

Borough of Pitcairn Council
Workshop/Business Combined Meeting
Agenda
July 12, 2021
6:00 pm

Meeting called to order – President Dona Galia

Stand for Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

John Bova

Kevin Dick

Debra Freeman

Dona Galia

Lisa Petrosky

Jim Rullo

Michael Tobias

Mayor Margaret Stevick

All present.

Mrs. Galia announced Council held an Executive Session at 5:00 pm to discuss personnel and legal items.

Mr. Tobias motioned to approve Minutes from Borough Council’s Combined Meeting on June 14, 2021. Seconded by Mr. Bova; motion carried unanimously.

An update was given by Fourth Economy Consultants regarding Pitcairn’s participation in the grant funded Allegheny Together business development program of Allegheny County’s Department of Economic Development. They invited everyone to the three community sessions to offer input and ideas focusing on specific categories to improve Pitcairn’s main street and business districts as well as recreation, assets and identity. The consultants will gather all the information and data resulting in an implementation Plan by the end of the year. During the second year the County will help with technical help to implement what is in the Plan. Mrs. Galia thought this is a very positive opportunity for Pitcairn and thanked them for their guidance.

Citizen Comment on Agenda Items

Mrs. Evelyn Marto asked when the discussion of Wilmerding’s request for policing would take place. Mrs. Galia Dona said two representatives from Wilmerding are in attendance; discussion under the Public Safety portion of the Agenda. Mr. Bova: informal conversations between the two boroughs started months ago when Wilmerding realized their contract would not be renewed by the County. As soon as it evolved into a topic public should be involved, he alerted Pitcairn residents to help spread the word on social media inviting the public to attend tonight’s Meeting. No decisions have been made.

Rick Vilsack of 339 Third St. described buying a three- unit building that became unoccupied for six years while he was still charged the base fees for each unit. He paid the outstanding fees in order to obtain an occupancy inspection. Mr. Bova pointed out the billing is consistent with policy, if a unit will not be used the owner can ask to have the meter removed to stop those bills. Mr. Vilsack said they did stop billing for one of the three, he asked for the second one to be removed and feels he should be refunded the back fees for the empty units. Mr. Bova promised to look into his claim this week.

Mayor Betsy Stevick

Mayor Stevick reported Pitcairn Police worked 233 calls in the month of June, received \$750 municipal fines, \$561 from the State, \$220 for magistrate fines and \$200 Quality of Life fines. There is a need for school crossing guards, must have clearances. Please spread the word.

Personnel – Dona Galia

Mrs. Galia announced Pitcairn was again awarded Banner Community status making it a multi-year awardee.

Streets – Kevin Dick

Mr. Dick motioned to adopt Ordinance #1043 authorizing eminent domain proceedings for property known as Block and Lot 376-E-395-009 owned by Norfolk-Southern Railway Company as part of the Dirty Camp Run Flood Protection Project. Seconded by Mr. Bova; motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dick motioned to issue a Notice to Proceed to low bidder, A. Liberoni, Inc. for the Center Avenue and Hillside Avenue Paving Program, for \$67,259.60. Seconded by Mr. Bova; motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dick motioned to approve payment to A. Folino for 2017 Paving Project punch list items in the amount of \$2,290.12. Seconded by Mr. Tobias; motion carried unanimously.

Parks and Recreation – Debra Freeman

Mrs. Freeman invited Council, Mayor and public to attend the Trail Feasibility Study Open House on July 20th, 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Park Building.

Mrs. Freeman explained Park and Recreation would like to hold Halloween and holiday events depending on CDC guidelines at the time. She motioned to have banners created for each end of Broadway. Seconded by Mr. Dick; motion carried unanimously.

Finance and Economic Development – Lisa Petrosky

Mrs. Petrosky motioned to pay bills as presented. Seconded by Mr. Rullo; motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Petrosky motioned to approve Night Market event in September and to allocate Special Events funds if needed. It will be the last Friday in September. The concept is to have the businesses to stay open, music, food trucks, and vendors. Seconded by Mr. Bova; motion carried unanimously.

