

Borough of Coraopolis
Allegheny County, Pennsylvania
Regular Council Meeting via teleconference
February 14, 2024
6:40 PM

The Regular Meeting of the Borough of Coraopolis was called to order by Council President Robb Cardimen.

Police Chief Denbow led the gathering in the Pledge to the Flag.

A Roll Call of Members was then taken.

Present

Robb Cardimen

Rudy Bolea Via Teleconference

George Mihalyi

Allison Marine

Gary Flasco

Kim Haskins

Mike Harris

Joe Szabat

Michael Dixon, Mayor Via Teleconference

Mr. Cardimen said are there any questions from Borough Council on the Agenda? Mr. Cardimen said are there any visitor requests or comments regarding these Agenda items? Being none, the meeting continued.

Mr. Harris made a motion to approve the Minutes of the January 8, 2024 Reorganization Council Meeting. Ms. Haskins seconded the motion.

Motion passed by Unanimous Voice Vote.

Mr. Szabat made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 7, 2024 Council Workshop Meeting. Mr. Mihalyi seconded the motion.

Motion passed by Unanimous Voice Vote.

Mr. Mihalyi made a motion to approve the Invoices for February 2024 in the amount of \$452,739.48. Mr. Szabat seconded the motion.

Upon Roll Call Vote

Robb Cardimen Yes

Rudy Bolea Yes

George Mihalyi Yes

Allison Marine Yes

Gary Flasco Yes

Kim Haskins Yes

Mike Harris Yes

Joe Szabat Yes

Motion carried.

Mr. McCutcheon said there are two large items on there, one is \$172,000.00 for the traffic signal on State Avenue and Montour that has been completed. We will receive \$160,000.00 in grant money back on this. Mr. McCutcheon said we also paid the entire year of our liability insurance to Travelers in the amount of over \$100,000.00.

Mr. Mihalyi made a motion to approve the Payroll for the month of January 2024 in the amount of \$146,666.35. Ms. Haskins seconded the motion.

Upon Roll Call Vote

Robb Cardimen	Yes
Rudy Bolea	Yes
George Mihalyi	Yes
Allison Marine	Yes
Gary Flasco	Yes
Kim Haskins	Yes
Mike Harris	Yes
Joe Szabat	Yes

Motion carried.

Mr. Mihalyi made a motion to advertise an Ordinance to prohibit parking on the westerly side of Chess Street from 4th Avenue to Hiland Avenue. Mr. Flasco seconded the motion.

Motion passed by Unanimous Voice Vote.

Mr. Harris made a motion to authorize the Borough Engineers to prepare the specifications for the Neely Hts. Avenue Road Reconstruction Project that includes street and curb reconstruction, sidewalk replacement, waterline replacement and sewer line repairs with financial participation from CWSA and Columbia Gas. Mr. Mihalyi seconded the motion.

Motion passed by Unanimous Voice Vote.

Mr. Cardimen asked for a motion to approve the National Day of Prayer sponsored by West hills Ministerium at the Town Square Parking Lot on Thursday, May 2, 2024 from 6 pm to 8 pm.

Mr. Mihalyi said could we move that to the Park where there is more room and the use of the amphitheater is an available?

Ms. Dana Watkins said no, that's not a good idea because that's not what it is. The National Day of Prayer is a national event and it is supposed to be down in the Public Square and the Public Square is where anybody and everybody knows what's going on or wants to know what is going on and it draws people to it. That's what it was originally for, and that's what it's for. Doing it across the tracks and back into the cut, the only people that will be there is the people that know about it and it is not that type of an event. The event is for the public that don't know about it, that sees that it is going on and will be drawn to it.

Mr. Mihalyi said are there problems with parking there?

Ms. Watkins said no.

Mr. Harris made a motion to approve the National Day of Prayer sponsored by West hills Ministerium at the Town Square Parking Lot on Thursday, May 2, 2024 from 6 pm to 8 pm. Ms. Haskins seconded the motion.

Motion passed by Unanimous Voice Vote.

Mr. Harris made a motion to approve the Coraopolis Summer Jam at Shelley Jones Memorial Park and Bliwas Field on Saturday, June 29th and Sunday, June 30th from 10 am to 8 pm. Ms. Haskins seconded the motion. Motion passed by Unanimous Voice Vote.

Solicitor's Report

Mr. Richard Start said at the last meeting we had a Public Hearing regarding the Cash Market and the proposed transfer of a liquor license. We have scheduled a public meeting with the group wanted to transfer this license at the VFW on February 27th at 6 PM. He will be there to answer any questions and explain his idea in greater length and he continued to explain.

Mr. Cardimen said will we have a continuance of the Hearing, if so, when?

