

**COALDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
221/223 Third St., Coaldale, PA 18218
March 12, 2024 7:02pm**

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Council President Claire Remington followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Solicitor Robert Yurchak, Council President Claire Remington, Vice President Yvonne Stoffey, Mayor Eric Ramirez, Councilman Jacob Adamitis, Councilwoman Kim Gavornik, Councilman Francis Hutta, Councilman Wayne Figner, and Treasurer Katherine Papesh. Councilwoman Angela Krapf was absent.

Audience Attendance: 5 members of the public were in attendance.

Public Participation:

- Bob, a property owner in Coaldale, wanted a status update on the bleachers and if anything has happened yet. Claire Remington advised that there is discussion with the school to come to some sort of resolution. She also advised that she is meeting with them in the month of March to work out something. He distributed paperwork showing what they are worth now and believes that the school should bring them back. Francis Hutta advised there was a public meeting with the school last month and both sides shared information, a lot of that was not discussed, and they were not aware of. Bob advised if it were him, that he would be in jail, to which Francis agreed, but they needed to find out what really happened, and they will, for the best interest of Coaldale.
- Dan, Water Authority Board member, updated Council that they received two grants: 1) \$331,600 for Abbott Street project for 12-inch water main & restore the trenches and service lines, and 2) \$300,00 for new water meters.
- Kathy, a property owner in Coaldale, asked if the Council could get in contact with the property owner of 133 E. Howard Ave. since he has not been around since 2018. She believes he lives in upstate NY. The trees are causing damage to the neighbors. A few days after the last council meeting, there were high winds, and a huge branch broke and hit the power line causing it to smoke. Kathy called 911 to get the Fire company and PPL out to get some of it down. Over the past couple of years, another neighbor's fence was smashed due to the branches. Claire advised she will look at the parcel locator to find out who owns the property. A neighbor tried contacting him and after being hung up on, the phone was disconnected.

Approval of previous minutes: Motion made by Francis Hutta to approve the February minutes. Seconded by Jacob Adamitis and motion carried **unanimously**.

Treasurer's Report/Approval of Bills: Given by Katherine Papesh.

- Kathy asked if Council if they would be interested in researching whether to collect the delinquent per capita taxes. There are usually about 752 delinquents which is about \$12,000. She said we could either do it in-house or hire Berkheimer to collect them. Berkheimer will add their charge onto the bill. Action was tabled until next month.
- **Motion** made by Francis Hutta to approve the bills. Seconded by Jacob Adamitis and motion carried **unanimously**.

- **Motion** made by Francis Hutta to accept the Treasurer's Report. Seconded by Kim Gavornik and motion carried **unanimously**.
- Kathy advised that Council received a credit card application from Co-Stars and there is also PLIGHT. Kim informed everyone that the credit card was applied for because they cannot remove a name on the current one. The people's name(s) on the card, and currently no longer on Council.

Mayor's Report: None.

President's Report: Given by Claire Remington, President.

- Council was approved by the STMP Program to help our Treasurer with the financials for \$57,000, and Council will only have to pay 6% of it. Companies that gave estimates were PA Economy for \$57,625 and Keystone for \$63,300. **Motion** made by Francis Hutta to pay PA Economy. Seconded by Jacob Adamitis and motion carried **unanimously**.
- Claire asked Council to consider funneling the money from the Tamaqua Animal Rescue to go towards the cat neutering/spaying but wait until May to act. **Motion** by Francis Hutta to funnel the donation money from Tamaqua Animal Rescue to go towards the cat neutering/spaying. Seconded by Jacob Adamitis and motion carried **unanimously**.
- Claire addressed adopting the new resolution – fee scale. One was adopted in January 2024. Action was tabled until next month.

Secretary's Report: Given by Beth.

- A letter was sent to the Panther Valley School District advising that they could not utilize the Complex on Election Days in April and November because the town will be utilizing it.
- A 2021 Ordinance was adopted July 13, 2021, for property maintenance code, but the code is not correct as Council had the one from 2018.
- Rental applications are due back April 1, 2024, but they have not been mailed out yet. Need a date for them to be returned without penalty due to Council sending them out late. Kim Gavornik advised that a letter should be sent out noting the fee being changed from \$30 to \$100. She suggested that by a 30-day notice to pay the \$30 due and the person will have an additional 30 days to pay the remainder off what is paid.
- Kim Gavornik asked what can be done, if no one is living in a property, when 4 years of taxes are due or they are not paying their sewer bill. Luis advised he can black card the property and ensure no one can live there until everything is paid. Claire Remington advised that the Solicitor steps in.
- Act 57 local tax collection law needs a motion, and Claire Remington advised it should have been adopted years ago. **Motion** made by Francis Hutta to accept Act 57. Seconded by Jacob Adamitis and motion carried **unanimously**.

