

MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING OF NESQUEHONING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., Borough Office
114 W. Catawissa Street, Nesquehoning, PA 18240

ROLL CALL: COUNCILMEN JACOBS, PAUL, RADOCHA, SABOL III;
COUNCILWOMEN FOX, POREMBO; PRESIDENT HAWK; &
MAYOR KITCHKO

President Hawk called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Councilman Paul and Councilman Sabol arrived at 6:30 p.m.

PURPOSE: Workshop/Committee

1. STREETS MICHAEL RADOCHA, CHAIRMAN; LOUIS PAUL, CO-CHAIRMAN;
GEORGE SABOL

Councilman Radocha stated how they have to clean up dirt from some of the washouts. Councilman Jacobs stated how they could be cleaning up the piles of anti-skid at the intersections.

Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how she had received a phone call from Jessie Walck, Business Manager of the Panther Valley School District concerning shared services. She stated how she asked him to send something right. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how he was contacting all of the towns (Nesquehoning, Summit Hill, Lansford & Coaldale) in the Panther Valley School District. She stated how he was talking about paving projects.

Councilman Jacobs stated about the parking on Allen St. He stated how one of the no parking signs was knocked down and never replaced.

President Hawk asked about sealing on Little Flower Avenue, because it was starting to gap at the curb line.

2. SEWER MARY FOX, CHAIRWOMAN; FRANK JACOBS, CO-CHAIRMAN;
MICHAEL RADOCHA

Councilwoman Fox stated how Mr. Pilla was going to start emptying unit #2.

Councilwoman Fox stated about the infiltration from Lake Hauto. She stated how she had talked to Mike Tirpak about placing something in the manhole at the pump station at Rhododendron Drive. Councilwoman Fox stated how Rush Township was monitoring their own, but Mr. Tirpak thought how the water was coming from up further since it was gravity fed. She stated that if they would place a flow-meter in the manhole, it could cost approximately \$7,000.00, unless they would rent one. Councilwoman Fox stated how Mr. Pilla had a company willing to sell them two flow-meters for \$2,500.00. Councilman Radocha stated that for them to do a flow test, it was not going to pinpoint the problem. He stated how they could spend \$5,000.00 on smoke testing and catch most of the problems, which then they would be better off. Councilman Jacobs stated how they know that they have a heavy concentration of rainwater coming from New Columbus. Councilman Radocha stated how it would be beneficial to eliminate it rather than monitoring it. Councilman Jacobs stated how they would need the manpower to do the smoke test. Councilman Radocha stated how they would get some cost on it.

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Councilwoman Fox stated about the property on Stock Street that was not on the Sewer System, which they were having issues with the septic system. She stated how the Maradeo property was also not hooked to the sewer system. Councilman Jacobs stated how he did not know if they wanted to spend that kind of money to extend the main line for one property. Councilman Radocha stated how they would have to connect to the main, if they were within 150 feet. Councilwoman Fox asked if their turkey mount would fail, was the Borough obligated to install main sewer line. Councilman Radocha stated how they should have to pay the \$2,050.00 to tap into the sewer line. Fox stated how the Maradeo property had paid for their tap in fee back in the 90s, but never hooked up.

Councilman Jacobs stated how the prison was having an issue with their water meter, which they bill for sewer based on water consumption. He stated how Mr. Tirpak was supposed to get her figures to use for the sewer surcharge billing.

Councilwoman Porembo stated how she had received a complaint from Toni Marie at the Lantern concerning a sewer odor, which she was getting from the sewer plant. She stated how she called Councilwoman Fox and Mr. Pilla informing them of the complaint. Councilwoman Fox stated how Mr. Pilla was airing the tanks, breaking down the sludge. She stated how they have issues with odor on really humid days. Councilwoman Porembo stated how Toni Marie called her back to let her know that it was better.

3. BUILDINGS GEORGE SABOL, III, CHAIRMAN; MICHAEL RADOCHA, CO-CHAIRMAN; FRANK JACOBS

Councilwoman Fox stated how the rain spouting was blocked on the church side of the Borough office. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how she had informed Councilman Sabol about the problem and asked to have the Borough crew clean it out.

4. PUBLIC SAFETY ROSEMARY POREMBO, CHAIRWOMAN; LOUIS PAUL CO-CHAIRMAN; DAVID HAWK

Councilwoman Porembo stated that on June 29th, they reviewed the revised Detective Job Description, along with the Rules of Property Procedures. She stated how Mayor Kitchko was going to check into the weapons transfer rate from Ed's Sports Center. Mayor Kitchko stated how he did not get the rates yet.