Health and Welfare – Michael Tobias

Mr. Tobias motioned to approve the disposition of 736 7th Street, Pitcairn, by the Tri-COG Land Bank. Seconded by Mr. Rullo; motion carried unanimously.

Update from Code Enforcement Officer, Nick Turner, who reported issuing condemnation notices and working with the Solicitor. Mr. Turner hung Knox boxes on certain commercial buildings in the Borough for Fire calls and encouraged businesses to update their fire alarm systems if needed. **Mr. Turner requested one week unpaid leave for vacation and it was granted.**

Electric – Jack Bova

Mr. Bova motioned to adopt MOU approving \$50 an hour/\$75 overtime for Utility and Public Works Foreman, James Comunale, retroactively for his work during an electrical emergency incident on June 23, 2021 and for future emergency situations outside the normal electrical service call outs. Seconded by Mr. Dick. Mr. Bova pointed out Mr. Comunale is currently doing the work of two linemen with Ray Preece off work with a broken leg and now retiring in October. Council commended him for all the projects he has overseen saving the borough several million dollars. Mr. Dick said he built the substation saving over \$500,000. Mrs. Galia added he is also building the new Public Works Garage. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bova motioned to adopt MOU approving unpaid leave and health insurance coverage for Raymond Preece from August 10, 2021 to September 3, 2021. Seconded by Mr. Tobias; motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bova motioned to approve attendance to Pennsylvania Municipal Electric Association's Annual Conference, September 8-10, 2021 at Penn State. Seconded by Mr. Dick; motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bova motioned to appoint the Cohen Law Group to process a Verizon Franchise Agreement Renewal. Seconded by Mr. Rullo. Mr. Dick voted no; motion carried.

Public Safety – Jim Rullo

Council invited two members of Wilmerding Borough Council to speak. They gave the history of contracted policing and the current provider, Allegheny County announced they would be leaving for monetary reasons. Wilmerding contacted other communities, got further with Pitcairn. Asking for policing to start in January 2022, submitted a good faith contract. Mr. Bova: it would have to be cost effective, cannot compromise our police coverage or cost Pitcairn anything. He continued: based on estimates from Chief Farally, he believes we could do it for \$400,000 a year. One officer in Wilmerding 24 hrs a day. They want a car, patrolling and policing, precise contract language will be worked out. Mr. Bova voiced concern if Wilmerding goes to the State Police, Pitcairn will have to respond more, for no compensation. Wilmerding said the County is not leaving due to the calls, they are leaving for monetary reasons. Mr. Bova: Wilmerding was paying \$300k we are asking for more to have a cushion, 3% increase a year, there will be an out in the agreement for either party. They are asking for three or five-year contract. Pitcairn would receive 25% of fines. Mrs. Galia asked Solicitor Matt Kalina: if we move forward and we are struggling to hire officers, what happens if we can't find enough officers for both communities. Mr. Kalina: we would spell that out in the contract. Lengthy discussion took place between Pitcairn residents, Council, Chief Farally, and Wilmerding council. Resident Megan Law asked is there any thought to an assistant chief, do we use agency for back up officers which is very expensive. Chief Farally: we don't use an agency; we have Mutual Aid Agreements with other communities at no cost. Still discussing if there would be a Sergeant, Lieutenant. Ms. Law asked about call volume. Mr. Dick: it is lower than ours. Resident of 339 Kenney Avenue said County provided three officers all the time. Wilmerding responded: they are in the building, may not be patrolling; the County sometimes added more personnel as their choice. Chief: they use it as a substation; only one person on. Pitcairn resident voiced concern can one officer patrol all the streets; can one officer do that whole area and if something happens there, will it pull experienced officers from Pitcairn. Mr. Bova: it could work either way with officers going to both communities. Chief: we will train and choose them. Fire Chief Tom Dick: to not have a police department in one community causes issues in neighboring communities, we have a brotherhood between fire companies, you have to respond. He continued: if you put an extra officer there, he will be available to Pitcairn also. Monroeville is here to back us up but crime is increasing there too, having another officer down there will help Pitcairn. If you are busy, you can't go to that call, but if you are available, you must respond. Mr. Bova: we cannot be less safe, but if Wilmerding is not policed, we are less safe. Wilmerding feels if they go to the State, they will regress, promises to support Pitcairn police. Ms. Law: are salary increases in the contract. Mr. Kalina responded yes. Wilmerding said at the end of each year they will revisit costs. Mrs. Galia: Wilmerding said they are willing to pay ahead of January to cover start up expenses. Mrs. Petrosky: quarterly payments should not be reimbursement. Wilmerding said they offered to split the first quarter to give half in advance. Heather Luimes of Pit Care pointed out the communities are already linked more than would be apparent.