Mr. Start said yes, it will be scheduled after we see what develops from the public meeting. When the continuance has been scheduled it will be publicly noticed and comments will be taken at that time.

Police Chief's Report

Chief Denbow gave the Police Department Report for the month of January 2024.

Fire Chief's Report

Chief Spencer gave the Volunteer Fire Department report for January 2024 and said we answered 19 calls. Six were mutual aid calls, one motor vehicle accident, one gas leak, three CO Alarms, one false alarm, three elevator entrapments and three fire alarms and one burnt food for a total of 125.67 hours for the VFD.

Engineer's Report

Mr. Drew Null said Riverfront Park; there isn't a pay request for this evening. Some punch list items are remaining and have been addressed with the Contractor.

Mr. Drew Null said Grants; DCNR grant round has come open and they accepting until April and the CFA, the Act 13 program that you filed for in the past also came open. Applications are being worked on for resubmission and resolutions will be sent to you within the next two months.

Mr. Drew Null said the Ridge Avenue Tot Lot; we did get a copy of the agreement from the County and have submitted a waiver to request the use of COSTARS. We've talked about that Snider COSTARS agreement in the past, and they are looking at April/May for delivery.

Mr. Drew Null said the design is being finalized for Neely Heights along with that motion that was approved this evening to advertise and it is most likely an April bid opening.

Mr. Harris said regarding No. 4 on your report; the Mill Street Roadway Improvement, are there any drawings or anything? What's the status?

Mr. Null said we have filed several applications and do have one application that is a little less than half of what the total projected cost is. We are working with the Authority to replace a water line too and they are trying to secure some funding. Field surveys are done and the goal is to for construction to begin next year. This year is more of a planning year.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Dixon said earlier this month I had to opportunity to participate in the CCDC's Chili Cook Off which was extremely well attended so I thank the community for showing up for us. The CCDC does a ton for this Borough and it doesn't go unrecognized, so thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Mayor Dixon said I received an email from a local property developer who is experiencing an issue with the Water Authority. This email got me thinking about blight. The Water Authority has recently implemented Tap In Fees and I think that the Council of the town might want to know more about. This can create a barrier to some people trying to revitalize certain parts of our community and he continued to explain.

Committee Reports/Comments from Council

Mr. Flasco said I have nothing to report this evening.

Mr. Mihalyi said I had a gentleman call about the fire whistle and the noise. He wanted to know if he is allowed to start a petition.

Mr. Start said yes, I believe any citizen can petition Council for any matter.

Mr. Mihalyi said I will report back to him.

Mr. Bolea said I have nothing this evening other than a question for Mr. Null; has there been progress on the Flood Zone Project where insurance premiums are increased?

Mr. Null said we last filed applications (unsuccessfully) two years ago. The feedback received is no permits seem to not help the situation so at this point we may want to form a committee to determine a reasonable strategy to move that forward.

Ms. Marine said we are getting quotes from recreational furnishings that are COSTAR approved to be placed in the Town Square area.

Ms. Marine said Parks and Recreation wanted to share with the new Riverfront Park, a really nice feature of that park is having a paved 35 space parking lot and she continued to explain.

Ms. Marine said we wrapped up our parking study with an outside consultant last month and they published their final study which we will be taking a summery of and posting on the Borough website and she continued to explain. I think the most notable element to come out of the study is removing the parking meters, the paid hourly parking and making that free and open and she continued to explain. We still have a monthly parking permit program for those who want the assurance of a dedicated parking spot.

Ms. Haskins said I do not have anything at this time.

Mr. Szabat said the Coraopolis Library had their meeting last night and they are looking for additional Board Members, if anyone is interested, please call Mary at the Library.

Mr. Szabat said the library personnel are making plans for the asbestos abatement and looking for a starting date, so it can get underway.

Mr. Szabat said the library had to cut four hours off of their operating hours due to staffing shortages, they got the clearance from Allegheny County Library Association to do so. If any one is planning on going to the library, please check their new hours first.

Mr. Szabat said Ed Pitassi was named President of the Library Board. The next meeting is March 5th at 6:00 PM in the library and everyone is welcome.

Mr. Harris said I have a comment on the parking. I support the safe passage of our emergency vehicles we have to keep in mind that we are necessarily looking to eliminate some on street parking on Chess Street. Again, I bring up the vehicles that would be in ordinance violation on the streets just to make more parking spaces for those that are on the streets that may be losing their on street parking.

Managers' Report

Mr. McCutcheon said, if you haven't been up Montour Street lately heading out of Coraopolis and into Moon Township, there is a pretty nasty hill slide there. This is a PennDOT road, so they are working on it and will be a major project because I think the slide is a couple hundred yards and he continued to explain.

