

BOROUGH OF EDGEWOOD
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**BOROUGH OF EDGEWOOD
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD
MONDAY, MAY 19, 2008**

President Patricia Schaefer called the Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Edgewood to order on Monday, May 19, 2008 at 7:35 PM in the Municipal Building.

Finance Director Kezmarsky called the roll and the following responded: Ms. McDonald, Mr. Harding, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Szefi, Ms. Pryce, Ms. Schaefer.

Mr. Hellett was absent.

Mayor Davin, Borough Solicitor Barry and Junior Councilperson McArdle were also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Ms. Schaefer called Mayor Davin forward to read the following Proclamation.

BOROUGH OF EDGEWOOD

PROCLAMATION 2008-01

WHEREAS, emergency medical services are a vital public service; and

WHEREAS, the members of emergency medical services teams are ready to provide lifesaving care to those in need twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; and

WHEREAS, access to quality emergency care dramatically improves the survival and recovery rate of those who experience sudden illness or injury; and

WHEREAS, the emergency medical services system consists of emergency physicians, emergency nurses, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, firefighters, educators, administrators and others; and

WHEREAS, the members of emergency medical services teams, whether career or volunteer, engage in thousands of hours of specialized training and continuing education to enhance their lifesaving skills; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize the value and the accomplishments of emergency medical services providers by designating Emergency Medical Services Week.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Borough of Edgewood, in recognition of this event, does hereby proclaim the week of May 18-24, 2008 as **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK** with the theme EMS: Helping People, One Life at a Time. The community is encouraged to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies and activities.

PROCLAIMED this 19th day of May 2008 by the Mayor of the Borough of Edgewood.

Mayor

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

Ms. Schano of 132 Dewey Street spoke as a representative of the Edgewood Foundation, giving an update on the Foundation's activities. She informed Council of the clean up which had occurred involving 25-30 people who picked up trash. The Senior Brunch was recently held and plans are underway for a parent/child sleepover at Koenig Field, according to Ms. Schano. She stated that the Fire Department expressed an interest in helping with this event.

Mayor Davin indicated that the Foundation would like to sponsor the parent/child sleepover in conjunction with the Fire Department. She said that a fire pit would be in use and that this event was planned several years ago, but never happened. Mayor Davin stated that the Fire Department personnel said they would like to participate and asked for use of Koenig Field for July 11, 2008. The Mayor clarified that every child must be accompanied by a parent. Sleeping bags or tents could be used, but no articles which might damage the Field will be permitted.

At this point, President Schaefer indicated that the Community Services Committee would settle the logistics of this event.

Mr. Lang of 1212 East End Avenue first thanked Council for warmly welcoming him at the last Council meeting. He then stated that he was a part of the Public Improvements Committee and funds have been accumulated for public improvements such as trash cans, benches and street pole banners for South Braddock Avenue. Mr. Lang asked that Council become a part of this effort. He wanted information on whom he might work with directly and was given Mr. Hellett's name as Chair of the Community Services Committee.

Ms. Schaefer suggested that he attend a Community Services Committee meeting. She said that some of the improvements may have to go through the Code office.

Borough Manager Ferguson offered that when specifics of the project are available, Mr. Lang should come into his office to sit down with the Building Inspector. Mr. Ferguson felt that there may be a few code issues to speak about.

Mr. Ferguson said that it is interesting that the Comprehensive Plan will be issued soon and that there are line items on what is permitted for the Edgewood vs Swissvale side of South Braddock Avenue in that document. He stated that this project might dovetail nicely into something with Swissvale. Mr. Lang stated that his group is currently meeting in Swissvale also.

On another issue, Mr. Lang mentioned that a renter at 1312 South Braddock Avenue wanted to buy a parking permit, but was told he could not.

Mr. Ferguson explained that the renter would need to be sponsored by an Edgewood resident in order to get a permit. These permits were designed for non-residents who visit regularly.

COMMITTEE ACTION

M-1 Ms. McDonald moved to approve the minutes of April 21, 2008. Second by Mr. Harding.

DISCUSSION: None.

Upon roll call vote, the following was recorded: Ms. McDonald, Mr. Harding, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Szefi, Ms. Pryce, Ms. Schaefer voted yes. **Motion carried.**

M-2 Ms. McDonald moved to approve the minutes of May 5, 2008. Second by Mr. Harding.

DISCUSSION: None.

Upon roll call vote, the following was recorded: Ms. McDonald, Mr. Harding, Mr. Reynolds, Ms. Pryce, Ms. Schaefer voted yes. Mr. Szefi abstained as he was not present for the meeting. **Motion carried.**

M-3 Ms. McDonald moved to authorize the payment of bills for goods and services received by the Borough, having been reviewed and approved by the General Government Committee, in the amount of \$79,200.39. Second by Mr. Harding.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Pryce questioned a Local Government Academy bill and was told that it covered Mr. Harding's attendance to a meeting.

