

# REGULAR MEETING BADEN BOROUGH COUNCIL OCTOBER 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2020

*Due to COVID-19 guidelines for maximum occupancy capacity the regular meeting set for October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 was cancelled.*

Council President Judith Montell called the Regular Meeting of Council to order at 6:30 p.m. in the hall of the Baden American Legion located at 271 State Street, Baden PA 15005 to conduct business of general purposes.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

## ROLL CALL

**PRESENT:** Mr. Besong, Mr. Kotula, Mr. Shelkons, Mrs. Singleton, Mr. Trzcianka and Mrs. Montell

**NOT PRESENT:** Mrs. Furr

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mayor Gagliardi, Solicitor James Amato, Police Chief Christner

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OTHER RECORDING DEVICES

## AGENDA (Changes and/or Deletions)

Councilman Ted Kotula spoke on behalf of himself regarding what residents are hearing about police mergers and takeovers. After hearing the residents' concerns in regarding a takeover of the police by New Sewickley Township he made the following motion.

**MOTION** by Mr. Kotula, second by Mr. Shelkons to discontinue discussions with New Sewickley Township regarding police services. Mrs. Singleton voted no.

**ROLL CALL** to continue discussion of merger or police consolidation with New Sewickley Township.

Mrs. Besong	Not to continue
Mr. Kotula	Not to continue
Mr. Shelkons	Not to continue
Mrs. Singleton	Yes
Mr. Trzcianka	Not to continue – Further explained that everyone on council with the exception of Mr. Besong approved sending letters to municipalities and all we got was budget numbers from 3 of the 5. He commented that maybe we should stop talks with everybody.
Mrs. Montell	Not to continue

Five (5) No, One (1) Yes Motion carried to not continue talks with New Sewickley Township.

**MOTION** by Mr. Trzcianka, second by Mrs. Singleton to discontinue talks with all municipalities. Mr. Shelkons asked the audience if they knew the difference between contractual services and police consolidation. He noted that New Sewickley was the only municipality that came back with contracted service figures. He can understand why people would not want contracted services but he felt that consolidation should still be on the table. A resident spoke up about being against contracting with New Sewickley Township because it is so far away.

**ROLL CALL** to discontinue talks regarding police services (merger and consolidation) with all municipalities.

Mr. Besong	Yes
Mr. Kotula	No

Mr. Shelkons	No
Mrs. Singleton	Yes
Mr. Trzcianka	Yes
Mrs. Montell	Yes

Four (4) Yes, Two (2) No – Motion carried to discontinue talks with municipalities regarding police services.

The audience was in favor of all the motions.

Officer Derek Shipley spoke in regards to addressing council in June of 2020 about the Baden Police Department being totally fine with discussion merger/consolidation with our surrounding communities (Conway, Economy, Harmony...). This would make a better and bigger team of officers. He stated that the New Sewickley conversation was purely a talk of takeover and this is why the police are upset. He wanted to clarify that the Baden Police Department still supports looking into merging with another department.

## VISITORS

- Shawn Jackson from Watson Street informed council of the town he lived in before that had police contracted services and over the years police coverage was minimal and the town turned into Section 8 housing with drug problems.
- Lynn Daudet from Walnut Street thanked council for listening to the citizens. She stated that the police department has asked for police dog and she wanted to know if council would be willing to get them one. Mrs. Montell stated that we are currently in the process of hiring a new police officer and a K9 officer is an expense that she does not see in the future.
- Rob Kingerski from Third Street stated that we as residents are behind our police as they are the law enforcement experts in our town. He felt that the second motion was not necessarily a good thing. There are local towns that we could merge with that police recommend and it will give us a better police department and possibly a K9 officer and detective. Mr. Kingerski stated that he hopes he is speaking on behalf of those presents that they would not be against looking into merging with our neighboring communities. He asked if figures were given from New Sewickley and Mrs. Montell stated that there were figures received but they were not final figures. Mr. Trzcianka commented that information got out that was not accurate. He stated that a consolidation/merger is not going to save the borough money. He commented that he spoke to a Harmony Township commissioner who questioned Baden not receiving a letter from them. Mr. Trzcianka stated maybe they should have sat down with the police sooner, but in his eyes we were just trying to get budget numbers. He stated that consolidation is coming across the board for police, fire and public works. Mr. Kingerski didn't feel that was a bad thing. Mr. Trzcianka felt that the committee needs to sit down with the police officers and put in writing exactly what everyone is looking for. Mr. Kingerski stated that the police chiefs need to be involved. He also felt that the residents need to be informed.
- Chief Christner stated that Mrs. Montell told Chief Christner about the possibility of merging/consolidating with another department. He stated that she told him that she wanted him involved in every step of the process and this has not happened. Mr. Kotula commented that as public safety chairman he agrees that there should have been better communication, but on the other hand it needs to be reciprocated.
- Christina Smith from Dettmar Avenue stated that she felt the motion to discontinue talks with police departments was premature because the community did not understand because of the lack of communication. She felt a

consolidation with another community would be beneficial and give us a better police department. Our current police department is three officer and we are in the process of hiring a fourth. She felt that a police department could not be run efficiently with four officers. She also emphasized the need for better communication with the police department and community. She asked that the motion regarding discontinued talks about police consolidation be revisited.

