thanks Shade Tree Commission, Lynn Burbank, and Gashi for taking down trees and replanting.

**18<sup>th</sup> ORDER- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Resident asked about memorial plaques that were taken down, why they were down, and if they will be put back up. Councilmember Bugelholl said that he will hang them up this coming weekend as soon as possible. Resident asked if any of the families were told that the plaques were ever taken down. President Quinn said that they were taken down for painting and stored. Councilmember Bugelholl said that he will get them hung. Resident asked if there was a vote to take them down, he also said that he has yellow paint in his basement to paint the front door because he does not like the color of the front door to the Borough Building. Resident also said that the Ambulance Association purchased a plaque for Barry Hosier, and they would like to hang it up in the Borough Building.

Resident said that when the Ambulance Association went out of business after 70 years of service to the community, they heard nothing from Council acknowledging that fact and it was very hurtful to the board who devoted their life to service. Resident also has a question for President Quinn directly. The Ambulance Association closed in November of 2022, two years ago, they received a registered letter that they had to have a meeting and that any discussion outside of the Board was libel to prosecution. They had their meeting in August, and shortly after that President Quinn announced that the Borough was not to receive the donation. Resident wanted to know how President Quinn knew that information. President Quinn said that at a wedding in February, this resident told President Quinn directly. There was some discussion, and the resident was upset about this information getting out.

Resident said that she lives on Salem Street and was without power for three days and why there was no accommodation made for the residents, some went to hotels. President Quinn said that the Borough was not notified through the utilities that the power was out for the residents for that long. Resident then said that she has knowledge that residents can call 911 and that information will go to EMA. Vice President Butera said that PPL should have notified the Borough. Councilmember Jordan asked if anyone contacted 911. Resident said that no she did not, but that information should be shared. President Quinn asked if Chief Turner had any notification about power being out. Chief Turner said that no, they just were called about lines down. He also said that Council cannot call a state of emergency, that would go through the Mayor and that information would come from the EMA. The information must go through the correct channels to be able to take action in the Borough. 911 would contact EMA and EMA would contact the Mayor and then a state of emergency would be called, if needed. Then he would let the Council know what is going on.

Resident mentioned that he also lost power, and he was told that residents can call PPL to change what grid that they are on, to lose power less frequently.

Resident thanked Council for the TNR program. President Quinn said that yes, thank you and remember that the program does not start until 2025.

Resident stated that they live next to the Moose Lodge on Exeter Avenue and while the sign has bothered them all summer, making it so that they could not use their front porch, the Moose has now installed safety lights that shine into their living room and kitchen. They said that they were going to put shields on them before Thanksgiving, but it is not done yet. She has been in contact with the Code Office. President Quinn said that Council will follow up with this at the next work session.

Resident from Luzerne Avenue said that her sidewalks are still a mess after the Luzerne Avenue project, and she needs them to be fixed and how long does she have to wait or who does she have to talk to be able to get it fixed. President Quinn said that she will contact Reilly about it. She also mentioned that she does also manages a cat rescue and gave some information about feral cats and the trap situation.

John Hood, the Fire Chief, would like to meet with Council about adding a Fire Tax to help support the Fire Department because fundraising has not been enough. Solicitor Bufalino suggested December 11<sup>th</sup> at 1pm.

**19<sup>th</sup> ORDER- ANNOUNCEMENTS**-nothing announced

**20<sup>th</sup> ORDER- ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned 7:42 by Bugelhol

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kendra-lee O'Brien". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Kendra-lee O'Brien, Borough Secretary and Secretary to Council