Deb Marto: if the buffer is exhausted, where would Pitcairn draw from if it goes over budget. She asked how the Officers feel about it. Part time Officer Caruso: it is a great idea to combine communities. Full time Officer Peduzzi said he has analyzed it and feels it will bring finances and resources in. Mrs. Petrosky: if we are in Wilmerding will it increase who we must back up, for instance Turtle Creek where calls are increasing, whoever Wilmerding has mutual aid with, will we be called there. She heard they have only one officer and a chief. Chief Farally: yes, there would be mutual aid with those communities. Mr. Bova: do we respond to Turtle Creek now. Chief, no, there will be a potential for the Wilmerding officer to be called to Turtle Creek. Mr. Dick: it will go both ways. Turtle Creek will respond to Wilmerding. Mr. Bova asked Chief Farally: if our Wilmerding officer is called to Turtle Creek, our Pitcairn officer won't respond. Chief: unless there is a critical incident. Mrs. Petrosky: will three officers a shift be enough. She described a scenario. Mr. Dick: if there is a major event there are times there are no cars. Mr. Bova: we have had only one officer here at times, Wilmerding will be the community without an officer in those cases when Turtle Creek. He added: at this price point they are getting only one officer, if they want more, they would have to pay more. Tom Dick, Jr.: if Turtle Creek would request back up, you would still have one officer as a rover to assist. You wouldn't send all three cars, mutual aid from other communities would handle it. He added: we send an officer now to Trafford and sometimes no officer here. Wilmerding representatives: East McKeesport covers Wall now so they also pass through when there is a call. They clarified this proposal is for contracting, not merging. This is an important difference from a grant application standpoint. Deb Marto asked how much time will Chief spend there. Chief responded, as Chief he will decide how to divide this time between the two Zones, majority in Pitcairn but he will be there for his officers whatever town they are in. Resident asked if Pitcairn was going to buy a vehicle and what does that cost. Wilmerding: we will buy used. They will also revisit the call volume to see if they need to purchase a second car. Mrs. Petrosky: the proposals are \$400k a year with Pitcairn purchasing a vehicle, or \$350k if Wilmerding purchases vehicle. Mrs. Galia: these are negotiating points.

Mrs. Galia motioned to begin formal negotiations with Wilmerding Borough for police contracting. Seconded by Mr. Rullo. Roll call vote resulted in motion carrying unanimously. Mr. Bova: this is time sensitive in order to prepare officers. He asked anyone with further thoughts please get them to Council as soon as possible. Tom Dick: is there a deadline? Wilmerding said October they begin next year's budget planning. Chief Farally said three months is very short to recruit and train.

Solicitor's Report

Mr. Rullo motioned to advertise an amendment to the street opening ordinance. Seconded by Mr. Bova; motion carried unanimously.

Engineer's Report

EADS will be sending out notice to proceed to the low bidder for the paving of Hillside and Center.

Borough Manager's Report

Ms. Dietz read aloud the bank fund balances and summarized the Tax Collector's report.

Police Chief Report

Nothing more.

Mrs. Galia thanked everyone for coming and sharing their opinions and questions.

Mr. Rullo motioned to Adjourn at 7:25 pm. Seconded by Mr. Tobias; motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Dietz