Councilwoman Porembo stated how they had discussed the garbage on Catawissa Street with Chief Smith and the garbage was cleaned up, they placed garbage receptacles outside. She stated how he told them that they do not have a walkway to hide them and that they had complied with everything that was asked.

Councilwoman Porembo stated how Chief Smith had asked for computer at a cost of \$950.00. She stated how they had asked him to look into a cheaper laptop. Councilman Jacobs stated about purchasing equipment for people to use at home. He stated how they were \$20,000.00 over in salaries and they agreed to \$6,000.00 for the technology grant. Councilwoman Fox asked if the computer that he was looking for was to be used at his house. Councilwoman Porembo stated "yes". She stated how he was also looking for an additional user license for their Alert System for \$1,650.00. Councilwoman Porembo stated how their discussion was about him doing work at home.

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Councilman Jacobs stated he how did not like some of the requests in the Detective Job Description, like taking a car home. He stated how they were looking at an additional \$9,000.00 to cover his shift. Mayor Kitchko stated how they were going to cover his shift with part-time officers. Councilman Jacobs stated that the \$9,000.00 along with the \$26,000.00 that has already been spent was a half a mill. He stated how the budget was really tight. Mayor Kitchko stated how they will still have the two part-time officers working. Councilman Jacobs stated how he has been seeing three officers working on dayshift. He asked if they put the detective on, would there be four officers on during the day.

Councilman Jacobs stated that on the last police report, there were over 2,000 miles put on the police vehicles. Mayor Kitchko stated how that was every month. Councilwoman Poremba stated about trying the detective out for three months (August – October) to see how it would go and how much it would cost. President Hawk stated how they had discussed with Chief Smith about a trial period to see how it would shake out. He stated how Chief Smith explained that they were just changing things around from the way Officer Neikam was working with the part-time officers were working. Councilwoman Poremba stated how she thought that when a part-time officer was working on a shift, it was to cover for a full-time officer, who was out on vacation/sick leave. She stated how they will assign a shift (Officer Neikam's shift) to the part-time officers.

Councilman Jacobs stated how there was wording in the job description that said how the Borough will purchase whatever was necessary for the detective to do his job. He asked if that would be put on hold until they see if it was going to work out. Councilwoman Poremba stated that Chief Smith explained that whatever was in the budget would not be exceeded. She stated how they would have to live within the budget. Councilman Jacobs stated about the detective needing plain-clothes.

Councilman Jacobs stated about the detective taking a car home. He stated how that was approximately a 60 mile round-trip. Councilman Jacobs stated how that was extra miles/gas for a vehicle at the Borough's expense. Mayor Kitchko stated how they could say no to the vehicle. Councilwoman Fox stated how they have five full-time police officers and how Officer Neikam worked one of those full-time shifts. She stated how the part-time officers would be covering the shift that Officer Neikam was not working. She stated how it would be like having a sixth full-time officer. Councilwoman Poremba stated "correct". Councilwoman Fox stated how they have to watch that they were not over stepping the hours because of medical insurance. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how they would have to check with an insurance agent to answer that question. Councilwoman Fox stated about talking to Solicitor Yurchak.

Councilwoman Fox asked if the detective's work was going to take away from the full-time officers over time; for example court time. Mayor Kitchko stated how he will be handling most of the court time. He stated how there might be certain cases where the arresting officer would have to go to court. Councilwoman Fox stated how it might balance itself out if he were to handle the court hearings. Councilman Radocha stated how they had talked about not having a pay difference, but he thought that it was going to cost them more money in the long run. Councilman Jacobs stated how they were already at the 95% for materials and supplies. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner asked if Officer Neikam was going to help out in filling shifts when a full time officer went on Vacation. She stated how Officer Breiner usually takes a week or so during hunting season and did not know if Officer Neikam would fall into Officer Breiner's shift while he was on vacation. Mayor Kitchko stated "yes". Councilwoman Poremba stated how it was written into the job description. She stated that the only way they were going to know if it would work was to put a time limit on it. President Hawk stated how they would have to sit down with Chief Smith to go over some of the questions.

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Councilwoman Poremba asked Secretary/Treasurer Ahner if she had received the paperwork form David Walls. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how she only received the insurance paperwork, nothing in regards to the loan. Councilwoman Poremba stated how she would follow up with him regarding the loan.