Upon roll call vote, the following was recorded: Ms. McDonald, Mr. Harding, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Szefi, Ms. Pryce, Ms. Schaefer voted yes. **Motion carried.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

GENERAL GOVERNMENT REPORT

Ms. McDonald said that the Committee met this evening to review bills and sign checks. The Committee met with the auditors last week with positive results, according to Ms. McDonald, and a recommendation is on the agenda tonight to accept the audit.

DISCUSSION: Solicitor Barry asked to receive a copy of the audit. Mr. Ferguson stated that he would also supply a copy of the Tax Collector audit.

POLICE REPORT

Mayor Davin reviewed the crime statistics and stated that the Part I crimes have increased from last year. Part II crimes are lower than last year, according to the Mayor and the year-to-date figures are lower in the last two years. Mayor Davin said the months of March and April show significant increases. In comparison to 2007, calls have been down the past month and the year-to-date amount is down from 2007.

The Mayor stated that, with regard to the revenue, it seemed to be in line with the last couple of years.

DISCUSSION: None.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. McDonald read the highlights of the Public Safety Report. She stated that the Committee met last Monday. She stated that many things are under discussion, but need to be researched further before they can be brought before Council.

DISCUSSION: None.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Szefi stated that the Committee did not meet. He indicated that a summary of the Building Inspector was included in the packets.

DISCUSSION: None.

PUBLIC WORKS

Ms. McDonald read the highlights of the report. She stated that the Department was very busy during April.

Ms. McDonald deferred to Mr. Ferguson the explanation of the tree which fell onto a house on Lincoln Avenue on Mother's Day.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Pryce had a question regarding the time shown for cutting grass and where it was reflected in the report. Mr. Ferguson offered to get an exact interpretation of the report.

COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORT

Mr. Hellett was not available to give the report. Ms. Pryce stated that the Committee did not meet.

DISCUSSION: None.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Ms. Schaefer stated that the Committee did not meet.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Reynolds stated that June 2, 2008 was a possible date for a meeting, and Mr. Ferguson said that he would set a meeting in early June.

PENSION COMMITTEE

Mr. Szefi said that the Committee did not meet.

DISCUSSION: None.

AD HOC

PORT AUTHORITY AGREEMENT COMMITTEE

Mr. Reynolds said the Committee did not meet, and stated that there are several things in the works.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Ferguson stated that Ms. Showers will be available June 9, 2008 at 7:00 PM if everyone can attend a meeting.

INTERCOUNCIL (WHSD)

Ms. McDonald stated that she did not attend the meeting.

Ms. Schaefer did attend the meeting and reported that the S.T.A.R. program was discussed, a program from the state with respect to preschool child care. She said there are levels of certification to increase productivity and educational operations in nursery school. Career counseling was discussed at the Woodland Hills High School as well as internships for high school students and opportunities to shadow various workers.

Ms. Schaefer indicated that she discussed the 3 Rivers Wet Weather Demonstration Program during this time.

DISCUSSION: Ms. McDonald noted that the next meeting is May 28, 2008 and a state level speaker would attend to talk about maximizing real estate.

President Schaefer said a representative from the County would be promoting this area on the same program.

3 RIVERS WET WEATHER DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Ms. Schaefer said the Committee met at Carnegie Mellon University to discuss infrastructure and securing funding.

DISCUSSION: None.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mr. Szefi said the third, sparsely attended, public meeting was held at the Western PA School for the Deaf with residents of Rankin, Swissvale and Edgewood. The final product is anticipated to be rolled out in July.

DISCUSSION: None.

BOROUGH SOLICITOR REPORT

Mr. Barry said he is continuing to work with Mr. Ferguson on the recommendation of a photocopier leasing arrangement. State contracts are being perused so as not to require advertising. Mr. Barry said he is working on a couple of issues with Ms. McDonald and Public Safety.

DISCUSSION: Ms. Schaefer had a question about the right-to-know law which will start in January and the need to appoint someone as a point person for this project. She stated that the Local Government is hoping to have classes.

Mr. Barry was pleased to inform Ms. Schaefer and Council that his associate, Mr. Worner, is well versed in this law and stated that he will have him write a memo about it.

BOROUGH MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Ferguson said that he met with the General Government Committee last week concerning the 2009 budget. As well, he has scheduled meetings with Comcast and Blue Cross and several other groups.

Mr. Ferguson reported on the pin oak tree which fell at 210 and 212 Lincoln Avenue. He thanked the Police and Fire Departments, the arborist and Public Works. He stated that, with all due respect, the Borough has become extremely good at handling these situations. The arborist and Fire Department were on scene in a matter of minutes and everything was executed perfectly, according to Mr. Ferguson. He stated that, even though he was out of contact for about an hour, all necessary phone numbers were available.

