

Council Meeting
November 9, 2020
7:00 p.m.

The council meeting of Mayor and Council was held on the above date and time with Council members Carrow, Smith, Burnett, and DeBenedictis present with Mayor Dias presiding. Recording Secretary Sue Muncey, Town Foreman Jeff Hurlock, Chief Carl Hutson, Town Solicitor Gary Junge, Barbara Cooke, David Ross, Carol Eagle, and Adam Thomas were also in attendance.

- 1. Call to Order** - Mr. Dias called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- 2. Pledge to the Flag** – Mr. Carrow led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 3. Approval of Minutes** –

Ms. DeBenedictis made a motion to accept the Council Meeting minutes of 10/12/20 and the Budget Meeting minutes of 10/15/20 in its written form. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- 4. Approval of Income and Expense Report** –
Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the Income and Expense Reports for October 2020 in their written form. Mr. Carrow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- 5. Communications** – No report.
- 6. Report of the Chief of Police** – Mr. Hutson stated there were 271 calls for service and 212 traffic arrests for the month. PFC Andrews attended the Cub Scout Pack 239 Meeting on 10/1/20 to share with them about the police department. Extra patrols were out mischief night. The crossing guard position has been filled. We received \$14,000 from the COVID-19 Relief Fund. We still have \$5,000 available.
- 7. Report of the Town Foreman** – Mr. Hurlock had no report.
- 8. Report of the Town Solicitor** – Mr. Junge had no report.
- 9. Report from Inspections/Enforcement** – Mr. Hurlock had no report.
- 10. Reports from Members of Council**
 - a. Report from Electric Committee** – Ms. DeBenedictis had no report.
 - b. Report from Street Committee** – Mr. Smith had no report.

- c. **Report from Water & Sewer Committee** – Mr. Burnett stated there was a water issue at 206 S. Rodney Street and a sewer issue at 320 Smyrna Avenue. Mr. Burnett asked about arsenic and the treatment plant.
- d. **Report from Equipment Committee** – Mr. Smith stated there will be an Equipment Meeting on 11/17/20 to discuss the yard waste truck.
- e. **Report from Personnel Committee** – Mr. Carrow had no report.
- f. **Report from Public Safety Committee** – Mr. Dias had no report.
- g. **Report from Budget Committee** – Mr. Smith stated the budget is tentatively completed.
- h. **Report from Economic Development Committee** – Mr. Carrow stated the July 4th Association will host the Christmas parade on 12/6/20. The lighting of the tree will be at the park. The flag pole for the park – we are still waiting on. It probably will not be installed until the spring. The gazebo will be decorated at the park for Veteran's Day. The flowers were provided by Sherri Scuse. Mr. Dias wanted to thank Mr. Carrow for taking the lead on this.
- i. **Report from Downtown Development Rebate** – Ms. DeBenedictis stated Rick Ferrell is looking at a list of properties on Main Street.
- j. **Report from DEMEC** – Ms. DeBenedictis received an email from Kimberly that was originally sent by Lincoln Willis. It lists the names on Legislature. The top half didn't change, but the bottom half did. Ms. DeBenedictis stated Mr. Burnett will be taking over Efficiency Smart. Tom Coyle hired a new manager for the area.
- k. **Report from Board of Adjustments** – Mr. Hurlock had no report.
- l. **Report from Planning & Zoning Committee** – Mr. Hurlock stated a meeting was held to review the site plan application for Railroad Square. There were a couple minor adjustments our engineer requested. A meeting is scheduled for 11/25/20 at 7:00 p.m. at the Clayton Fire House to finalize.
- m. **Appeals Board** – Mr. Hurlock had no report.
- n. **Law and Legislature Committee** – Mr. Dias stated everyone needs to look at the Charter. He will schedule a meeting at the beginning of the year.

11. Public Forum –

Carole Eagle – She asked if the house by Thelma Knight is eligible for the DDD. Ms. DeBenedictis stated no. It is outside the district area. We are looking into a vacancy ordinance. The fines would go into a façade grant. Ms. Eagle stated Mrs. Knight has offered to pay for the windows. She has a safety concern.

