

PRE-MEETING BADEN BOROUGH COUNCIL NOVEMBER 13TH, 2024

Council President Dave Trzcianka called the Pre-Meeting of Council to order at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Baden Municipal Building, 149 State Street, to conduct business of general purposes.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mr. Bosh, Mrs. Gallagher, Mr. Miller, Mr. Shelkons, Mrs. Singleton, Mr. Stuban and Mr. Trzcianka

NOT PRESENT:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OTHER RECORDING DEVICES

AGENDA (Changes and/or Deletions)

VISITORS

RESOLUTIONS

24-04 Liquor License Transfer – Establishing a protocol and fees for intermunicipal liquor license transfers.

MOTION by Mrs. Singleton, second by Mr. Stuban, carried unanimously to approve resolution 24-04.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Secretary

- 1. Lead Service Line** – In the council packet was a sample of the federally mandated letter mailed out to the residents. There were approximately 1,400 letters mailed out.
- 2. Financial Account Balances** – Elaine Rakovan went over the current account balances to date and she expressed her concerns about the depletion in funding. She also clarified that some of the funds may not be co-mingled such as Liquid Fuels and the Water Fund. She went over the spreadsheet and made note that the draft budget from last meeting has changed after reviewing the current budget balances. The original draft budget showed a shortfall of almost \$250,000 and the revised draft budget is \$146,584. Elaine stated that we want to be in a place financially where if an unforeseen event/cost occurs we have the funding immediately and do not need to run to the bank for a loan and not pay bills until all the loan paperwork is completed and loan received.

The council questioned some line items and expenses/cost within the fire department budget. This includes uniform allowance being paid to first responders and not firefighters, vehicle maintenance costs being over \$14,000 and their fuel costs are almost depleted. Discussion took place regarding the fire department and public works informing the council of the repairs and costs associated with vehicles.

Public Works

Foreman, Rodney Keenan stated that all of the vehicles are running. He is using the vehicle repair shop at the bottom of Monaca hill. Streets are currently being swept. 200

tons of cinders have been ordered. Salt bins are full, and the plows are going to be pulled out this week.

The water tank stirring equipment is not up and running. Mrs. Rakovan explained that the original DEP representative who mandated the equipment installation told us that no additional certification is required when the equipment is installed. The new DEP representatives have stated that new certification is required and once certified the employee needs to be trained for two years under someone who is certified. So, this would require contracting with a certified individual as a mentor for two years. Discussion also took place regarding sediment removal from the tank.

Mr. Stuban asked Rodney to look for burnt out streetlights when plowing at night and report them to the office.

Code Enforcement

Not Present – No report submitted.

Fire Chief

Not Present – No report submitted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance (John Shelkons)

- General Fund Balance: \$180,470 Expenses: \$986,084
- Water Fund Balance: \$307,342 Expenses: \$138,931

Public Works

Nothing to report.

Technology /Public Relations / Liaison (Library, Parks/Rec, Mun Auth) (Joe Bosh)

- **Library** – Mirrors were installed in the library for safety (see blind spots). There are rumors that the state and county will be cutting funding to the library next year. It is their understanding that the formula used for calculating the funding is changing and it will hurt our library. They are trying to get a meeting with the school district to discuss the school not sending a representative to the library meetings and the cut in funding for this year. The library board did tentatively agree upon a policy regarding registered sex offenders in the library. Sherri DiCicco resigned from the library and the recreation board.
- **Technology** – Mr. Bosh was hoping the CEO would have been attendance to give feedback on getting better reporting on code enforcement issues. As of now the borough office has zero access to any files/notes that the CEO is handling. The borough has access to a Microsoft product (Share Point) that is used for document storage with a company that is shareable. Mr. Bosh has replicated the current form that the CEO uses. He explained how it works and would give access to the borough office. The additional cost will be minimal (less than \$10 per month) The launch date will be January 2025.
- **Solicitation Ordinance** – The cost for the permit fee needs to be determined. The council agreed to charging \$25. A resolution will be adopted next week regarding the fee. The disqualification on the background check also needs to be determined.

Mr. Bosh commented that he would like to go into executive session after the meeting.

Administration & Personnel (Becky Gallagher)

- **Stray Cats** – Mrs. Gallagher noted that she found an ordinance for feral cats. She recommends have the ordinance state it is unlawful to feed feral cats if it causes a nuisance. If you are feeding a feral cat, then you are responsible for the feral cat. Discussion followed. It was recommended to amend the nuisance ordinance to include the feeding of feral cats.

Public Safety (Dawn Singleton)

Nothing to report.

Building / Grounds / Equipment (Michael Stuban)

- **CEO/Fire Chief** - Mr. Stuban reported that the CEO/Fire Chief is missing the meeting because he is working, and the fire department is doing a burn class tonight. The CEO inspections are being done and the CEO is getting ready to send out a letter to the people who still have not scheduled their inspection. A citation will be issued with the local magistrate on compliance if the inspection is not completed by December 31st. The CEO asked that the verbiage for the letter be approved by council. There was no CEO or Fire report because he (CEO/Chief) has been very busy.
- **Municipal Authority Ordinance** – The USDA requires an ordinance be done by the borough recognizing the extended life of the municipal authority.

2025 BUDGET REVIEW

Mr. Stuban went over the draft budget by line item.

Additional Changes made:

411.800 Fire Department Incentive Program - remove \$14,000 and make it zero.
456.500 Library Allocation increase from \$23,000 to \$25,000.

With these changes the budget shortfall is \$134,584

Tax rate increase was discussed. 1 mill brings in \$225,000. 0.6 mills will be \$135,000. 0.65 mills will be \$146,000. 0.5 mills will be \$112,000.

Mr. Shelkons commented that half a mill is a 10% tax increase. His concern was to keep the increase at a minimum. Further discussion followed. Next year there may be refunds on the tax assessments, as well as the garbage contract is up for rebid that can expect an increase in cost.

Mr. Stuban stated that we have until next week's meeting to go over the budget and consider the tax rate. He stated that .6 mills will make ends meet. 1 mill will give an extra \$90,000 that may help prevent a tax increase in the 2026 budget. He has council to consider their options and be prepared for discussion and motion next week.

Community Yard Sale – Mr. Stuban noted that the recreation board is not having the yard sale next year. The office can oversee the yard sale and Tom Turney volunteered to get ads for the yard sale map and guarantee a profit of \$2,000 that will go to the library.

Old Business Not on the Agenda, New Business or Unfinished Business

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Bosh, second by Mrs. Singleton, carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting and go into executive session regarding personnel at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted for approval,

Elaine K. Rakovan
Borough Secretary