Councilwoman Poremba stated how they had to schedule a date for a follow-up meeting concerning 90 E. Catawissa Street. She stated how they were at a total of \$39,000.00 in fines with 35 AFA's since 2017. President Hawk stated about deciding on a date, August 19th at 4:00 p.m., to meet with the representatives from 90 E. Catawissa Street. Councilman Sabol stated how they should allow them to take the floor first to see what they were willing to offer, because he did not want to see the borough except \$1,000.00 for their fines. He stated how they put the fire department through hell for a long time. Councilman Sabol stated that if they were not going to enforce their ordinances, then why have them. He stated how he will allow some leeway, but not much. Councilman Sabol stated how they should give the Borough a reason to lower the fees. John McArdle stated that when they had their initial hearing, they wanted to only pay \$10,000.00 and give donations to the fire companies. He stated how all of the fire money would go into the Fire Truck Fund and they were requesting half to three quarters of the full amount. Mr. McArdle stated that they were complaining on how they had to spend over \$50,000.00 for the alarm system. He stated how that was their argument. Councilman Jacobs stated how they have to come up with a number. Councilman Paul stated "\$38,500.00". President Hawk stated how their argument was that they had to hand out a substantial amount of money to upgrade their alarm system. He stated how that was not the Borough's problem. Councilman Jacobs stated how that was going to be there argument again.

Councilman Paul stated how it would help pay for the fire trucks. Mr. McArdle stated how that was why he wanted the funds to go into the Fire Truck Fund. He stated that he did not think that it was going to be fair to divide it up between the three fire companies. Mr. McArdle stated how they had the chance to put some money back into the fund and it would be fair to everybody. Councilman Paul stated that he felt that the Borough should get the full amount. He stated how it would help pay off with what the fire companies needed. Councilwoman Poremba stated about all of the lawyer's fees that the Borough paid. President Hawk stated how they should think about how much they would be willing to settle for. He stated how they will be holding an August workshop meeting. Councilman Paul stated how he did not want to budge on the fees. He stated how they were always scraping for money and trying to figure out where they were going to get funds for the police or the recreation. Councilman Paul stated how it was the time to keep something they have. President Hawk stated that if they did not budge, they would probably end up in court and then the Borough was going to have court costs. Councilman Paul asked if they should drop to \$30,000.00. Mr. McArdle stated how he would go no less than half. Councilman Radocha stated how he was suggesting no less than \$20,000.00. Councilman Jacobs said he was thinking \$20,000.00, also. Mr. McArdle stated how he felt that the Council needed to make them work for the \$20,000.00. He stated that from his understanding, Solicitor Yurchak was going to be the negotiator.

President Hawk stated about starting at the top. He stated how he agreed with Councilman Sabol on how they should let them convince Council on why they should lower it. Councilman Jacobs stated how they should check to see how much they have paid Solicitor Yurchak over the past several years in regards to the property. Mr. McArdle stated about correspondence back and forth with Carol Walbert. He stated that if it was not for them getting on the property owner to upgrade the system, they were going to close the building down. President Hawk stated how they could cut the fines at half, but add in the legal fees.

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Councilman Jacob asked about the calls from the beginning of the year. Mr. McArdle stated how there have only been three; one actual fire and two cooking related incidents. He stated that in 2019, they revised the fee structure. Councilman Paul asked Mr. McArdle about how many years had it been going on. Councilman Jacobs stated how there was a new owner, a few years ago. Mr. McArdle stated how it was going on way before the ownership changed. He stated that it was not until Council adopted the ordinance in 2017. Mr. McArdle stated how Council was trying to work with them to get the problem resolved, but they drug their feet.

Mr. McArdle stated that when they did the last inspection, he requested their annual submission of the flow test for the sprinkler system and standpipes, but have not received them. Councilman Paul asked if that was the only building they owned, in town. Mr. McArdle stated about the old movie theater. Councilman Jacobs stated how he claimed that his brother owned that building. Councilman Sabol stated how that was a blight property. He stated how they should set up a meeting with the property owners to see what they were going to do with the property.

Mr. McArdle stated how PennDOT was going to be closing Route 209 between Jim Thorpe and Nesquehoning starting on July 14th. He stated how they might have a problem getting emergency vehicles back and forth. McArdle stated how they worked out a plan with the district manager to allow emergency vehicles passage to the emergency by having the Communication Center call the foreman to alert them in order to clear a lane. He stated how it would only be to go to a call not returning from a call.

5. SANITATION LOUIS PAUL, CHAIRMAN; ROSEMARY POREMBO, CO-CHAIRWOMAN, MARY FOX

Councilwoman Fox asked Secretary/Treasurer Ahner if Tamaqua Transfer was contacting the Borough office if they had any issues. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated “no”. Councilwoman Fox stated how she had answered the email that they were not looking for specific times for garbage collection, but a general idea as to when they will be picking garbage up. She stated how they did not get anything back. President Hawk stated how they were looking to see what areas they were going to be starting in, Estates, New Columbus, etc. Councilwoman Fox stated how they should be letting the office know if they were running behind schedule; started late or issue with truck. Councilman Paul stated how the people should put the garbage out when it was supposed to be put out and when they pick it up, they pick it up. He stated how they have been around the same time for the last couple of weeks.

