

Council Minutes – December 11, 2014

Jermyn Borough Council met on Thursday, December 11, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. On roll call the following members were present: J.Wilson, J.McDermott, W.Estile, J.Allan, J.Smith and K. Hosie. B.Parks was absent. Attorney Nicholls and Mayor Smallacombe were in attendance.

MINUTES – A motion was made by J.Allan seconded by J.McDermott to accept the minutes of November 13, 2014. All members were in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORT– W.Estile gave the financial report:

Beginning Balance	– \$131,971.21
Deposits	– \$39,550.46
Expenses	– \$60,770.76
Ending Balance	– \$ 110,750.91

A motion was made by J.Smith, seconded by J.Allan to accept the financial report as presented. All members were in favor.

At this time President Hosie announced that Brian Swatt our Junior Councilman was appointed ambassador for Lakeland High School.

MAYOR– The Mayor reported our annual Christmas Parade will be at 6:00 on Saturday with refreshments in the gym afterwards. The Christmas Show will be on Sunday at 3:00, decorating will be done tonight and tomorrow, if anyone can help. The tickets are out for the annual dinner at St. Michaels Center on February 21, we also have raffle tickets to sell. The crime watch is selling candy bars, they are \$1.00 apiece. The Police Department is collecting donations for the animal shelter, dry dog and cat food and cleaning supplies. The Mayor thanked the Police, Fire Police and Fire Department for the great job with the transformer problem on Washington Avenue. The Historical Society will have their Christmas meeting at Mr. Avery's on the first Sunday in January. He said the Historical Society received a check from the County to pay for the cost of the band.

FIRE CHIEF– R.Rood reported there was a problem at the scene of the transformer on Washington Avenue, he said the line that was down was a 12,000 volt line and the area was roped off and a resident walked under the tape . Mr. Rood said he tried to stop him but was ignored. He wants the public to know that when an area is roped off too please stand back.

PUBLIC INPUT – A. Whitiak, 512 Garfield, thanked the first responders on the night of the transformer fire and he got a phone call from the Fire Chief which was appreciated. He said that he feels the 5 minutes rule is wrong. He read a quote “We are not to judge all Muslims by actions of a few lunatics, we are encouraged to judge all gun owners by the actions of a few lunatics. It seems we are constantly hearing how social security will run out of money, but we never hear about welfare or food stamps running out of

money. "In God WE Trust, when even one American who has done nothing wrong is forced to shut his mind and close his mouth, All Americans are in peril. – Harry Truman

Mr. Smith said as far as the 5 minute rule it has not been passed. K. Hosie said it is in the handbook and it will be enforced in January. Mr. Whitiak said he has looked at the budget and asked if the borough has a business plan? Mrs. Hosie said that's what the budget is and the department heads are to spend the money wisely. She also explained we will be taking out a \$100,000.00 tax anticipation loan and it will be paid back when the taxes come in. Mr. Whitiak said you are throwing good money after bad.

Floyd Celli, 642 Washington Avenue, Mr. Celli said the balance always goes down? Mrs. Hosie said we have more expenses in the winter. Mr. Celli said \$110,000.00 isn't much of a cushion, what can the borough do to raise money? The Mayor said we are one of the few towns with a cushion, we don't have big business in Jermyn, our only hope might be if a business may come in and develop the land behind Rapid Pallet. Mr. Celli said Mr. Parks came and looked at the front of his building. There is a problem what can be done? He said he fell on ice in his garage and hurt his thumb. He asked if Attorney Nicholls would look into the liability for storm water runoff. Mrs. Hosie said the Mayor spoke to Corey at Rock Bottom and he promised him the work would be done by today. Mrs. Hosie apologized for the delay.

Mr. Smith suggested we give Rock Bottom a deadline.

A motion was made by J.Wilson, seconded by W.Estile to notify Rock Bottom that they have thirty days to do the job and to get three quotes from other contractors. Mr. Rood said he does not want his project done in the winter.

FINANCE– A motion was made by J.McDermott, seconded by J.Smith to approve the invoices in the amount of \$7,046.17. All members were in favor.

PUBLIC SAFETY – Mr. Smith said he has spoken to Chief Arthur and he has gone to a government surplus depot and has got equipment for disasters at no cost to the borough. He commended Chief Arthur for doing the research and being pro-active.

Mr. Estile said that Chief Arthur went to the depot today and got 42 sleeping bags, which cost \$238.00, a diesel generator worth \$24,000.00, a new base radio, and a case of combat boots. These items were obtained at no cost to the borough. Mr. Estile asked if room number 3 can be used to store everything. Chief Arthur is responsible for all the materials and would like to put a lock on the door.

A motion was made by W.Estile, seconded by J.McDermott to allow Chief Arthur use room 3 to store emergency equipment and to have a lock put on the door. All members were in favor.

ZONING OFFICER– Mr. Chase reported said he has found two sheds and two garages without permits and will be working on a complaint.

JUNIOR COUNCILMAN– B.Swatt reported he has been doing research on the blackboard connection as a better form of communication and asked the issue to be put on the agenda for the work session.

