

Meeting November 7, 2022

The meeting of Mount Pleasant Borough Council was called to order by President Ruszkowski 7:00pm in Council Chambers at 1 Etze Avenue, Mount Pleasant, PA 15666. The Pledge of Allegiance was said and President Ruszkowski asked for a moment of silence for our Veterans. President Ruszkowski asked Borough Manager Landy to take roll call. Councilpersons present included Barnes, Czekanski, Cholock, Phillabaum, Barrick, Lasko, and Stevenson. Mayor Bailey and Solicitor Istik were present. President Ruszkowski stated that a quorum is present. Councilman Cholock and Solicitor Istik left at 8:14pm.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Stevenson to approve the minutes of October 24, 2022 since Council has been provided with a copy. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Lasko. Motion carried 8-0.

Speakers: None.

Public Comment: None.

A Motion was made by Councilman Cholock to hold an executive session regarding personnel matters. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Czekanski. Motion carried 8-0.

A Motion was made by Councilman Phillabaum to reconvene. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Czekanski. Motion carried 8-0.

Council President Ruszkowski stated that the executive session was held from 7:03pm to 8:13pm to discuss personnel matters.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Bailey read the Mount Pleasant Police Dept. Report for the Month of October 2022:

The Department answered the following calls:

Incidents	140
Criminal Arrests	7
DUI Arrests	2
Parking Tickets Issued (Boro)	18
Traffic & Non-Traffic Citations	25
Assist Other Departments (Police, Fire, EMS)	6
Accidents Investigated	6
Special Details	1

Income

Parking Meters	\$1089.02
Parking Tickets	\$397.00
Fees for Police Reports	\$150.00
Clerk of Courts	\$1168.07
District Court	\$1009.73
Ordinance Fines	\$0.00
Fingerprinting	\$0.00
Donations	\$100.00
Total Revenue	\$3913.82

Mayor Bailey gave the following report:

- Halloween Parade was a successful event. Thanked the Fire Department for sponsoring and organizing. Thanked Borough Manager Landy for arranging to have the headless horseman.
- Attended the Veterans Park Advisory Committee meeting.

- Attended the Jerry Lucia bench dedication on Saturday, October 29, 2022. Held at Central Fire Station. Bench was donated by the Westmoreland Drug & Alcohol Commission.
- Attended the Friends of the Library Fall Dinner at Bells Restaurant in Laurelville, PA. Congratulated all that put the hard work in and the fundraisers that they do for the library to support the children's books and programs there.
- Trick or treat went well. Thank you to the Fire Department and Police Department for helping to keep the area safe while the children are trick or treating. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that there were many complaints on Facebook regarding the time change and don't know whether the live in the Borough or the Township. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that she believes it was a mistake to change the time from 2:00pm to 4:00pm to the new time of 4:00pm to 6:00pm and that the fire department also requested that we not change the time. Councilman Cholock stated that the fire department was out. Borough Manager Landy stated that he believes that the Township will follow suit with the time change next year after speaking with them. Mayor Bailey and Councilman Cholock both stated that they liked the time change. Borough Manager Landy asked several residents if they minded the time change and they all liked the idea. Councilman Phillabaum stated that he believes the biggest complaint was that people didn't know where the Borough ends and Township begins. Borough Manager Landy stated that there are signs when entering the Borough.
- Congratulated Mt. Pleasant Viking Girls Soccer Team for bringing home the programs 1st Soccer WPIAL Title and wished them good luck moving forward going to the States program.
- The Veterans Day Parade will be held on Friday, November 11, 2022 at 10:15am. There will be a ceremony following at the Veterans Wall.
- Mayor Bailey read a proclamation for The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution setting November as the National American Indian Heritage Month.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Istik held her report in Executive Session.

Tax Collector's Report:

Borough Manager Landy read the following report for the month of October 2022:

Property Taxes	\$1,112.29
Supplemental Taxes	\$ 0.00
Per Capita Taxes	<u>\$ 425.00</u>
Total Collected	\$1,537.29

Remaining balance to collect for property taxes is \$26,367.36 and per capita is \$4,475.00.