Police Report: Given by Yvonne Stoffey.

- Financial Summary for February: District Justice fines \$985.73, parking tickets \$12.00, moving permits \$100.00, accident reports \$140.00, total revenue \$1,473.
- Total miles patrolled were 6,692 miles.
- Responded to and resolved 124 calls for service, issued 8 parking tickets, issued/filed 4 non-traffic citations, issued/filed 20 traffic citations, and executed 3 criminal arrests.
- **Motion** made by Francis Hutta to accept the Police Report. Seconded by Jacob Adamitis and motion carried **unanimously**.

Solicitor Report: Attorney Robert Yurchak

- Specs for sanitation bid will be emailed tomorrow for soliciting bids 2-year, 3-year, and 4-year alternate bids for sanitation contract. The council is not going with Recycling for which the contract is up in July.
- Kim Gavornik addressed the delinquent trash bill and Portnov acting on the collections. She also suggested stopping the sewer/maintenance fee from going through Portnov and allowing the Water Authority turn off the water if they do not pay it within 30 days. Dan, Water Authority Board Member, advised that Lansford does it. The council is \$100,000 in debt and Kim suggested that she come up with a payment plan with the Solicitor overseeing it to allow the community to get back on track.

Fire Report: Given by Jacob Adamitis.

- For the month of February: 1 dwelling fire, 1 brush fire, 3 automatic aids, 2 false alarms, 1 public service, 10 Quick Response Service (QRS), 1 EMS Assist, 2 wires down, 3 fire police request/assist PD, 1 pole fire, 1 CO detector activation, 1 equipment fires, and 1 landing zone. 28 total calls for February 2024. Total calls for the year are 52.

Code Enforcement/Zoning Report: Given by Luis

- Luis will talk to his boss about Board of Health inspections.
- Claire Remington requested that Carl Faust, Zoning Officer, give at least a quarterly report.
- Kim Gavornik suggested the Council investigate the Zoning Ordinances to get everything updated and changed in the next couple of months.

Jr. Council Report: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administration: Given by Kim Gavornik.

- Lori, Secretary, and Borough had a mutual resignation. In the next month or so, it will be posted for hiring another Secretary.
- Webinar July 24, 2024, for the Treasurer which costs \$45.00. **Motion** made by Francis Hutta to pay the \$45.00 for the Treasurer to attend the webinar. Seconded by Jacob Adamitis. And motion carried **unanimously**.
- Basketball was cancelled one night due to a power outage which was \$35.00. **Motion** made by Francis Hutta to refund the money. Seconded by Wayne Figner and motion carried **unanimously**.
- Resolution for New Hires was drafted by the Solicitor: If any employee is hired, and passwords or possessions must be returned to receive final paycheck. Motion made by Francis Hutta to adopt the Resolution for New Hires. Seconded by Wayne Figner and motion carried **unanimously**.
- Register for August for Blighted Property Webinar for \$45.00. **Motion** made by Francis Hutta to pay \$45.00 for the webinar. Seconded by Wayne Figner and Jacob Adamitis and motion carried **unanimously**.

Building/Complex: Given by Francis Hutta.

- The school board meeting was on February 9, 2024, with Rob Palazzo and Council did not demand square footing, pricing, etc. Contract calls for 2,000 sq ft of classrooms and offices they are apparently renting. There are 2,582 sq ft of classrooms and 1,125 sq ft of offices which do not include hallways, bathrooms, coat rooms, storage, or anything else. The Borough receives \$2,070.00 per month, which comes out to \$.52 per sq ft. while previous rentals have been over

\$1.00 per sq ft. Council wants to charge what's fair to cover the bills and come to a happy medium. He advised that Council needs to sit down and talk it out with the School Board next month.

- As far as the window replacement is concerned, they were not touched. Francis is drawing up specs for Carl Faust to review along with the Solicitor to ensure everything is adequate which will then be put out for a bid, closing the 2nd floor windows, as far as framing and vinyl siding, no windows will be included. Claire Remington advised that the people of Coaldale deserve to know that the taxpayers are footing the bill for the Complex. Last year, the Borough only received \$705.00 per month for the classrooms/offices.
- The gym received from senior citizen bingo \$4,600.00, soccer in 2023 \$60.00 and 2024 \$60.00, basketball practice in 2023 \$950.00, and parties 2023 \$300.00 and 2024 \$200.00.
- Yvonne Stoffey is working on forms Complex inside, Complex field, and the other parks in the area to make it more organized.
- Claire Remington asked Council to get some quotes for Extermination services other than Seitz.

