

**Borough of Windber Council Meeting**  
**Minutes of January 23, 2023**  
**7 p.m.**

The regular meeting of Windber Borough Council was called to order by Council President John Holden at 7:05 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance.

The following council members were present: John Holden, Pete LaMonaca, Dr. Doug Ledney, Joe Pallo, Mark Portante, and Rich Rummel. Ron Mash was absent. Mayor Mike Thomas, Manager, Ron Allison and Attorney Joseph Green were present.

**Approval Minutes** A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Dr. Ledney to approve the Minutes of December 12, 2022, meeting. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

**Recognition Visitors** Chuck Krevel owner of Rock-Solid Storage on 17<sup>th</sup> Street said he had the property surveyed about six months ago and he had it resurveyed again. Unfortunately, the playground is on his property. He asked the council if he could subdivide the property to transfer it back to the borough.

**Chuck Krevel** Mr. Krevel said he has spoken to Randy Cortez whom has done work with the borough before. Mr. Bloom said we can do it as a land merger. Mr. Krevel said okay, he knew there was something we could do. He would like to get that moving forward so as to whatever the attorney needs to.

A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Mr. Portante to approve the land merger of the playground property on 17<sup>th</sup> Street owned by Chuck Krevel so it can be transferred back to the borough. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

**Todd Koehler** Mr. Koehler said he was wondering where we were with the rental inspection workshop, we had discussed in a past meeting. Mr. Holden said Mr. Allison has that in his manager's report. We do have a workshop scheduled for February 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. here in the council chambers.

**Rich Rummel** Mr. Rummel Sr. had no comments at this time.

**Correspondence**

1. Windber Area Authority Minutes of November 9, 2022.
2. Windber Fire Department 2022 Banquet Invitation.
3. Red Rose Ball.

Mr. Holden said that Karen Wozniak, Tax Collector is requesting a standing order to destroy Windber Borough real estate tax notices, per-capita tax notices, delinquent lists etc. as they

become outdated according to the schedule provided by the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission of Archival and Records Management.

A motion was made by Mr. LaMonaca and seconded by Mr. Portante to approve the request from Windber Borough Tax Collector, Karen Wozniak to destroy Windber Borough real estate tax notices, per-capita tax notices, delinquent lists etc. according to the schedule provided by the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

**Approval  
Payroll**

Mr. Rummel asked why there were two payments listed for the Codes Officer? Mr. Holden said one was his regular pay and the second was the retroactive pay increase he received once his contract was approved. The original contract was up at the end of September.

Mrs. D’Arcangelo asked if it was possible to get a copy of the bills or budget etc. Mr. Holden said yes all she must do is submit a right to know request.

A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Mr. LaMonaca to approve payroll for December 16, 30, 2022 and January 13, 2023. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

**Approval  
Bills**

A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Dr. Ledney to approve the bills for December 2022. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

**Cash Bal.,  
Treasurer  
Report**

There were no questions at this time.

**Council Liaison Reports**

**WAA/  
Dr. Ledney**

Dr. Ledney said there were five or six breaks in various locations over Christmas with the cold weather. The guys worked on those and secured them and did a nice job on that. Also, they purchased a new backhoe which you will be seeing over the next couple of weeks.

Dr. Ledney said that Manager Dennis Mash is retiring in August and we thank him for all of his years of service.

**Municipal  
Authority/  
Pallo**

Mrs. Gates asked Mr. Pallo if he could get copies of the monthly and year end reports from the Municipal Authority because we have not had one since last August. Mr. Pallo said he would contact Matt.

**Library/  
Holden**

Mr. Holden said he had nothing to report on the library that he missed their January meeting, and they did not have a December meeting.

**Mayor’s  
Report**

Mayor Thomas participated in the Veteran’s Day celebration at Veteran's Park and gave the welcoming address.

He also attended a curriculum advisory meeting at the High School. The purpose of this group is to give input on how government grants are spent in the district.

Mayor Thomas attended the Wreaths across America ceremony sponsored by the Windber Veterans Association. They along with the Windber Cross Country team, placed wreaths on the graves of deceased veterans.

Mayor Thomas has also been working with President Holden, Manager Allison, and Anson Bloom on some economic development items. Attended several meetings with this group and potential businesses and landowners.

Mayor Thomas said that Dave Breen from the Somerset County Community Band would like to bring the band to Windber to perform here at the gazebo, like the military band did when they were here. The date would be Saturday, July 1, 2023. The council was in favor and so the Mayor said they would begin planning for it.

Mayor Thomas said that Barry Jerley brought a donation check over to the police department today from the Raymond DiBattista Trust Fund in the amount of \$59,000 for the purchase of a new police cruiser. Mayor Thomas said they really truly appreciated it, and it enables us to purchase a new car without using taxpayer money.

**Solicitor's Report**

Attorney Green said he handed Robin the rental agreement for the ballroom. Some of the features of it are if alcohol is served at an event the fire department must be the bartenders or an exception would be if they have a certified bartender. Mr. Bloom said they would have to be RAMP Certified, TIP Certified and sign a liability waiver.