NEW BUSINESS

2015 BUDGET – A motion was made by W.Estile seconded by J.Allan to adopt the 2015 budget at \$675,943.00. All members were in favor.

THIRD PARTY INSPECTOR – A motion was made by J.Wilson seconded by J.Allan to hire BIU and NEIC Inspection Agencies with a verbal change stating that commercial will be negotiated between the third party agency and the owner. All members were in favor.

2015 AUDIT – A motion was made by W.Estile, seconded by J.McDermott to retain Brian Kelly, CPA to do the 2015 audit at a cost of \$3,875.00. All members were in favor.

CDBG RESOLUTION – A motion was made to pass a resolution with Lackawanna County CDBG for the paving of Henry Drive at a cost of \$100,991.00 by J.Wilson, seconded by J.Smith. All members were in favor.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY – A motion was made by J.McDermott, seconded by J.Smith to extend the deadline for the submission of obligations, regarding the Historical Society having their museum in the DPW garage until April 1 ,2014. All members were in favor.

2015 Budget Ordinance – A motion was made by W.Estile, seconded by J.Allan giving Attorney Nicholls permission to prepare and advertise the ordinance for the 2015 budget. All members were in favor.

Council went into Executive Session for personnel, council reconvened from executive session.

Mrs. Hosie asked for a motion to hire Mark Kilmer as a part time DPW employee. Mr. Smith asked to see his resignation letter, it was stated that he resigned for a better position. A motion was made by J.Wilson, there was not a second to the motion. Motion failed.

TAX ANTICIPATION LOAN – Attorney Nicholls explained that we received one proposal from Peoples Security Bank at 1.59 %, for \$100,000.00. The purpose is to get through until tax money starts coming in. A motion was made to accept the proposal from Peoples' Security Bank for \$100,00.00 at 1.59% by J.Allan, seconded by J.Smith. All members were in favor.

A motion was made to give Attorney Nicholls permission to draft the resolution for the TAX Anticipation loan and to advertise by J.Smith, seconded by W.Estile. All members were in favor.

Acting Chief Arthur – A motion was made by J. Smith, seconded by W. Estile to re-appoint William Arthur as Acting Chief until the next council meeting or Chief Zellers returns. All members were in favor.

Mr. Smith suggested it may be time to look at the budget in a different way, he said that over time as we experience different things we learn a lot more about the running of the borough. Walter succeeded in drafting the budget along with James Allan. I think it is time we look at a different way of looking at the budget. My suggestion is what we have been doing, making an analogy, all the tax money goes into a big pot. All that money goes wherever it has to go, Police, DPW, Fire, all different departments. Mr. Smith said the way that the money is going, it is becoming tighter and tighter. We have to be a little more closely guarded in how we watch the money. Whoever is the finance chair next year, I think what we might want to do, and this is only a suggestion, we might take a look where we fund each budget. Lets say the Police Department has a budget of \$100,000.00, each line item underneath it creates that budget of \$100,000.00. They would have their own checkbook and that police department would run exclusively by the money that was allotted to the police department. What I see right now, we have the big pot and the money just goes anywhere. So as we get tighter we should be more on target. The DPW has \$200,000.00, all line items underneath equal \$200,000.00, they should have their own checkbook and that money they spend should go against the \$200,000.00 rather than the general pot. I think we should take a look at that. K.Hosie asked if Debbie would still write out the checks. Mr. Smith said yes. The Mayor said bigger towns and the county does it that way. J.Wilson asked why would you have separate checking accounts? Mrs. Hosie said you would not. Mrs. Wilson said perhaps Kelly and John could set up paper accounts. Mr. Smith said the records are very important, accountability is the name of the game but I think what has occurred after doing it for two years, everything that is passed down, this is the way. When you look back at it, sitting in the background and not forefront, I realize that different departments can go way over budget. What happens is that surplus that used to be up there, they take money out of the surplus and put in the big pot. So now your surplus goes down and the departments are getting more than council realizes. This is my observation and it has been going on forever, people can't say it is this council or Walter or Joe in charge. Mr. Smith said we better start planning now that the money is not going to be there, we have to stop the bleeding now. I think if we do our budgets in a different way we just might be able to save the day. So whoever is in charge of finance next year might want to take a look at it.

Mayor Smallacombe said there is a contest going on for the best decorated home in Jermyn. There will be four prizes, the donations where from the Windsor, Perk-Up Restaurant, Debbie's Floral Boutique, Longworths, Art Wilson and the Mayor. The prizes will be awarded after December 28.

Mr. Smith asked why can't we put LED lights in our wreaths? Mr. Chase said it is an initial expensive cost. Mr. Smith said in the long run, look at the lights that are out right now. Mrs. Stackel said it is a disgrace, Mr. Smith agreed with her. Mr. Estile said Mr. Petch, the electrician is looking into it. Mr. Allan said depending on the size of the bulbs it could be very costly, and Simpson got new decorations and they were \$500.00 a piece, he said the current wreaths were purchased by a drive. Mrs. Stackel said the DPW should be checking the bulbs before putting them up.

A motion was made to adjourn by J.Allan, seconded by W.Estile, All members were in favor.