

Regular Meeting Minutes
February 10, 2022

President Lou Little called the meeting to order. All council members were present except for Mr. Heaton who was running a little late. A Harker/Bill Sepp motion approved the January meeting minutes. The officers' reports were approved by a McNeely/Monica Sepp motion. The only correspondence received was from Mr. Dennis Miller who requested removal of the no parking signs from property that he had purchased from Mr. Regis Benden. He had requested the removal previously but it was recommended that he wait until the sale was complete and then submit his request again. The request was given to Mr. Little so that he could contact Mr. Miller. Ms. Harker moved to listen to citizen comments and was seconded by Mrs. McNeely. The motion passed all in favor. Mr. Little was reminded that the Beaver Falls Fire Department Chief should be called first as written in the agenda.

Mr. Mark Stowe, Chief of the Beaver Falls Fire Department was invited to speak on the proposal to contract West Mayfield's fire service from Beaver Falls. Chief Stowe also introduced his assistant chief, Dave Seidle who would explain other services that would be offered. Chief Stowe noted that borough officials would have the final decision as to whether to accept the contract or decline it and retain the West Mayfield Volunteer Fire department. Beaver Falls has a full time 24/7 365 days a year department combined of both paid and volunteer firefighters. There are 9 full time and 3 part-time paid fire fighters. They are all certified firefighter 1 or higher. All officers are officer 2 and have received over 5000 hours of training. There is continuing education for all members. Their equipment is state of the art and includes pumpers, heavy rescue, aerial ladder trucks, command vehicles. The response time would be approximately 5 minutes and would consist of 2-4 men at a time. They have EMT's and paramedics with ALS certification and provide mutual aid to other departments as well as other departments providing mutual aid to them. The first responders are not dispatched unless requested by ambulance.

They are class 3 insurance services (ISO) with 1 being the best and 10 the worst. They answer unlimited calls, provide rescue service including water rescue, respond to gas leaks, wires down, lock outs, etc. They also offer fire prevention services and have an arson investigator. They have canine Patty whom they use to provide fire prevention to children. They would provide an officer at all council meetings. The borough would no longer have to provide work comp coverage for the fire department. All firefighters from West Mayfield would be welcome to join with Beaver Falls. All maintenance replacement and repairs of equipment would be paid by Beaver Falls. Beaver Falls would like to have a pumper parked at our fire department station. Chief Stowe noted that the response from West Mayfield for rehab service was great. The cost for the first year of the three-year contract would be \$19,164 with an increase of 5% in each of the remaining two years.

Mrs. Wanda Horvath, 3741 West 5th Avenue had questions for Chief Stowe regarding the services of Beaver Falls. She questioned if residents were charged for responding to a call. Chief Stow said that Beaver Falls never bills a resident but if that resident submits a claim to their insurance company, Beaver Falls will invoice the insurance company. This is a common practice that has been going on for years and covers the cost of foam used in fighting the fire and other charges. She also asked about the grade certification for insurance. It is strictly for insurance and is only for fully paid departments such as Pittsburgh and other large urban cities. Beaver Falls does not have a training facility. FF1 and FF 2 are written skills tests for the Fire Fighting Program and is a 160 hour course. There is a one-month class which involves skills, reports and written tests. The City of Beaver Falls includes the cost for training in its budget. The station is always manned. 16 firefighters are within a 10 minute radius for a structural fire.

John Larson, 1117 Boden Street asked if staff would need to be increased if Beaver Falls took over. No, there are 9 full-time now and they are getting ready to hire more part-time fire fighters.

Mrs. Licia Cogley, 634 37th Street asked if the proposal included 25/7 availability. There are 7 full-time or part-time available and when a call is received, any off-duty officer can respond to the call. In order to become full time a civil service test is required and FF1 and EMT's must go through the training program. All volunteers are paid by the hour.

Mr. Bill Heaton, 3412 Knape Street had questions regarding the services that West Mayfield provides and if Beaver Falls would continue those services – pumping out flooded basements – yes. Cutting down trees – would have to call public works. Flushing out storm drains - would have to call if they were already on a call- the station is always manned. They have a regional strike team – 1 crew manpower only. There are approximately 12-14 water rescues a year. There is no additional charge if an investigation of a fire is required.