Mr. McCutcheon said the new traffic signals at Montour and State look great and the whole intersection looks nice now. It is nice to be awarded these grants, and we do have the ARLE grant that was awarded and will be doing 4th Avenue and Watt Street and hopefully will get done this year.

Comments from the Public

President Robb Cardimen said before opening the meeting to public comments I would like to make the following observations and direct that they may be part of the public record. It is the public's right to comment at public meetings and is limited to residents of the Borough or persons who pay taxes to the Borough and that is why we ask each person who desires to comment to give your name and address of the residence of property that you own in the Borough. Each person who seeks to comment is limited to three minutes and comments are limited to matters that are or may be before the Borough. Council Members are not required to answer any questions posed by the members of the public or engage in any dialog with the comments of the public. Council Members shall not comment on matters of personnel, discipline, or any legal matter.

Barbara Williams said I am here representing Dennis Borne, he is the owner of the property at 513 West End Avenue and this is about his past due Coraopolis Borough taxes. Ms. Williams said Mr. Borne is elderly with health problems and his only income is Social Security and she continued to explain.

Mr. Rick Start said Council does not have the ability to intervene on this matter.

Ms. Williams said I was under the assumption that the Borough has retained a law firm to collect back taxes for the Borough.

Mr. Start said yes, but there is an agreement stating all property owners must be treated the same. He continued to explain and a discussion pursued.

Mr. Start said I will take a look at the agreement and I'll be in touch with you.

Mr. George Carr from 103 Chestnut Street said I have two issues. In regards to the Cash Market issue, you are guaranteeing that we are going to have input?

Mr. Start said yes, sir. A discussion pursued.

Mr. Carr said my second issue is with Ray McCutcheon. What's the deal with the trash cans that were supposed to be here by the end of the year?

Mr. McCutcheon said they are here.

Mr. Carr said they just aren't put out?

Mr. McCutcheon said they haven't been put out and a discussion pursued.

Ms. Paula Montgomery said I own 617 7th Avenue. Thank you, Mayor Dixon, for bringing up the issue regarding the Tap In Fee. Is all of Council aware that a new Tap In Fee Ordinance was passed in November of 2023? And asked Mr. Cardimen to address Council.

Mr. Cardimen said there was an ordinance passed on the advice of the CWSA for tap in fees on properties that have not been occupied for over a year.

Ms. Montgomery said and the tap in fee is \$3,250.00 per house. As an investor in the community and looking to renovate abandoned properties the tap in fee is prohibitive and she continued to explain.

Erick Bryant of 625 6th Avenue said I want to reiterate on her statement with the tap in fees, where is this money being allocated?

Mr. Cardimen said it is for shared responsibility of input into Coraopolis Water and Sewer infrastructure. Each property owner has and input into that system.

Mr. Bryant said what I see happening is investors won't invest in vacant properties in our town, you may want to take into consideration these tap in fees. He continued to explain and a discussion pursued.

Ms. Sara DePace of 1366 4th Avenue said that's new information to me too, so I was just wondering. That tap in fee, what does that cover? Just to turn the water on for them? Is the lines already there? Is that for them to have access to lines already there or is it to put lines in?

Mr. McCutcheon said this is really an Authority issue so it should be brought up at their meeting and a discussion pursued.

Mr. Brian Diggins from Birch Holdings said we have offices at 1012 5th Avenue. Just to piggy back, I didn't know about this issue, but I would encourage you guys as Council, you know, we've been developing properties since 2015 down here and I've never felt like we had a very pro business or a very friendly relationship with Council or doing what you guys can to help small businesses succeed down here and he continued to explain.

Mr. Diggins said on Mill Street, it was mentioned that some plans are being discussed to present to Council. Is that something that LSSE is coming up with independently? Is the road going to be changed with the bump outs and the way that the road functions?

Mr. Null said we're going to review it with Council.

Mr. McCutcheon said the plan is to get rid of the bump outs.

Mr. Diggins said will there be public discussion about it or will you involve property owners?

Mr. Cardimen said once we have a couple of concepts, I think Council would bring something to the public for input.

Mr. Diggins said at the meeting last week there was a motion to terminate service agreement with Amato, Start and Associates and then immediately there's a motion to appoint you as Solicitor. Are you willing to give some clarification?

Mr. Rick Start said I separated my relationship with the firm.

Mr. Diggins said so you are just opening as a sole proprietor?

Mr. Start said yes sir and a discussion pursued.

Mr. Mihalyi made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Haskins seconded the motion.

Motion approved by Unanimous Voice Vote.

MEETING ADJOURNED