

**MINUTES
COMMISSIONERS OF BRIDGEVILLE
FEBRUARY 10, 2014 – 7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Pat Correll at 7:00 P.M. Present: Commissioners Sharon McDowell, Paul Kovack, Lawrence Tassone, Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) Jerry Butler and Town Manager Jesse Savage. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer.

II. QUORUM

President Correll reported a quorum was present to discuss the business of the Town of Bridgeville, despite the absence of Commissioner Mervine.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the Agenda – Tassone; 2nd – Kovack; motion carried.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL; LAND ACQUISITION/SALE

Motion to go into Executive Session – Tassone; 2nd – Kovack; motion carried. The Commissioners went into Executive Session at 6:30 P.M.

V. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Motion to return to Open Session – Tassone; 2nd – Kovack; motion carried. The Commissioners returned to Open Session at 7:07 P.M. President Correll advised the Executive Session concerned Personnel and Land Acquisition / Sale. No votes were taken during the Executive Session. The Open Session began with the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes from the January 13th Commission meeting and the January 15th Budget Amendment Workshop – Tassone; 2nd – McDowell; motion carried.

VII. STAND BY ME PROGRAM (Ms. Beth Pritchett)

Ms. Beth Pritchett advised she is a financial coach with the Stand By Me program and explained that the program offers free one-on-one financial coaching for all Delawareans. The program started approximately 3 years ago in New Castle County and has since been initiated in Kent and Sussex. Approximately 18 financial coaches work in the state, two work out of Good Will here in Sussex County. They go to businesses and offer assistance to employees with credit reports/scores, budget preparation, home ownership counseling, etc.

Ms. Pritchett came to introduce the program and locate people who could use their services. Town Manager Savage advised the Town will be happy to display brochures about the program at

Town Hall. It was clarified that this assistance is available to everyone, no matter what their financial situation.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE

Town Manager Savage advised the Town has received an invitation from the Bridgeville Kiwanis Club for the Commissioners and Town Manager Savage to attend their 75th Annual Charter Night event on March 17th. The Town office will RSVP for the Commissioners.

The Eighth National Drug Take-Back Initiative will take place on Saturday, April 26, 2014 from 10 AM to 2 PM at the Bridgeville Volunteer Fire Company. Details of the event will be placed on the Town website.

IX. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BILLS PAYABLE

Balance Sheet – January 31, 2014

General Fund – \$274,263

Reserve Fund – \$622,561

All Accounts – \$1,069,643

Account Receivable - \$160,938 (Includes 2nd quarter Greenwood billing)

Budget Report Target – 58%

Income – \$1,655,229 (67% of budget)

Expenses – \$1,474,338 (59% of budget)

Net Income – \$180,892 to-date

Accounts Payable

Bills – \$14,747

Expected Expenses – \$126,500

Amount to be approved – \$141,247

Motion to approve the bills as presented – Tassone; 2nd – Kovack; motion carried.

X. TOWN REPORTS

President Correll advised the Town has received an alert from SCAT (Sussex County Association of Towns) regarding House Bill 250. It appears that Representative Wilson and Senator Pettyjohn's Community Transportation Funds are going to decrease by one-half, which will negatively affect our budgeting for street improvements. This reduction has come from Governor Markell.

Commissioner Tassone commented on CEO Butler's report, which included 26 rental violations, an unusually high number. Code Enforcement Officer Butler advised these are rental property owners who did not renew their licenses by the end of the year deadline. He sent them violation letters with 10 days to comply. Most responded, but he fined those who didn't respond.

Concerning the Street Department, President Correll advised she has received comments from other Towns and from our residents on how well Bridgeville has cleared their streets in recent snow

events. She wanted to commend our Public Works employees. They come in at midnight and work until the streets are clean during snow events.

Commissioner Tassone questioned the number of water shut-offs on the Water Department report. Town Manager Savage advised many were because of leaks and burst pipes during the cold weather; however, others were due to non-payment. The Town does consider the occupants before turning off the water at each property. Ninety day past-due water bills are subject to disconnection. Residents often come in the same day to pay their past-due balance and the water is turned back on. Commissioner McDowell would like to see the Town make exceptions for the elderly. It was clarified the Town does try to work with the sick and elderly and is very willing to work out payment arrangements with the residents.