6. RECREATION GEORGE SABOL III, CHAIRMAN; LOUIS PAUL, CO-CHAIRMAN; MARY FOX

Councilman Sabol stated how they were waiting on a couple of things; like concrete for the pad. He stated how they were going to pour the curbing on E. Mill Street the same day.

Councilman Sabol stated how he had talked to Pam Zlock about meeting at the individual parks. He stated how he had mentioned to her about the Recreation Commission helping to fund the shed in the New Columbus Park.

Councilman Sabol stated about meeting with the engineer concerning Johnson Park. Councilwoman Fox asked if they were going to have a chance to meet with them. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how they were going to hold a preconstruction meeting in which Council could attend. Councilman Jacobs stated how the bids had to be submitted by July 20th.

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Councilman Jacobs asked if anyone from town got a firework permit. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated “no”. Councilman Jacobs stated how they were terrible in town the weekend. Councilman Sabol stated how he received complaints, because people were setting them off in the middle of the streets and they left a mess. He stated how they go through it every year and they were not going to stop it.

Councilwoman Fox stated how Solicitor Yurchak sent Mr. Stempa a letter in regards to the tunnel. She stated how Mr. Stempa was refusing to let any Borough worker on his property. Councilman Radocha stated how they were going to have to do something with that tunnel. Councilwoman Fox stated how they should have him sign off of it, because if the tunnel would cave in then it would be his problem/responsibility. Councilman Sabol stated that they made the effort to get it fixed and if they would have to go to court in the future, they have the proof that they tried. Councilman Jacobs asked if they wanted to go the route of going to court to get it fixed. He stated how they would have to talk to Solicitor Yurchak about it.

7. BUDGET/ FINANCE

**FRANK JACOBS, CHAIRMAN; ROSEMARY POREMBO, CO-
CHAIRWOMAN; DAVID HAWK**

Councilman Jacobs stated how the police were over budget in salaries as of June 30th. How they will be starting to meet on the 2021 budget.

Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how she would like to schedule a meeting with the gentleman from PMRS to go over the information, which they had received on the PMRS study. She stated how she did not understand all of the figures/information that was sent. President Hawk stated how she could set up a meeting.

Councilman Sabol stated how every year, they were talking about the police and how they were over budget on their salaries. Councilman Jacobs stated how it was more that years than it has been the last few years. He stated that the reason it was coming up was because of the detective issue. President Hawk stated that to be over budget at that point of the year, it was high. Council Paul stated how the detective would not cost them more money. Councilman Jacobs stated how it would be to cover the shift. Councilman Paul stated how it was not what he understood at their meeting. Councilman Radocha stated how it would not cost them any more money in full-time wages. Councilwoman Fox stated about having part-time officers fill in for the schedule. Councilwoman Porembo stated how it would be like bringing another full-time officer onto the schedule. Councilman Paul stated how he guessed that the detective position was out the window, because he could tell by the atmosphere where it was going. Councilwoman Fox stated how they could not overspend. She stated how they had to work with the money that they had.

Councilman Paul stated how that was why he did not understand why they were not going after the full \$39,000.00. He stated that they are trying to figure out what they could scrape together; borrowing from Peter to pay Paul. Councilman Paul stated how they do not have the money for things, but they just let things go; instead of \$39,000.00 they will accept \$20,000.00 and he did not agree. He stated how they really need money for police protection and they could get it. Councilman Jacobs stated that the money they get for the fines would not go into the police budget. Councilman Paul stated how he knew that, but with the Fire Truck Fund receiving the fines, they would not have to give them as much, which it would then balance out. President Hawk stated how he did agree with him, but at the same point he did not want to spend more money to get more money. Councilman Paul stated how they should enforce their ordinances so they could get additional revenue.

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8. PERSONNEL/ ROSEMARY POREMBO, CHAIRWOMAN; MARY FOX, CO- SAFETY CHAIRWOMAN; FRANK JACOBS

Councilwoman Porembo asked Secretary/Treasurer Ahner if she received the signature pages from the handbooks. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated “no”.

Councilwoman Porembo stated how the Personnel Committee had discussed the cleaning situation and they wanted to know if Council wanted them to meet with the cleaning person to go over what needed to be done. She stated how it would be giving her another chance. Councilwoman Fox asked if she was coming into the office to clean. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how she was coming into the office two nights a week; Tuesdays and one day over the weekend. Councilman Jacobs stated how they should close a half hour early to clean. Councilman Paul stated how they were paying someone to clean the office, but they had four girls in the office, who could run a sweeper. He stated how he worked for the borough for three years and cleaned their own building. Councilman Paul stated how his wife worked for a State Representative and she cleaned the office for 25 years. He asked why they were paying someone to clean.

