

**NEWPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL
MID-MONTH MEETING MINUTES
October 15, 2024**

President Greg Shope called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the following Borough Council Members present: Christian Fickes, Barbara Leach, Mary Bucher, Tami Halstead, Penny Frownfelter, and Billie Dudley.

ABSENT: Mayor Stephen Tice

OTHERS PRESENT: Newport Borough Secretary Shelly Damiano, Luke Roman, Perry County Times

President Shope asked Cl'm Frownfelter to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Shope announced that the meeting was being recorded.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

PAY MID-MONTH BILLS: As approved at the October 1, 2024 meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

MORE Grant (Municipal Opportunities for Retrofits and Energy Efficiency)

Secretary Damiano informed council Newport Borough has been awarded \$50,000.00 for the MORE Grant. The grant covers the following: 1) Level 2 Commercial Energy Audit, 2) Energy Conservation Measure (ECM), 3) Facility Conditions Assessment (as part of ECM), and 4) Project Design for the borough office building. No match required. Requesting approval to proceed with accepting the grant.

MOTION: Cl'm Frownfelter moved, seconded by Cl'm Dudley to Approve the MORE Grant in the amount of \$50,000. Motion carried.

Code Enforcement Officer/Zoning Officer Position

The President and Vice President have interviewed 2 applicants of the 9 resumes received. The position is still open on Indeed.com. Still looking for a qualified candidate. The new Code Enforcement/Zoning Officer will have a 90 day probationary period. In the meanwhile, former Code Enforcement Officer Michelle Tice is on-call and Mayor Stephen Tice is able to issue fines and citations.

Alcohol Fees/Permits

The next Ordinance meeting to be held next week on Monday, October 21, 2024, will review the permit fees.

Code Enforcement Violation Fines

Code Enforcement Committee Chair, Cl'm Bucher, stated that at the earlier Code Enforcement Committee meeting tonight they discussed proposing to increase the fines, but want to do more research.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval to renew Newport Borough Volunteer Fire Department State Workers' Insurance Fund (SWIF).

Total premium is \$30,861.00 and the policy year is 11/1/2024 - 10/31/2025. The required down payment is \$7,715.00 due by 10/31/24.

MOTION: Cl'm Halstead moved, seconded by Cl'm Dudley to Renew the Newport Borough VFD State Workers' Insurance Fund for a total premium of \$30,861.00 with a down payment of \$7,715.00. Motion carried.

Newport Borough Workers Compensation Renewal & Commercial Policy Renewal: 11/1/2024

Selective is the borough's current insurance carrier, through Don Jacobs Insurance, for both Workers Compensation and Commercial & Property insurance. Renewal Rates:

WC [\$10,401.00] + Commercial/Property [\$20,952.00] Total of both policies = \$31,353.00

Municipal Risk Management, Inc. (MRM) gave a comparable quote:

Newport Borough Workers Compensation [\$9,196.00] + Commercial/Property [\$10,571.00] +

Public Officials/Employment Practices Liability [\$11,545.00]

Total of all 3 policies = \$31,312.00. MRM is a Trust that returns surplus to members in the form of annual dividends, once vested into the Trust.

MOTION: Cl'm Frownfelter moved, seconded by Cl'm Fickes to Approve Municipal Risk Management Trusts for the Property & Liability Commercial policy, Newport Borough Workers Compensation policy, and the Public Officials/Employment Practices Liability for the total cost of \$31,312.00, which will begin on November 1, 2024. Motion carried.

Newport Police Department: Unclaimed Property

Richard Foltz, Director of Perry County Emergency Management Agency, New Bloomfield, PA, forwarded the PA State Treasury Department's Unclaimed Money for law enforcement agencies to the borough. Cl'm Halstead explained that there were (2) \$15 unclaimed property items at the State Treasury Department listed under Newport Police Department. Consensus from council was to pursue the claim for the \$30.00. The secretary will complete the required documentation.

Ordinance #387: Amending Chapter 55 Shade Tree Commission

Cl'm Halstead explained the proposed ordinance to amend Chapter 55 Shade Tree Commission.

The blue highlighted sections are existing sections where there has been no amending or removing of the text. The yellow highlighted sections are adding or changing with the language. Chapter 55 §55-5 Violations and Penalties was an added section.