12. Unfinished Business –

a. Discuss and Vote on COVID-19 Payment Plan Letter (NS)

Mr. Smith stated a letter will be sent to residents stating that late fees and disconnect will resume. Other towns started back when the Governor lifted the ban on 7/1/20. Mr. Smith stated our residents are struggling. He wanted to extend to the end of the year. Mr. Smith stated we need to decide the term in months to pay back. The Governor stated four (4) months. Mr. Smith stated he does not feel that is enough time. Ms. DeBenedictis read the letter in full. Mr. Smith stated we need to add a statement that the amount given doesn't include the December bill. This will not be calculated in the stated amount. Mr. Dias asked what the existing amount owed was. Mr. Smith stated including October, the payable amount is \$125,000. Without October he stated a ballpark figure would be \$60,000 - \$70,000 outstanding. Five (5) resident's bills go back to the month of March. Mr. Smith stated we need to discuss the term. He stated he is not comfortable with less than 10 months. Mr. Carrow asked with the late fees in January, does this include going back to March? Mr. Smith stated no. The resident would be responsible for their monthly payment and their current bill. Mr. Carrow agreed that we should extend as far as possible. The more time we give them, the better we are. He agrees with the 10 months. Mr. Smith stated some residents are over \$2,000. Mr. Hurlock stated before COVID we stuck hard to policy. Mrs. Muncey stated if you give to one, you have to give to all. Mr. Hurlock stated we need guidance. We need to know how to handle. Mr. Carrow stated he has faith in Jeff's decision. Mr. Hurlock stated he would like to discuss with the Mayor if something comes up. Ms. DeBenedictis asked what if they can't do it. Mr. Smith stated once we set this in place, they are responsible. He does not feel comfortable going past 12 months. Mr. Carrow asked the number of customers who are late. Mr. Smith responded as of the end of September 96 customers, end of August 68 customers, and the end of July 35 customers. Mr. Smith stated March was initially high. Mr. Carrow stated set a number. Mr. Dias stated we are setting a number tonight. Mr. Carrow stated 10 months. If we see an issue, we can revisit. Mr. Smith stated if they don't stick to plan, they will get late fees and be disconnected. If there is going to be a problem, it will present itself to us. Mr. Hurlock stated once you send the letter out, you will know if there will be an issue. Mr. Carrow agreed with Mr. Hurlock.

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the COVID-19 letter with the changes mentioned giving a 10 month division of past due bills. Mr. Carrow seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

13. New Business

a. Scott Lynch to Discuss the AMI Program (MD)

Mr. Lynch introduced himself as the VP of Asset Development for DEMEC. Mr. Lynch proceeded with his presentation. (See attached copy of presentation). Mr. Lynch stated AMI stands for Advanced Metering Infrastructure. This could be very informative to the customer. After completing the presentation, Mr. Lynch stated an estimated cost would be \$800,000 which would include water and electric meters. It would be \$40,000 ongoing. Mr. Smith asked if it was feasible to phase in an area of town and slowly work in the rest of the town. Mr. Lynch stated that is what they are doing in Middletown for the water meters. Yes it is possible. Mr. Burnett asked the \$800,000 that includes the infrastructure and the cost of the software? Mr. Lynch stated he will get an answer. The meter cost is included in the bulk. Mr. Hurlock stated we should just start buying these meters today. It will work with our current system. Mr. Lynch stated he will see how the meter compares to this program. Mr. Smith stated we should install the meters on the new homes and pick up the rest as needed in phases. Mr. Lynch stated he will ask the representative and respond back. Mr. Smith stated he is looking at the long term and how to phase in. Mr. Hurlock stated they put in about 10 meters a month. Mr. Ross agreed. Mrs. Muncey asked if the solar meters would also have to be changed. Mr. Lynch stated yes. Mr. Carrow asked how many man hours would it save a month – reading, re-reads, etc. Mr. Ross stated one (1) person a full day. Mr. Hurlock stated it would be a couple hours each person. Mr. Carrow asked what percentage of meters are hand read. Mr. Hurlock stated AMR drive by 90%; manual 10% for commercial. Mr. Carrow asked does one person do drive by readings? Mr. Hurlock responded yes. Mr. Carrow said with disconnection it is a safety issue. We would not be putting our employees in harm's way. Ms. DeBenedictis asked the \$800,000 – that includes water/electric meters, software, and equipment? Mr. Lynch stated yes. Mr. Smith stated let's get the numbers available to discuss at an Electric Committee Meeting. Mr. Hurlock stated we need to look at and consider meters. Mr. Carrow asked if the life expectancy is the same as current meters. Mr. Lynch stated yes. They have a three (3) year warranty. Mr. Carrow asked about the services for the customers. There will be no access to the home – just meter usage? Mr. Lynch stated correct. It would be no more invasive. Mr. Lynch stated he will have a phone call with Jeff to get these questions answered. Mr. Carrow asked if we needed to take action to send to the committee. Mr. Dias stated let Jeff get the answers first. Mr. Smith stated we can have a committee meeting by the end of the month.

14. Adjournment

Mr. Carrow made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

Sue Muncey