Borough Manager's Report:

Borough Manager Landy gave the following report:

- Drove around during trick or treat and there was a nice crowd. That is what we want. People that don't want to participate can shut their porch lights off.
- Attended the Jerry Lucia bench dedication at the Central Fire Station.
- Updated the Secretary office with a new laptop and will be able to take it home and do work from home if needed.

- Rode with Police Chief Grippo looking at parking issues for the upcoming snow plowing season.
- Spent a lot of time this year on budgets with Secretary, Sharon Lesko. Sharon & I were able to come up with balanced budgets.
- Heard interest rates are going up and went to the banks asking for better interest rates. Received confirmation that rates are going up. Should be receiving better interest rates on our bank accounts in the next few weeks.
- Attended a zoom meeting with Police Chief Grippo regarding security cameras at the parks. Councilwoman Lasko stated that the reason for the cameras in the parks is that we have had some vandalism in them. Councilman Phillabaum stated that there has been destruction of equipment at Jack Bobbs Park.

Mayor Bailey stated that the bathrooms at the parks are now closed for the winter season and she also asked Police Chief Grippo to see that the basketball courts are locked at 10:00pm since that is curfew. Mayor Bailey said that the sign states 11:00pm but asked Council if it was fine to close it at 10:00pm. Council agreed it could be closed at 10:00pm. Mayor Bailey said that the Police asked if the basketball courts could be closed permanently for the winter. Council was not in favor of and did not agree with closing them for the winter. Borough Manager Landy stated that if the basketball court is icy and is a safety issue the Police should be able to keep it locked. Council agreed with that if it is icy or not safe that they can lock it. Councilwoman Lasko stated that the sign should be updated if it is going to be locked at 11:00pm. Mayor Bailey stated that she will report back to the Police Department that when they do their 10:00pm foot patrol that they are to lock the basketball court at that time.

President's Report:

Council President Ruszkowski gave the following report:

- Councilwoman Barnes asked about the pictures that are hanging on the wall for the Mayor. Council President Ruszkowski asked Borough Manager Landy to put up Mayor Bailey's picture on the wall. Councilwoman Barnes and Mayor Bailey asked what about Council President Ruszkowski's picture when she was acting Mayor. Council President Ruszkowski stated that there was some controversy and she will refrain from having her picture put up. Councilwoman Stevenson stated no along with several of the council members. Councilwoman Stevenson stated do not let "nay sayers" deter you. Councilman Phillabaum stated that the group photo also needs to be put up. Council President Ruszkowski said she will decline. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that it is not right and that she filled as acting Mayor in at a very important time. All of Council believes that Council President Ruszkowski should most definitely have her picture on the wall in chambers. Councilwoman Barnes stated that whether or not Council President Ruszkowski was officially sworn in, she was the interim Mayor. Council agreed. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that she would be the first woman Mayor in the history of Mount Pleasant. Councilwoman Barnes agreed that Council President Ruszkowski was the first woman Mayor and this is part of history. Mayor Bailey agreed. Councilwoman Barnes stated that the Borough made history twice within a few weeks with Council President Ruszkowski as acting Mayor during the passing of late Mayor Jerry Lucia and with Mayor Bailey being appointed by Council as Mayor in January 2022. Councilwoman Lasko stated that it was a difficult time and that the Borough needed a stable leadership and Council President Ruszkowski provided that. Councilwoman Ruszkowski stated that during the first few days after the passing of the late Mayor Jerry Lucia that no one was thinking what needed to be done. Mayor Bailey stated that Council President Ruszkowski stepped up and took control and it needs to be recognized. Council all agreed and stated that she has their support.

Property Report:

Councilman Barrick gave the following report:

- Spoke with Mr. Ulery of Ulery Architect regarding the gazebo project. Hoping to have a copy of the plans before the next meeting.
- Needs to contact the surveyor for the Bridgeport Street property to discuss the easements and utilities on the property so they can be laid out on the plans. Once that is complete it can go through the Borough Planning and then on to County Planning.
- Needs to contact Bill regarding the East End Marketplace to prepare for the buildings to be brought in.

