

Catawissa Borough Council Meeting

DATE: September 9th, 2024 – 6:30 p.m.

- CALL TO ORDER

- The meeting was called to order by Council President Andrew Detwiler

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- ROLL CALL:

- Present were Andrew Detwiler, Jeff Fleming, Sue Helwig, Ernie May, John Mensch, Paul Hulse, Kevin Ferris and Mayor Todd Burke. Attorney Anthony McDonald was absent.

- READING OF MINUTES:

- A motion to dispense reading of and approve minutes of the previous month's meeting was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Ernie May. All Aye

- GUESTS TO BE HEARD:

- Columbia County Commissioner David Kovach presented a history lesson about Catawissa and read some interesting information about the Borough. The Columbia County Commissioners declared August 11th as "Catawissa Day" in Columbia County and congratulated Catawissa for 250 years of serving its constituents. A proclamation signed by Columbia County Commissioners Dave Kovach, Randy Karchner and Dean Brewer was presented to the Council along with a copy of the Commissioner's meeting minutes. He congratulated Gary Robert's on a job well done. Pictures were taken with Mayor Burke, Gary Roberts and Dave Kovach. Borough Council thanked Commissioner Kovach for coming and for the presentation. Gary Roberts had a number of things he wanted to bring to the Borough's attention. First, he informed Council that during the 250th celebration the Redskins had a reunion. They printed a history book about the Redskins early years and Mr. Roberts presented a copy of that to the Borough. Mr. Roberts also presented the Council with a book about all the residents who were killed in WWII, which was found in the Catawissa Bottling attic and reprinted by the VFW.

Mr. Roberts spoke of getting the youth involved and introduced Austin Hill, who redid two signs for the churches that are located on Riverhill and by the playground. By doing this project, Austin is up for review to earn his Eagle Scout award. Mr. Roberts continued to inform the Council that Scout Troop 67 is 96 years old and looking for more projects to do within the Borough.

Mr. Roberts then offered thanks to Crystal Fleming, Bob Dunkelberger, Water Company, Police Department and especially Officer Reedy, as well as all of Council for all their help with the 250th Celebration. He thanked the Lions Club for the great fireworks display. He also shared that he has been contacted by different people about wanting to continue this effort. So, he is looking to do a carnival called "Catawissa Celebrates" during the same time frame next year.

- Council President Andrew Detwiler thanked Mr. Roberts for all the hard work and time he and his committee put in to the 250th celebration. It turned out very well and everyone did a great job. Council person Sue Helwig wanted to say that it has re-started a sense of community and people are very excited about this type of thing continuing.
- Mr. Roberts informed Council that on December 15, 1892 Catawissa became a Borough. So, his committee is looking to do some kind of celebration. They are thinking of working with the church to do Winterfest.

****All guests will have a (3) minute limit for all issues to be heard. ****

- Mr. Mark Schleider from the VFW stated that they are willing to move forward with “Catawissa Celebrates” and need to do this every year. They would use all local talent at this event. Mr. Schleider also informed the Council that if there is any way they can assist the Borough with needs please contact them. They are donating over \$40,000.00 this year and their 1st priority is Veterans, but they will reach out to any group or organization to provide financial assistance locally.
- Council member John Mensch announced that Catawissa Borough and the Catawissa Police Department Benevolent Association are organizing a Halloween decorating contest. It is in the planning stages with more details to come.
- CORRESPONDENCE: None
- MAYOR:
 - Mayor Burke thanked everyone for coming and informed everyone that two citations had been presented to the Borough during the closing ceremony of the 250th celebration. One from Representative Robert Leadbeter and one from Senator Lynda Culver.
 - Mayor Burke requested a motion be made to approve Trick or Treating on Wednesday October 30th with a rain date of Thursday, October 31st, 2024 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Motion made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Sue Helwig. All Aye