The Borough Manager continued, saying that he met with the homeowner and the adjuster. He said that the sidewalk was planned out and will be rebuilt. The resident was very grateful and everything went smoothly, according to Mr. Ferguson. This was the second tree to be lost and the arborist is assessing if there is any action the Borough should take on the other trees.

Mr. Ferguson said that a street or two a year has been included for trimming. The arborist did a visual inspection of the trees and he will use a machine to reveal the density of them.

On another topic, Mr. Ferguson referred to an article done by the Post Gazette regarding suburban municipal debt which concluded that Oakmont, Fox Chapel, Mt. Lebanon and Edgewood

are in over their heads. He went on to say that currently Channel 4 is running the same type article and is stating that our community is in trouble through an online report. The report listed the Borough's debt at 11% of the budget. Their analysis rolled all of the debt into one category, according to Mr. Ferguson, but he indicated that this was not paid out of the general fund. The following is what Mr. Ferguson presented:

"About three (3) months ago, the Pittsburgh Post Gazette ran an article discussing suburban municipal debt in Allegheny County. In my opinion, that article was incomplete. It lumped communities together by looking at an annual Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) report submitted by municipal auditors. The article reported that communities such as Edgewood, Oakmont, Fox Chapel and Mt. Lebanon were in over their heads based on vague standards associated with debt ratios for municipalities.

Channel 4 ran what it called an investigative report this past week on municipal debt as well. It indicated that communities with debt amounting to ten percent (10%) of their annual budgets were in trouble. I have not seen that number used as a benchmark in all my time dealing with municipal finances.

While the report did not mention Edgewood specifically, it did refer to Edgewood in its online report. This online report consisted of listing communities and their total annual debt amount. It listed Edgewood's debt as approximately 11% of its annual budget.

I think it is important to clarify this superficial analysis for the Borough of Edgewood since no opportunity was provided by Channel 4. First, their analysis rolled all of Edgewood's debt into one category and that is very misleading. All of our debt, in fact, a significant portion of it, is not even paid for out of our general fund. Also, much of the remaining debt the Borough has in its general fund is short term in nature.

1. 42.6% of Edgewood's outstanding debt is paid for out of our sewage fund and not from our general fund. This debt then is paid for by user fees. This debt was the result of a sewer project the Borough completed replacing 1,200 feet of sewer lines on Race Street. If we use WTAE's analysis indicating that 11% of our annual budget is debt and we rightfully subtract this amount, Edgewood's debt is now under 7% of our general fund budget. Conversely, if we would add Edgewood's user fees from the sewer fund into the revenue side of their analysis, Edgewood's overall debt would be calculated at a little less than 5%.
2. 11.25% of Edgewood's debt is very short term in nature and will be paid off by 2011. In fact Edgewood will pay off its 5-year loan for a DPW pickup truck in 2009. One of our loans for our pumper truck will be paid off in May 2010 and our two (2) other new DPW trucks have three (3) annual remaining payments, meaning they will be paid off in 2011.
3. The Borough also has an outstanding loan that was used to renovate the Koenig Field bathrooms several years back. The \$785.28 quarterly payment will be repaid in September 2009.

Edgewood's long-term debt, which I will define as 10 years or more, translates to less than 5% of our annual general fund budget.

The Borough will be facing what amounts to a \$50,000 debt in 2016 because there will be 27 pays during the year. Borough Council has had the foresight to set aside one day's pay every year, as part of the budget, to handle this added expense. In 2016 when other municipalities are scrambling to come up with this money, we will already have it set aside.

Finally, there are a variety of other factors that should be considered when determining the overall fiscal health of a municipality that were lacking in both the Post Gazette article and the recent Channel 4 telecast.

1. We have no outstanding bond issues.
2. We have an undesignated cash reserve, or rainy day fund, of approximately 9% of our annual budget. Most financial experts agree that very healthy communities have a set-aside between 5-15%.
3. We have a healthy cash reserve in our sewage fund and liquid fuels fund.
4. We have comprehensive insurance covering the Borough for nominal losses as well as catastrophic events.
5. We have an infrastructure that overall is in outstanding condition.
6. While millage changed in the early 2000's as a response to unpredictable property values (and changed from 5.857 to 6.661 in 2003, but only because we eliminated the garbage fee) essentially taxes have remain unchanged for 12 years.
7. The two (2) long-term debts the Borough has incurred were in response to a specific need in the Borough; a deteriorated sewer line and new rescue truck for the fire department.