- Officer Derek Shipley stated that the department does walk on eggshells hoping that no one get sick/hurt and is off from work. He noted that Sgt. Alvarez cut his hand and is off work so he is working 80 hours from Sunday to Sunday. Chief Christner commented that tomorrow is trick or treat and he can't take his own kids trick or treating because he has to work due to lack of part time officers.
- Mike Slawianowski from Holmes Avenue backed Chief Christners comment regarding better communication. He questioned appointing someone to look into this that was kicked off of council. This doesn't look good for council. He recommended sending letters out to the residents, publicize and inform the residents as to what is going on. He state all of this could have been avoided if the residents would have been informed.

Mrs. Montell asked the audience to raise their hand if they attended a council meeting within that last year. Not too many hands were held up. She stated council meets twice a month on second and third Wednesday of each month and these meetings are open to the public. The dates are advertised and placed on the borough calendar.

- Elvin Everett from Milton Street has been a resident of Baden for 57 years. He could not imagine Baden without a police department. He commented that a merger of Conway and Freedom did not work out well seven years ago. He wants his town to be safe. He knows it costs money to keep our town safe and he asked that council and the police department to unify and work together. He stated that he is willing to pay more taxes to have safety in his town.
- Michael Loftus from State Street stated that he supports the police department 100% and he backs them on the decisions that they make and the opportunities that they may have. He does the same with Baden Fire Department where he volunteers. Both departments make multiple sacrifices throughout the year not seeing their kids and leaving dinner on the table for calls. He backed Mrs. Montell's request of show of hand as to who has attended a council meeting within the last year. Mr. Loftus addressed the audience stating shame on you if this is your second council meeting this year. There are meetings twice a month and everything they talk about is public knowledge.
- Bob Symoniak from Virginia Avenue stated that he is disappointed with council commenting that for councilman Dave Trzcianka to throw a temper tantrum at the beginning of the meeting and make a motion to cut off something that benefits the safety of our community is wrong. Mr. Symoniak stated that council needs to continue discussion with our local communities. He also felt that the police chief was not included in the process because some councilmembers didn't want him included. Mr. Symoniak said to the audience to talk to the councilmembers, ask questions and ask them what they support, their ideas and who they hate. He felt that council was not transparent.
- Rob Kingerski stated that after last weeks cancelled meeting he understood that it was the intent of council to stop talks with New Sewickley and to move forward with discussions of merger. This is what we understood. He told Mr. Trzcianka that he is wrong in making his motion to group all the other communities into one. The reason we don't want New Sewickley is because they are too far away. Mr. Kingerski asked council who held up the hiring of a police officer 6 or 7 years ago. He asked Chief Christner how many officers we used to have. Chief Christner stated five (4 full time officers and one chief). Mr. Trzcianka

commented that the previous police chief was an administrative position. The current chief is a working chief. Mr. Kingerski again asked for an answer as to why we did not hire an officer. Mr. Kotula stated that he felt it was a financial issue.

- Christine Richards from State Street stated if it wasn't for the Baden Police Department her mother (Stella Vogel) would have died a long time before she did. When she called 911 the police were there within three minutes. She stated to council that you can't take this away from the residents.

- **MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Mrs. Singleton, second by Mr. Kotula, carried unanimously to approve the minutes of September 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

### **BILLS TO BE PAID**

**MOTION** by Mr. Trzcianka, second by Mr. Kotula, carried unanimously to pay all bills with two signatures.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

- **20-01** Eliminating police members' contribution to the Police Pension Plan for the plan year 2021.
- **MOTION** by Mr. Trzcianka, second by Mr. Kotula, carried unanimously to adopt Resolution 20-01

### **ORDINANCES – None**

### **BIDS – None**

### **CORRESPONDENCE - None**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Finance (John Shelkons)**

- |                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| • General Fund Balance \$295,086 | Expenses \$163,955 |
| • Water Fund Balance \$159,869   | Expenses \$51,189  |

- **Subdivision Plans**

**MOTION** by Mr. Shelkons, second by Mrs. Singleton, carried unanimously to sign the Spencer subdivision plans that have been approved by Baden Planning Board and reviewed by the County Planning Commission.