Mutual aid is county-wide. If there is an Emergency Management disaster, West Mayfield has its own emergency management team. What would happen? New Brighton, Pulaski, Daugherty Township, Rochester, etc. How would the equipment be dispersed? The call for help would be from wherever it is needed. What happens after the 3-year contract with an increase of 5% each year? They would never double the cost, only raise to cover their own increased cost. What about traffic control for shut-down of a road due to inclement weather or an accident? They would handle that. Beaver Falls covers Eastvale at 3% increase but it will raise to 5% increase the next contract. Bill noted that we would be paying over \$30,000 in ten years.

Mr. Heaton wanted to make sure that Beaver Falls realizes that the fire station and all of the equipment in it is owned by the West Mayfield Fire Department, not the borough. If the fire department is disbanded, all of that is gone and Beaver Falls would not have access to any of equipment or the fire station itself. Other things that the volunteer fire department does for West Mayfield is cleaning out the park, holding the borough Christmas Party at the fire hall at no cost to the residents, Halloween patrol – helping across the streets and general patrol of the entire borough during the trick-or-treat hours. The fire station is also the voting poll – where would the residents vote if the station were to close? Santa goes around the borough in the fire truck every Christmas giving out over 200 bags of candy to borough children.

Mrs. Horvath asked what the borough council provided for the fire department. They pay for liability insurance in the amount of about \$5500, work comp insurance for about \$7000 and a donation of \$5000 yearly. She also asked about grants – they are for the purchase of equipment only and can't be used for any other purpose like paying utility bills and upkeep of equipment and the building. She asked why the department did not apply for a grant this year – they did but the application was late by only a brief period of time and it was not accepted. She asked also about the number of fire fighter ones that the volunteer department has (3). She feels that our volunteer department is not the same caliber as Beaver Falls and also reminded our members that if they went to Beaver Falls they would be paid. Mr. Heaton said that Covid did a number not only on our department, but all around the county. We lost a lot of revenue because fund raisers were no longer able to be held. . The fire department has asked for an additional \$5000 this year to help get it back on its feet. Hall rentals have already begun to pick up this year and other fund raisers are being planned as well. As far as service to the borough, that did not change at all and is not going to change because we have mutual aid with Chippewa Township, White Township and Patterson.

Assistant Chief Seidl asked why Beaver Falls had been removed from first alarm and it was because a resident complained to our chief that they had been billed for a call that Beaver Falls was the first to respond to. He did not want our residents to have to pay for a service from Beaver Falls that we provide for free. Ms. Harker noted that she had contacted County to place Beaver Falls back on our mutual aid call out. Mr. Seidl said that his paid staff would not be sent to West Mayfield. Most people have essentials and band together with bigger departments covering larger areas.

Mrs. Janet Helbig, 3601 Orchard Street asked council to consider giving the Fire Department the additional \$5000 it requested to tide them over for this year.

Mr. Bill Sepp, 4307 West 4th Avenue asked Chief Stowe if council decided to help the fire department this year, could we still come to you in the future. The answer was yes. The fire service is in big trouble. Something must be done so that we will have a sustainable service in the future. Mr. Budicak, borough solicitor reminded all present that a decision to change this can be made at any time.

With no other citizens wishing to comment, Mr. Sepp moved to return to the regular order of business, seconded by Mrs. McNeely and approved unanimously.

Old Business

Streets, Lighting & Bridges– Ms. Harker none

Buildings and Grounds – Mr. Sepp – none

Fire & Police – Ms. Harker – open discussion fire department

Sewers and Sanitation Mr. Heaton – There was an issue on Ann Street and the line had to be dug up but the problem still exists. Six companies were called about bids for putting in a new manhole but only 2 bids received. Bonzo Excavating \$26,534.70 and Tru Plumbing \$19,400. He will continue to get bids but we will need to advertise. Insight Pipe finished with the left over West 4th Avenue issues. The Rock Avenue sink hole will need a 20 “ line out of the ground and back fill to correct the problem. He would like permission to place 5-6 outfalls on Rock Avenue that go out and run into the creek and back fill the pipe to the creek to prevent more erosion. This won't satisfy any MS4 requirements but DEP likes the idea.