XI. CITIZEN'S PRIVILEGE

Mrs. Annette Cottrell from 18 Harlequin Loop thanked Town Manager Savage for reviewing her water/sewer bills after her concerns expressed at the January Commission meeting; however, she was not satisfied with the outcome. Additional days between water meter readings have caused Mrs. Cottrell and other homeowners to pay extra, due to moving into a higher rate category. Town Manager Savage advised the Town makes a conscious effort to read the meters on a 30-day cycle; however, the reading will not have the consistency that Mrs. Cottrell desires until the Town moves forward with upgrading all water meters to radio-read. The reading schedule is currently subject to holidays and weather conditions. Water Superintendent Kimball has provided tentative water meter reading dates for 2014; however, many factors come into play, including another upcoming anomaly of February being only 28 days long. The Town will do its best to stick to the schedule as closely as possible. The tentative schedule will be posted on the website.

Commissioner Tassone questioned if Town Manager Savage has or needs special authorization to deal with these anomalies that affect the residents. Town Manager Savage advised there were some months that raised Mrs. Cottrell's bill into the next higher rate category and he adjusted her bill. The actual adjustment was minimal. Commissioner Tassone wanted to make sure that the Town Manager did not need permission from the Commissioners to make adjustments to water/sewer bills due to this problem.

President Correll commented that it is not possible to read meters the exact same day every month; weather and holidays are just two of many possible disruptions to the schedule.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing, Discussion and Possible Voting on AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND §128-1D OF THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF BRIDGEVILLE AS IT RELATES TO SEWER AND WATER RATES FOR NON-METERED RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS (#2014-A)

Town Manager Savage advised the Ordinance was introduced at the January Commission meeting. There are approximately eight properties connected to sewer that are not metered and we have no measure of how much wastewater is being received from these properties. Currently they are paying a flat fee of \$24.00 per month for wastewater. Town Manager Savage proposes to charge them

based on the Town Code's definition of an EDU (equivalent dwelling unit). Per Code, an average home uses 200 gallons per day, which is approximately 6,000 per month. The current rate of \$24 covers only 2,500 gallons and Town Manager Savage believes this is not an appropriate or fair rate to charge these properties. He is recommending raising the consumer cost to \$60.00 per month. It was noted these households could purchase a water meter, install it on their private well and measure actual usage. That is an option if they believe the \$60.00 represents more than they actually use.

Town Manager Savage has sent letters to the households involved. He had a call today from a property owner who understood the reasoning, but believes the rate is too high.

President Correll advised these properties have had no increase in their price for many years. The state is requiring more stringent accounting of the Town's wastewater; we can't continue offering the current rate. She added that the Town offers all the water the Fire Company needs, but it will also be metered to meet state accounting requirements. Our eligibility for state grants and other monies is tied to our being accountable in this area.

Commissioner Tassone added this is an enterprise account and the state is requiring that we take in enough money in the account to pay its bills. Currently, that is not true. We will not receive loans if we do not meet state criteria.

Solicitor Schrader opened the Public Hearing at 7:27 P.M.

Mr. Trey Hardesty advised he has lived in Bridgeville or right outside of the Town for his entire life. He had been notified of the proposal and talked with Town Manager Savage earlier today. He believes in being fair and, basically, the Town is raising his water bill 150%. He believes a gradual increase would be fairer. He wondered if the Town has taken into consideration the possibility that some of his neighbors might not be financially able to pay this amount. Commissioner Tassone believes they have the same opportunity to come to the Town and express their concerns. It was clarified that these eight properties are not in Town limits, but are hooked into the Town sewer system. I.E. Mr. Hardesty has his own well, but he is hooked into the Town sewer system. Currently, any new home in Town must purchase a water meter (\$355). Mr. Hardesty could opt to place a water meter on his well and just pay for actual water usage. If the customer used under the 2,500 gallons, the meter would be paid for within a year's time.

There being no further questions or comments, the Public Hearing was closed at 7:33 P.M.