Councilwoman Stevenson reported that the windows have been cleaned and that the blinds will be installed on Wednesday, November 9, 2022.

Streets / Stormwater Report:

Councilman Phillabaum gave the following report:

- Street Department is picking up leaves now. Will continue until the weather changes for snow plowing.

Councilman Barrick asked if the weeds around the parking area at the Coal & Coke Trail could be cut by the Street Department. The Borough does not own the property; however, the toys-for-tots miniature train is going to be coming through on November 12, 2022 and they would like to have it cut for the occasion. Borough Manager Landy stated that we cut it once this year for the Business District Authority and they were going to do it afterwards and did not do it. Councilman Phillabaum will speak with Jeff McGuinness about having it cut.

Parks & Recreation:

Councilwoman Lasko gave the following report:

- There was a request from Linda Macaluso and a group of friends who taught with Vicki Smith-Hickle, who was an elementary teacher with the Mt. Pleasant School District and recently passed away suddenly. They would like to install a park bench at Frick Park in her memory at the far side of the greenspace outside of the outfield fence. Councilwoman Lasko and Borough Manager Landy worked together with Linda Macaluso and they have picked out a spot on the hillside. They have purchased the bench and it will have a plaque on it. They are waiting on the plaque to come in. The bench will be installed by the Borough. Once everything is ready, they will hold a dedication. Councilwoman Lasko stated that she discussed with them that should the bench ever be moved, it would be at their expense and not the Borough and they agreed that it would be at their expense.

Public Safety Report:

A Motion was made by Councilman Phillabaum to ratify contract with the Police Department for full-time Police Officer effective January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2026. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Lasko. Motion carried 7-0.

Councilman Phillabaum read the following Fire Report for the month of October 2022:

Total Calls – 52
 In Town – 21
 Out of Town - 31
 10-45's - 14
 Entrapments - 0
 Fires -16
 AFA's - 16
 Hazardous Calls – 4

Public Service Calls – 2
Ambulance Assistance – 1
Standby's – 0
Turnpike Calls – 5
Landing Zones – 0
Drills – 0
Total Members Answering – 655
Avg. Member Per Call – 12

Councilman Phillabaum gave the following report:

- Councilman Phillabaum stated he would like to participate in exploring a regional police force with members of Council in Scottsdale along with a few other local municipalities. He spoke with Police Chief Grippo and Barry Pritts of Scottsdale about their thoughts on a regional police force and they have no problem with it. Councilman Phillabaum stated that if either of them had not liked the thoughts of it, he would not pursue it any further. Councilman Phillabaum stated that there is an officer with Scottsdale that needs to take one more class for the overweight vehicles and if we were regional or anyone participating in it, would have access to the officer for stopping overweight vehicles. Councilman Phillabaum would like to be able to participate in the conversations with the other municipalities and report back to Council. Council agreed that Councilman Phillabaum should look into and look forward to hear more about it. Council President Ruskowski stated this is something that does not happen overnight. Councilman Phillabaum stated that it would take at least three (3) years if it is fast-tracked. Councilman Phillabaum stated that it would take more than three (3) years. Councilman Phillabaum stated that there would be a Board to oversee the regional police force and that Board would then report back to their respective municipality. Each municipality would pay a share towards the regional police force. Councilman Phillabaum stated that he is not committing to anything and that he is just exploring the options. Council had no objections at all to Councilman Phillabaum exploring the options of a regional police force.

Veterans Park:

Councilwoman Barnes gave the following report:

- Spectrio will have a gentleman here to install a part on the digital wall on Thursday, November 10, 2022 at 10:00am.
- We have received 10 applications with all the required documentation for the Veterans Banners.

Ordinances:

Councilwoman Czekanski read a report from Councilwoman Wojnar stating that the Borough does not currently have an Ordinance regarding ATV's. Pennsylvania state does have some rules and regulations but specify that municipalities may have further restrictions.