Councilman Paul asked Secretary/Treasurer Ahner if she cleaned her own office. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how she has cleaned her own office. Councilwoman Porembo stated how she did not agree, because she felt someone should be coming in to clean the offices/bathrooms. She stated that when they open the offices up, everything should be cleaned and sanitized daily. Councilman Paul stated that if everyone took care of their own space, they should not have a problem. Councilman Paul asked Secretary/Treasurer Ahner cleans her bathroom. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how the cleaning person cleaned the last time, but she had cleaned it the time before that. She stated how they did not have a problem cleaning their own personal space, but they were talking about the hallway, meeting room, and bathrooms. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how she did appreciate when the cleaning person was in to run the vacuum and mop the floor in her office. President Hawk asked Council if they wanted to give the cleaning person another chance. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how they were not only talking about the Borough office, but the police department as well. President Hawk stated how he did not think that the office staff should have to clean the offices. Councilman Sabol stated how they should meet with her and give her a chance.

Councilwoman Fox stated that once they do open the offices to the public, the women in the office will have to do some cleaning throughout the day. President Hawk stated how they did understand that. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how they have signs ready to post that there was only one person allowed in the office at a time and that masks will have to be worn. Councilwoman Fox stated how they will have to wipe the counter after each person. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how they were still going to promote the drop box, because there was really no reason for someone to come into the office if they were just dropping off a payment.

Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how they were planning on going with their shut-offs next week. She stated that Solicitor Yurchak had told the Water Authority that they were allowed to shut off the water. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how they were going to have the properties posted for the shut-offs. She stated how anyone of the Council Members would like to check with Solicitor Yurchak to make sure that they were allowed, before next Wednesday.

Councilman Sabol stated how they had discussed it several times, but he wanted to integrate daily time sheets. He stated how they were not getting monthly reports. Councilman Radocha stated how he agreed. Councilwoman Fox stated how they used to have to fill out daily work sheet.

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Councilman Sabol stated how he would like to use the Lexmark lawn mower to cut the grass in the Borough. He stated how he wanted to see how long it took him to cut each area. Councilman Sabol stated how he did not want to cut it all of the time, but each area just once.

Councilman Sabol stated that he has been trying to get them to work on the Merman Avenue Bridge for the last several years. He stated that if they would work on once section a week, they would have it half way completed. Councilman Paul stated that if they all remember, he had given them a monthly list of what they had to do. He stated how they have not done it. Councilman Jacobs stated that if they would clean up 6 intersections a day, they would have been done. Councilman Paul stated how they have to install the no parking signs.

Councilman Sabol stated how he had missed the last Recreation Commission meeting, but he had gotten the email that they were going to move forward with remodeling the kitchen. He stated how he thought that any expenditure they were going to have over \$500.00 had to be approved by Council first, which was in the bi-laws. Councilman Jacobs stated how it would have to be approved by Barry Isett & Associates. Councilman Sabol stated how they were going to talk to Gene Kennedy and go through zoning. President Hawk stated how he knew that they had talk to Mr. Kennedy about it. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how they will have to fill out a building permit, which will go to Mr. Kennedy first. She stated how it was then given to Mr. Dow for him to issue the building permit placard. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how they will have to have some kind of plans as to what they will be doing, because it will need an inspection. Councilman Paul stated how they have to get a building permit to install a kitchen. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated that since it was a commercial/public building they needed a building permit. Councilwoman Fox stated how they should be coming to Council with the cost for approval first.

Councilman Paul stated about the garbage at the apartment building on Allen Street and Railroad Street. Councilman Jacobs stated how they used to have a secured area to place their garbage.

Councilman Radocha asked if they send a letter to the company on Stock Street. Councilwoman Fox stated how they did not send them anything yet. She stated how they were going to speak with Mr. Kennedy first. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how she had talked to Mr. Kennedy and it did not apply to them, since his place of business was not primarily at that location. Councilman Radocha asked where his office was located. Secretary/Treasurer Ahner stated how people did not go to his house to conduct business. She stated that it was a very fine line when it came to zoning, but anyone was welcome to contact Mr. Kennedy. Councilman Radocha stated how he would talk to Mr. Kennedy.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Jacobs moved and Councilman Paul seconded to adjourn the meeting. All voted yes. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

RoniSue Ahner
Secretary/Treasurer