Motion to adopt the Ordinance – Tassone; second – Kovack; motion carried. The Ordinance was passed and its name was changed to Ordinance #14-1.

President Correll requested that the Town send letters to all affected water customers before the rates change in the March bill (which goes out in early April). This will give these customers the opportunity to buy a water meter, if they so choose.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Appointment of Certified Public Accounting Firm

Town Manager Savage advised the Town has had a relationship with the firm of Lank, Johnson and Tull for a number of years. He has not had any interest from other firms and advised that LJT has been very consistent in their charges over the years. It is his recommendation that the Town continue its relationship with LJT. President Correll added that she believes we are receiving very reasonable rates compared to other Towns.

Commissioner Tassone commented that there are different schools of thought concerning this issue. Some say that continuity is important; however, it has been shown that in certain cases it is not good business practice to stay with a CPA firm for a long time and that occasionally, every 4-7 years, it would not hurt to change CPA's. New eyes on the Town books might be helpful.

Motion to approve Lank, Johnson & Tull as the Town's Certified Public Accountant – Kovack; 2nd – McDowell; motion carried.

B. 2014 Municipal Election

Town Manager Savage advised the incumbent Commissioners (Patricia Correll, Jay Mervine and Lawrence Tassone) ran unopposed in the 2014 Municipal Election and the Bridgeville Election Board has submitted their Statement of Election of the candidates. The Election Board members include Mr. Richard Glover, Mrs. Ann Hallman, Mrs. Betty Ann Hardesty and Mr. John Shockley. The March Commission Agenda will include a Swearing-In Ceremony and Town Re-organization.

President Correll thanked everyone for the support they have given the Commissioners this past year.

C. Dangerous Building Committee Report – 10 Cook Street

Town Manager Savage advised the Commission appointed a Dangerous Building Committee to consider the property at 10 Cook St. after receiving letters from concerned citizens about the condition of the building. The committee consists of Commissioners Mervine and Tassone, as well as CEO Jerry Butler and residents Jack Cannon and Lester Williams.

CEO Butler advised all the committee members were in agreement that the house is a dangerous building and a hazard to the Town. A general inspection was completed and a written copy is available. The committee members agreed that the house should be demolished. He has spoken with Mr. Brad Whaley from the CDBG program, who believes they can offer the funds to the Town. CEO Butler has not been able to find the owner. According to DMV, the property is still considered the primary address of the owner, though he does not appear to be living there. The structure is not livable and about to collapse. He will continue to search for the owner. CEO Butler recommended the Commissioners turn this over to the Town Solicitor and start the proceedings for a court order to demolish the structure.

President Correll asked if the neighbors know the owner and if he still has personal property in the building. CEO Butler advised neighbors have seen Mr. Thomas and have told him to stop by Town Hall and talk to the Code Official; however, that has not happened. There are also some personal effects in the house.

Commissioner Tassone asked if it would be prudent to remove personal effects before demolition. Town Manager Savage advised the Commissioners will conduct a Public Hearing at the March Commission meeting after advertising in the newspaper and making every attempt to contact the owner. If we continue to move forward, our Solicitor will go to court for a judge's demolition order and an order to remove any personal effects. There is currently a Condemned sign on the property and a Public Hearing sign will be placed on the property, as well.

Commissioner Tassone suggested the owner may have a post office box in Town. Police Chief Longo recommended from a police point of view that if any personal effects are removed they should be videoed, photographed and documented, including serial numbers, etc.

Commissioner Kovack made a motion to accept the Dangerous Building Committee report and to move forward by scheduling a Public Hearing for the March Commission meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Tassone. Motion carried.

XIV. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

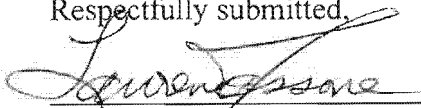
There were no new Ordinances for introduction at this meeting.

President Correll added that the Union United Methodist Church is hosting their Annual Soup Luncheon on February 26th from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. for \$6.50 and all are invited.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn – Kovack; 2nd – Tassone; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Lawrence Tassone, Commission Secretary



Peggy Smith, Transcriptionist