Finance & Litigation – Mrs. McNeely – none

Parks & Recreation – Mrs. Sepp – received 1 bid of \$950 to repair the monument at the ball field. It was decided to get more bids before a decision is made.

Ordinance – Mr. Seybert – none. Mrs. Sepp brought up an issue about the placement of the handicap parking sign on West 5th at the Mineard residence. The sign is 10 feet past her steps and does not allow the neighbor enough room to park. The sign is on borough property. Can it be moved about 5 feet so the neighbors will have more room to park? Mr. Budicak said the sign can be moved but the resident should be informed before it's done.

Mayor Cogley – none but she had a question regarding the solicitation permits. How is she informed if one is needed? Any resident who has a solicitor approach their home should ask to see the permit. If one is not available, the police should be called and they will explain the procedure.

A discussion began on whether the fire department should be given the additional \$5000 to see if they can get back on their feet this year. Mr. Sepp moved to give an additional \$5000 to the fire department and was seconded by Mr. Seybert. A roll-call vote passed the motion as follows: Mr. Sepp – yes; Mr. Seybert – yes; Mrs. Sepp – yes; Ms. Harker – yes; Mr. Little – yes; Mrs. McNeely – no; Mr. Heaton – yes.

New Business

Streets, Lighting & Bridges – Ms. Harker – the pick-up needed new brakes, cable on the plow needed repaired, and the salter chain. Two loads of salt have been delivered and more is on order. The riser for Rock Ave has been received and it will be brought up when the weather breaks. The large dump had a broken axle and has been repaired.

Buildings & Grounds – Mr. Sepp reported that he had been unable to locate the inventory that had been done previously. Mr. Heaton said that he believes it is on the disk with ordinances that he received from Mr. Kosanovich. There are some things that need ordered like washers, bolts, nuts....call the company and they will bring what is needed. There are some repairs that should also be considered – the bottom panel on the main garage door needs new flashing and weather-stripping., the front door to the building has a gap at the bottom. The tree in front of the building is leaning heavily onto the street and a new toilet seat and time clock are needed. He will get prices on the repair of the garage door.

Fire & Police – Ms. Harker – none

Sewers & Sanitation – Mr. Heaton would like to pipe the outfalls down to the creek and get some prices on that so that the erosion can be stopped. He was late arriving at the meeting tonight because there was a sewer plugged on Jean Street that he had to look at. He called Robinson Pipe Cleaning and they will come tomorrow to clean it out. This is the second issue in the last 6 months and he recommends 200 feet relining from manhole to manhole to correct the problem. Mrs. McNeely said that the storm sewer on High Street at Schutte by Kip Richeal's house is sinking and it should be taken care of so that the road doesn't get ruined. There was a complaint about Ross not being plowed and it was because there was very little salt left. They did the best they could and will take care of it when the salt is delivered.

Parks & Recreation – Mrs. Sepp- none. She did ask about scheduling the work on the creek at Jake Tate's to keep the road from collapsing. That will be scheduled when the weather breaks and will be done by the street committee.

Finance & Litigation – Mrs. McNeely – none. She did wonder if recycling was going to be rescheduled and if the train was still going to be used for it. The grant money isn't available and it costs money to take the recycling to a facility. She will check to see if there is any place that takes recycling and what they take. She asked also about checking out the streets for repaving or patching. Once the weather breaks an inspection of the streets will get scheduled.

Mayor – none

Bill Heaton has info on the MS4 requirements and also the FEMA training that the newly elected officials are required to take. They tried to go on the site to take the training but were unable to access it. Bill will help them with that. He also noted that he feels that the Buildings & Grounds and the Streets & Lighting committees should be consolidated into one. That way each council member would be the head of only one committee instead of 1 member who is the head of two. Mr. Little doesn't want to merge the two.

Mr. Budicak at this time asked that council members enter into executive session to discuss possible litigation that might occur. All other people in attendance were asked to exit the building and the meeting will continue upon the completion of the executive session.

Ms. Harker moved to pay the borough bills as presented on the bill list and was seconded by Mrs. McNeely. The motion carried.

Mr. Heaton moved to approve purchases made by committees and was seconded by Mrs. McNeely. The motion carried.

Mrs. McNeely moved to adjourn at 9 pm; seconded by Mrs. Sepp with unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Lansberry
Borough Secretary