Demolition/Grants: Given by Wayne Figner.

- There needs to be approval because there is a grant for six properties that need to be demolished. Grant Managers are Ron Zimmerman and Gerald Mannit from Pottsville. Motion made by Francis Hutta to apply for the grant. Seconded by Wayne Figner and motion carried **unanimously**.
- Prices are \$50,000 for single homes, of which there are 4. Condemned houses that are attached to homes can be \$50,000 plus another \$20,000 to face off the side of the house that was attached.

Financing/Utilities: Given by Kim Gavornik.

- She will be looking into APPI, which is an electrical company, to come in and see what costs can be cut. AAPI is through the Borough and IGS and they will both give presentations on ways to cut costs.

Handicap: Given by Wayne Figner.

- Wayne did not receive any paperwork. Claire advised that he needs to appoint numbers on vehicles and the spots, so they match. If it's okay, Council will investigate the stickers to put on the sign and vehicles.

Memorial: Nothing.

Police: Given by Yvonne Stoffey.

- Grant Writer for Police has passed.
- Officer Krebs inquired about the cell removal; the fire company offered to take it out in order to try out some of their new tools. Motion made by Francis Hutta to allow the fire company to remove the cell and the Borough will keep the door. Seconded by Kim Gavornik and motion carried **unanimously**.
- Resignation letter from Part-Time Officer Joshua Tom. Motion made by Francis Hutta. Seconded by Jacob Adamitis and motion carried **unanimously**.
- Motion to add a Motion by Francis Hutta. Seconded by Kim Gavornik.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the officers for the extra \$2.00 during COVID. **Motion** made by Francis Hutta. Seconded by Jacob Adamitis and motion carried **unanimously**.

Police Pension: Nothing.

Recreation: Given by Yvonne Stoffey.

- March 17, 2024, St. Mary's Orthodox Fish Dinner 11:00am – 1:00pm, March 23, 2024 VFW Auxiliary Food Truck "Having a Meltdown" 2:00-7:00pm, March 23, 2024 Egg Hunt at Black Diamond Park, March 29, 2024 Fish Fry at Fire Company 4:00-6:00pm, March 30, 2024 Rod &

Gun Club Easter Egg Hunt Registration at 12:00pm and Egg Hunt at 1:00pm, April 6, 2024
Comedian at Fire Company at 7:00pm with John Valby, April 20, 2024 10:00-3:00pm Flea
Market & Food Truck Festival.

- May 18th & 19th, 2024 is Town Yard Sale
- May 25, 2024, is Town Cleanup

Streets: Given by Francis Hutta and Kim Gavornik.

- Snow plowing will not happen on private roads/driveways. Residents will be responsible for plowing from where borough property ends to their residence.

Old Business:

- Claire Remington brought up the private area by the highway and there is a pop-up camper that has made no payment in 2023 or 2024. Officer Weiss hand-delivered a letter to which no action was taken. The solicitor will put together something that is binding. The solicitor advised that police could notify them or have it towed under Motor Vehicle Code. **Motion** made by Francis Hutta for Solicitor to put together something binding for the parking spots by the highway. Seconded by Wayne Figner and motion carried **unanimously**.
- No response from C.H.O.S.E. and they are doing nothing for the kids right now. Council wants their cameras back and Claire Remington suggested a letter be sent by the Solicitor. **Motion** by Francis Hutta for Solicitor to send a letter. Seconded by Kim Gavornik and motion carried **unanimously**.

New Business: Given by Claire Remington

- **Motion** made by Francis Hutta to increase zoning hearing fee from \$775.00 to \$800.00 and when you participate in the hearing it's \$75.00 per member. Seconded by Jacob Adamitis and motion carried **unanimously**.
- **Motion** was made by Francis Hutta to have trophies returned to borough. Seconded by Wayne Figner and motion carried **unanimously**.
- Building permits are to be shown in front of the house/in a window.
- Chris Waidell asked if Francis Hutta and Wayne Figner were going to be held responsible for supposed HIPAA violation against her husband. Claire Remington clarified that no HIPAA law was violated due to no personal health information being revealed. Francis Hutta brought attention to the fact that information of the executive session was being leaked to the public via Jacob Adamitis.

Executive Session: 6:32 pm – 7:00 pm Personnel Issues were discussed.

Motion made at 8:32pm to adjourn by Francis Hutta and seconded by. Motion passed **unanimously**.

SUBMITTED BY:

Submitted for approval on March 14, 2024