MOTION: Cl'm Fickes moved, seconded by Cl'm Dudley to Tentatively Adopt and Advertise Ordinance #387: Amending Chapter 55 Shade Tree Commission. Motion carried.

Upgrade Comcast accounts for the Park and the Borough Maintenance Garage

Currently both the Park and the Borough Maintenance Garage have identical Comcast services: 100 mbps for \$117.94 per account, including all fees. Both accounts can be upgraded to 150 mbps for \$102.94 per account, plus fees, but would still save about \$10 per account.

MOTION: Cl'm Halstead moved, seconded by Cl'm Dudley to Approve upgrading both Comcast accounts for the Park and the Borough Maintenance Garage to 150 mbps for \$102.94 + fees per account. Motion carried.

C-7 5W Replacement Light Bulbs for Snowflakes

The Snowflake light decorations use C-7 5W incandescent bulbs.

1,000 incandescent bulbs: clear-warm light color = \$275.00

1,000 LED: cool-white (blue) or warm-white color = \$790.00

Cl'm Fickes suggested to order the incandescent bulbs until the light poles are fixed downtown.

MOTION: Cl'm Halstead moved, seconded by Cl'm Dudley to Approve ordering 1,000 incandescent C-7 5W clear replacement bulbs at a cost of \$275.00 from Holiday Designs, Gainesville, GA. Motion carried.

2004 Ranger Repairs

Cl'm Fickes, Roadmaster for the Streets Department, stated that the Ranger needs 2 front tires and a ball joint, but he did not have the written quote for council to review. The repairs will be tabled until the November 5, 2024 meeting.

Local Share Account Statewide Grants

The Local Share Account (LSA) Statewide is a grant that is available with No Match required and is due by November 30, 2024. CFA charges a \$100 non-refundable application fee paid electronically by debit/credit card. Secretary Damiano would like to apply for the grant for insulation and metal interior finishing of the borough garage. The requirements for the grant include being a minimum \$25,000 project, submitting a quote for the project at prevailing wage, and passing a resolution with the grant amount being requested. If the grant is awarded, the grant would need to be advertised for bidding of the project due to the 2024 bidding threshold of \$23,200 to require formal bidding and public notice.

MOTION: Cl'm Frownfelter moved, seconded by Cl'm Dudley to Approve to apply for the Local Share Account Statewide grant for the Borough Garage insulation and interior metal finishing. Motion carried.

BUDGET

Liquid Fuels (ACT 655) estimated 2025 allocation is \$43,967.72.

Current Health Insurance is with Capital Blue Cross: Gold PPO 1000/20 Rx 0, with Vision. The plan is Age Banded. 2024 coverage rate:

3 employees for Medical and 2 employees + 1 employee with spouse/children for Vision = \$2,867.97 per month

2025 coverage rate:

\$3,095.33 Medical + \$34.68 Vision = \$3,130.01. An increase of \$262.04

Other health quote options from 2 other agents were presented to council for consideration.

Other benefits for employees besides Medical and Vision:

Dental, Life, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Short-Term and Long-Term Disability

Discussion:

1. Premiums: PPO vs H.S.A. Qualified High Deductible Plans
2. Cost Sharing: Employees paying a portion of premium. Some felt salary was not competitive and that is why the benefit premiums are paid by the borough.

2025 Budget Worksheet was tentatively completed line by line.

The 2023 Actual Income & Expenses and the current 2024 Year-to-Date Income & Expenses were referenced.

Some Discussions:

1. Sidewalk Café
2. Park Grants: Stretching equipment and new benches
3. Pickleball Lights for nighttime activities. Cl'm Halstead stated the park is not open after dark.
4. Is a Dog Park in future plans? Dog waste is not picked up inside fenced areas where residents let their dogs off their leash and being off the leash is not permitted. People are not cleaning up after their dogs now and is a constant problem for the ball teams.

Council will take the 2025 Budget Worksheets home for further review.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, November 5, 2024, Regular Monthly Meeting at 7 pm

ADJOURNMENT: Cl'm Dudley moved, seconded by Cl'm Halstead to adjourn at 9:05 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelly Damiano,
Secretary/Treasurer