Staff and Authority Reports

- WATER:
 - Cindy Bachman reported that hydrants will be flushed October 7th.
 - Ms. Bachman also reported on the Dry Hydrant project. She informed council that the portable vac units are too small to keep lines open and cost prohibitive. Relocating the line and reinforcing the wing wall will cost between \$20,000-25,000 and the biddable limit is \$23,200.00. Ms. Bachman said to err on the side of caution she feels we should put it out for bid. Ms. Bachman informed Council that the Engineer will provide a cost estimate for a bid package. Ms. Bachman requested Council approve getting an estimate. Council member John Mensch made a motion to amend the agenda to add Larson Design Group to give an estimate on re-routing the dry hydrant pipe and reinforcing the wing wall. 2nd. by Council member Sue Helwig. All Aye.
 - Council member Sue Helwig made a motion to request Larson Design Group do a cost estimate for the dry hydrant pipe and reinforcing the wing wall. Jeff Fleming 2nd. All Aye
- CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT:
 - Councilman Jeff Fleming read the Code Enforcement Report.
- POLICE:
 - Police Chief Laidacker read the police report for August 2024. Police responded to 185 calls during the month.
 - Chief has completed the road closure application for the Halloween Parade.
 - Police have two grant applications still pending approval.
 - Police Union met on September 3rd and voted to approve the proposed agreement with Catawissa Township.
 - Officers are scheduled to begin DT training in October.
 - Officers are currently working on the required annual MPOETC Updates.

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Committee Reports

- FINANCE/UTILITIES:

- Council member Sue Helwig read the electric and sewer open/past due report
- A motion was made by Sue Helwig, 2nd by Paul Hulse to approved \$98,194.00 for Non-Uniform Pension Plan Minimum Municipal Obligation Budget for 2025. All Aye
- A motion was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Sue Helwig to approve \$92,236.00 for Police Pension Plan Minimum Municipal Obligation Budget for 2025. All Aye
- A motion was made by John Mensch, 2nd by Paul Hulse to approve an agreement between Catawissa Brough and Tactical Data Group for 12 months with a cost of \$1,800.00 per month to handle Borough's grant writing needs. This agreement will start when the agreement with Penn Strategies ends. All Aye
- A motion was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by John Mensch to approve the cancellation of the agreement with Penn Strategies starting immediately. All Aye
- A motion was made by John Mensch, 2nd by Ernie May to approve presenting Catawissa Township with a proposal to provide 24/7 police coverage starting January 1, 2025. All Aye
- A motion was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Ernie May to approve Resolution 2024-05 regarding fixing the tax rate for the year 2025. This tax rate will include a .05% fire tax increase. Council President Andrew Detwiler opposed. All others approved. Vote carries.
- A motion was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Ernie May to approve Corporal Jason Hayes to attend NRA Patrol Rifle Instructor Class in October at a cost of \$2,275.63 coming from GL# 410.90 and 410.30 in General Fund. All Aye

- PROPERTY/BUILDING MAINTENANCE:

- A motion was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Paul Hulse to approve the Catawissa Halloween Parade on Saturday, October 26, 2024 with a rain date of Sunday, October 27th and all accompanying road closures. All Aye
- A motion was made by John Mensch, 2nd by Jeff Fleming to approve L&N Zimmerman Excavating Inc. to install a drain at the Catawissa Park for a cost of \$2,528.50 with funds coming from GL# 409.20 in Capital Fund. All Aye
- A motion was made by Ernie May, 2nd by Sue Helwig to approve opening bids for the removal of (2) trees and grind stumps in Quaker Cemetery, also trim any branches hanging over the Quaker Meeting House and haul away any debris. This expense will be paid out of the Eyer Fund GL #410.14. All Aye Bids were opened and recorded as: Northeast Tree Care dba John Brown's Tree Service \$16,500.00, Bob Craigs Tree Service \$16,500.00 and Susquehanna Tree Care \$32,000.00.
- A motion was made by Ernie May 2nd by Sue Helwig to award the removal of (2) trees and grind stumps in Quaker Cemetery also trim any branches hanging over the Quaker Meeting House and haul away any debris to the lowest responsible bidder. After discussion bid was awarded to Northeast Tree Care dba John Browns Tree Service for \$16,500. All Aye

- FINANCE Payment of Bills.

- A motion was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by John Mensch to accept bills as written and any others that may arise before the next council meeting. All Aye

- GUESTS TO BE HEARD:

- ADJOURNMENT:

- Motion was made by Jeff Fleming, 2nd by Sue Helwig to adjourn at 7:29 p.m. All Aye

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Snyder, Treasurer, Catawissa Borough

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