My point to all of this is to assure our residents that these items; the quality of our infrastructure, our cash flow, our debt ratios, our programs, and our potential need to go into any additional debt is all being aggressively monitored and please rest assured that we, in fact, are an extremely healthy Borough."

DISCUSSION: Ms. Pryce asked how residents have been notified.

Ms. Schaefer noted that this information was not just about Edgewood and that Channel 4 regurgitated the article from the Post Gazette's February article. Ms. Schaefer stated that the news article was not inaccurate, it was just incomplete.

Ms. Schaefer stated that the information will be placed into the minutes and will be available for residents to see.

Solicitor Barry asked Mr. Ferguson about the long term debt of less than five percent (5%) which he spoke about and asked what was the reason the debt was incurred.

Mr. Ferguson said fixing the sewers before the potential mandate to fix them came out and the fire truck work which was done in the interest of safety of the residents constituted the long term debt.

Mayor Davin commented on the excellent report given by Mr. Ferguson and asked that it be placed in the newsletter which is distributed to all residents.

Ms. Schaefer asked Mr. Ferguson to work with Ms. Stewart to have the comments published in the newsletter. She also stated that the Local Government Academy Board is working out a response to the article. A "Letter to the Editor" response was not published.

Ms. Schaefer thanked all those who left their Mothers' Day celebrations to come and help with the fallen tree.

Mr. Reynolds thanked Mr. Ferguson for the very good report. He asked about a hole on East End Avenue and had a question regarding the tree which came down.

Mr. Ferguson indicated that when a tree comes down, the sidewalk is cut differently from before; it is now cut with an indentation and the contractor pours the cement that way. Mr. Ferguson indicated that the arborist has been asked for different options.

Mr. Reynolds also had concerns regarding the shared driveway on Koenig Field and stated that people fly around the blind corner. He asked what the rules are concerning this site.

Mr. Ferguson said that he has ordered new "no parking" signs. He also said he has permitted Edgewood baseball volunteers parking passes. However, Mr. Ferguson understood that residents try to get close to the Field. The two main problems, according to Mr. Ferguson, are cars parking in the way of emergency vehicles and people bringing their dogs onto the Field. He stated that he is aggressively enforcing both issues. He indicated that there was an occasion where a girl from the softball team broke her arm and the ambulance was unable to get to her.

It was Ms. Schaefer's suggestion that the coaches should share information with the team parents regarding these issues.

Ms. Pryce said that a resident asked her to inquire about what is planned for the remainder of the trees in the Borough.

Mr. Ferguson noted that typically the Borough picks out areas that are overgrown and need to be trimmed and the arborist makes a recommendation for something aggressive, but a tree-by-tree analysis has not been done.

In response to Ms. Pryce's question regarding how to handle dead limbs from trees, Mr. Ferguson asked that she call him and he will contact the arborist

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. McDonald noted that tonight was Junior Councilperson McArdle's final meeting. She stated that he will be recognized at the June 2, 2008 meeting. She thanked him for being here and hoped that this was a valuable experience.

Mr. McArdle thanked Council for the opportunity and stated that this has been a great learning experience, somewhat the ultimate civics experience.

Mayor Davin again brought up the parent/child sleepover and getting the information into the newsletter.

It was Ms. Schaefer's opinion that the logistics needed to be clarified to ensure the safety of all involved.

COMMITTEE ACTION

- M-4 Mr. Reynolds moved to accept the resignation of Mia Fuqua effective June 2, 2008. Second by Ms. Pryce.**

DISCUSSION: None.

Upon roll call vote, the following was recorded: Mr. Harding, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Szefi, Ms. Pryce, Ms. Schaefer voted yes. Ms. McDonald voted no. **Motion carried.**

- M-5 Ms. McDonald moved to accept the Borough of Edgewood 2007 audit prepared by Maher Duessel. Second by Mr. Reynolds.**

DISCUSSION: Ms. Schaefer stated that the audit should be available for viewing at the Borough Building.

Upon roll call vote, the following was recorded: Ms. McDonald, Mr. Harding, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Szefi, Ms. Pryce, Ms. Schaefer voted yes. **Motion carried.**

- M-6 Ms. McDonald moved to accept the Borough of Edgewood 2007 Tax Collector audit prepared by Maher Duessel. Second by Mr. Reynolds.**

DISCUSSION: None.

Upon roll call vote, the following was recorded: Ms. McDonald, Mr. Harding, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Szefi, Ms. Pryce, Ms. Schaefer voted yes. **Motion carries.**

ADJOURNMENT

- M-7 Ms. McDonald moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM. Second by Mr. Szefi.**

DISCUSSION: None.

Upon roll call vote, the following was recorded: Ms. McDonald, Mr. Harding, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Szefi, Ms. Pryce, Ms. Schaefer voted yes. **Motion carried.**

Kurt M. Ferguson
Borough Manager