#### **Public Safety (Ted Kotula)**

- **Virginia Avenue**

**MOTION** by Mr. Kotula, second by Mr. Trzcianka, carried unanimously to have the solicitor write an ordinance regarding the placement of stop signs per the traffic study recommendations on Virginia Avenue at the intersections of Third Street and Second Street. This ordinance will also include the speed hump on Virginia Avenue.

- **Southwestern PA Commission Grant**

**MOTION** by Mr. Kotula, second by Mr. Trzcianka, carried unanimously to accept the \$238,506 funding from the Southwestern PA Commission to upgrade the traffic signals at the intersections of on State Street and Johnson Avenue, Harmony Road and Phillips Street. The borough match will be 20% (\$47,701) which may be paid from Liquid Fuels.

- **Full Time Officer**  
Applications being accepted through October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

- **School Resource Officer**  
Advertisement was run in the Beaver County Times looking for a part time School Resource Officer.

- **Fire Department**

**MOTION** by Mr. Kotula, second by Mrs. Singleton, carried unanimously to pay the Fire Department \$500 from their budget for the purchase of hats and puzzles for Fire Prevention Week.

**MOTION** by Mr. Kotula, second by Mrs. Singleton, carried unanimously to authorize the Fire Department to participate in the DCED fire department consolidation study.

- **Police Badges**

**MOTION** by Mr. Kotula, second by Mr. Shelkons, carried unanimously to purchase 500 badges at a cost of \$750.

**Building, Property & Grounds (Ted Kotula)**

- **Sale of Property**

**MOTION** by Mr. Kotula, second by Mr. Trzcianka, carried unanimously to authorize the solicitor to prepare and advertise the sale of borough property. All of the properties were assessed which will be the starting bids. Ehman Avenue (\$7,500), Hickory Alley (\$15,000), Jefferson Street (\$18,000) and Grant Avenue (\$18,000).

- **Harvey's**

- **MOTION** by Mr. Kotula, second by Mrs. Singleton, carried unanimously to sign the lease agreement with Harvey's regarding the right of way at the bottom of Washington Street.

**Public Works & Sanitation (Dave Trzcianka)**

- **Flags**

**MOTION** by Mr. Trzcianka, second by Mr. Kotula, carried unanimously to purchase 100 US flags at \$11 each and 100 flag poles at a cost of \$10.95 each. The Recreation Board will be giving \$675 towards this purchase.

- **Bucket Truck**

**MOTION** by Mr. Trzcianka, second by Mrs. Singleton, carried unanimously to authorize public works to use the bucket truck to repair a light bulb on the Legion Electronic sign.  
Note: The Legion advertises borough events on the sign at no cost to the borough.

**Municipal (Dave Trzcianka)**

Nothing to report

Library (Suzie Furr)  
Not present

Community Relations & Recreation (Dawn Singleton)

• **Banners**

The Recreation Board is still taking applications for the banner program.

• **Halloween in the Park**

The Halloween in the park went very well. Mrs. Singleton thanked officer Shipley for his time and service in helping them out as well as the Baden Volunteer Fire Department for their help and bringing out the fire trucks.

Administration & Legislation (Bob Besong)

Nothing to report

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

Nothing to Report

**ENGINEER'S REPORT – Not present, but written report as follows**

**1. USDA Grant/Loan Application**

Draft closing documents were submitted by Mr. Salopek for review by the Office of General Counsel (OGC). USDA anticipates OGC to complete their review by approximately September.

**2. Library ADA Access Updates – CDBG Grant**

A preconstruction meeting will be held with the Community Development Program of Beaver County representative and the contractor for the project (CTM Construction, Inc. of Monaca) on Friday September 18. Contract documents are still being signed.

**3. Bauman Avenue Storm Sewer**

Pipe must be repaired as soon as possible to eliminate the hazard of open pit.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Gagliardi thanked everyone for supporting the police department.

**PRESIDENTS REPORT**

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

Mrs. Rakovan clarified not hiring a police officer a few years ago. She asked Chief Christner to correct her if she is wrong. When we did not hire a full time officer a few years ago there were plenty of part time officers to fill the schedule which was a cost savings to the borough and at that time our full time officers were not being over worked. Within the past year and half to two years there has been a major decrease in the availability of part time officers. This is the main reason why we are in need of a full time officer. Chief Christner agreed with what the secretary had to say.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Mrs. Singleton, second by Mr. Kotula, carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted for approval,



Elaine K. Rakovan  
Borough Secretary  
November 9th, 2020