Some municipalities limit the use of ATV's by distance to a residential property line.

Councilman Phillabaum stated that he has received a complaint of a resident burning leaves and another one burning garbage. Councilman Phillabaum asked the resident to call 911 and report that they are burning and violating the Ordinance. Mayor Bailey will talk with the Police and asked if the 911 call was answered. Councilman Phillabaum said that it was.

Human Resources: None.

Finance / Grants Report: None.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Stevenson to advertise the 2023 Budgets for General Fund, Liquid Fuels and Medic 10. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Lasko. Motion carried 7-0.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Stevenson to advertise for bids for the Solid Waste and Recycling Contract. Bids will be accepted at the borough office until 11:00am December 2, 2022. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Lasko. Motion carried 7-0.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Stevenson to retain Opst & Associates, LLC of Greensburg, PA as Mount Pleasant Borough Auditor for the years ending December 31, 2022 through December 31, 2024. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Lasko. Motion carried 7-0.

Borough Manager Landy stated that they interviewed 2 candidates, Opsts & Associates, LLC and Singer Accounting. The third candidate was the current auditor, McClure & Wolf. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that Singer declined because of her current workload. There were two (2) proposals. The Opst & Associates, LLC proposal will save the Borough \$11,000.00 over the next three (3) years.

Councilwoman Stevenson proposed discussing raising taxes by ½ mil. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that the budget is balanced this year based on extra money that has come to the Borough and will not continue to come in the future and that we need to be thinking further ahead than just this next year. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that she knows that Council President Ruszkowski is not in favor of raising taxes right now. Councilwoman Stevenson stated that Borough Manager Landy suggested the small tax increase and she agrees with him. Councilman Barrick stated that because of increased prices, it is understandable that taxes need raised. Borough Manager Landy stated that it would cost approximately \$32.00 per year per household. Councilman Barrick and Councilwoman Lasko agreed that it is better that the Borough be looking forward now and increasing with a small rate instead of waiting and hitting everyone with a larger increase at one time. Borough Manager Landy suggested raising the taxes this year because the school district is not and residents won't have the schools big tax increase this year. Councilman Phillabaum stated he sees both side of it and that with all costs rising that this being the one thing that doesn't, every little thing helps. Councilman Phillabaum stated he isn't saying that he opposed to it; however, he does see both sides of it. Council President Ruszkowski stated that she is definitely a no to raising taxes. Councilman Barrick stated that the Borough just ratified a Police contract for the next 4years and instead of hitting residents with a big lump sum tax raise that it would be better to do a small amount this year and possibly another next year. Councilwoman Lasko agreed about raising taxes in small portions. Councilwoman Barnes stated that we are still sitting on the money from the sale of the plant and why can we not use some of that money and said that she believes people want to know. Borough Manager Landy said anyone can look at the budget. This year alone the Police budget is \$366,000.00 and the Borough brings in one million, so 33% of the money that is brought in goes to the Police budget. With a ½ mil tax increase it would bring in approximately \$22,000.00.

New Business:

- Borough Manager Landy stated that the Crossing Guard contract will be completed by the next meeting.
- Council President Ruszkowski stated that Secretary, Sharon Lesko, is now learning how to do the payroll.

Reading of Communications:

- PSAB will be holding an online Webinar: Legal Aspects of Code Enforcement on Wednesday, November 30, 2022 from 12 Noon to 1:30pm. Member rate is \$45.00.
- PSAB sent out a Grants Update with several grants that are available.

Discussion and Payment of Bills:

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Stevenson to pay all authorized and approved bills. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Czekanski. Motion carried 7-0.

Public Comment: None.

Miscellaneous and Adjournment:

A Motion was made by Councilman Phillabaum to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Councilman Barrick. Motion carried 7-0.

Meeting Adjourned 9:38pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey A. Landy,
Borough Manager

BOROUGH OF MOUNT PLEASANT

Susan Ruszkowski, Council President

Motions from Meeting of November 7, 2022

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