Attorney Green said the reason he did that was he got to thinking if someone was going to have an event there and provide alcohol without a bartender, and he goes and gets 10 people drunk and one gets into an accident it will come back on the borough.

In the case of a wedding, he would like both names entered on the contract, and he would like a credit card on file in case of any damage and a photo of their drivers license just in case we would have to go after them for any damage. It is a one-sided contract, but it is what it is. They are renting the facility for one day and we must protect ourselves. He said he would like the cleaning company to keep an eye on what they see as far as any damage. The event coordinator will also be at the events.

**Manager's Report**

**USDA GRANT-** They have called this office with some questions but have given no other information at this time.

**MS4 Permit PAG136340-**This Office is investigating a complaint ID#368266. It is alleged a local business is depositing oil into a drain within the business: Update, preliminary investigation has yielded nothing, and we continue to monitor the situation.

**GP11 Debris Removal Permit-** LRP-2022-00440 (GP115605122-007) (WINDBER BORO SOMERSET CITY, Windber FPP Debris Basin Restoration, Paint Creek, Windber Borough, Somerset County, PA). The work under this permit is set to begin. Rosebud began putting their equipment into place and marking survey points in the basin. UPDATE, week of January 9, 2023, a representative was into the office and did pick up and return the key for more preparation work at the site. I did email Mr. Sinclair to get an update.

**Economic Development-** This Office had a December meeting scheduled with a developer and national chain store. More information to come. UPDATE, since last meeting there has been two meetings in relation to this with our Codes Officer, the Mayor and Council President. We are hoping to see a deal made soon.

**Complaints/Concerns-** I have received an inquiry as to why there is not a “NO OUTLET” sign at 5<sup>th</sup> Street to the railroad tracks. I spoke with our Road Foreman who has a sign on order and is waiting for all parts to be available. When he receives it, it will be installed.

I did take a ride with Mr. Panetti, and he did point out concerns he has, and we discussed them. Moving forward they will be addressed for either an answer or action taken.

**Windber Borough Office Security-** As a result of a recent set of incidents and the decision was made to secure the building. There was a male who came to this office and did cause a disturbance during business hours. This individual has been involved in previous incidents. We had been delaying a plan to install security and a more complete system, but it was determined this could not be delayed further. The doors are locked and when citizens come to do business at the Borough Office, they must first make contact through the system before coming in. The cameras have been more directed to points of entry for visual. I will be working to further improve the building security.

**Mayor’s Office-** After meeting with Mayor Thomas and a discussion with Chief Frear I have located some space in the Police Building for the possibility of a Mayors' Office. It is important the mayor has a location in order to conduct business with the public as well as handle his obligations within the Police Department. I will need some guidance from our Codes Office and possibly an architect as there is an exit that may be affected. I will have updates on progress forthcoming.

**Abandoned Vehicles-** To make the Borough more attractive for both future economic development and attracting citizens to live within the area I have directed both the Police Department and Codes Office to put a concentrated effort on enforcement. I have toured the borough and have seen the need.

**Event Coordinator-** Beginning in February the Event Coordinator will begin submitting a monthly report for Grand Ballroom Activities.

**22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> St. Bridge Projects-** As previously communicated there will be public officials meeting and a public comment meeting scheduled for February 13, 2023, beginning at 4 p.m. at the Grand Ballroom. Upon completion we will roll right into the regular council meeting for the month. I have given this schedule to the Event Coordinator we will be making use of the location for the evening. This will be a good time to show off the improvements.

I did get communication from EADs they would need some core samples on Stadium Drive. It was priced at \$500.00, and I did secure EADS and their subcontractor to complete the work.

**Public Meeting/Workshop-** We have scheduled a workshop for public comment and discussion for February 7, 2023, at 5 p.m. for the Rental Ordinance.

**Police Interviews-** There are three applicants who wish to be interviewed for the posted position. The council will need to determine a day to schedule for the interviews.

**Realigned Plow Schedule-** The part time plowing/call out schedule had to be realigned due to personnel issues. Further information to be discussed in executive session.

**Codes Report**

Mr. Bloom said he had nothing to add other than what was in the packet and what the manager reported.

**Ballroom Report**

Mr. Holden said the ballroom is coming along. It should be completed by the end of the month with the occupancy permit ready the first week in February.

Mr. Holden said the council has received the email regarding the exterior painting given the weather and the conditions. The actual wood, because it was freshly harvested, was damp and needs to dry out before you put any type of finish on it. The question to the council is do we go ahead and paint it when the time comes or do we put a sealer on it. He was advised not to put a sealer on it, in five years it would not look good. To Rich's point, if you paint it, you can't go back.

Mr. Holden said there was a change order implemented, related to painting of the ballroom on the inside ceilings on the sides of the dance floor because of the different patchwork done and different colors and type of wood. The actual ceiling over the dance floor has been patched and they whitewashed the patches to blend in.

Mr. Holden said the ADA ramps and the hand rails going up the steps on the deck and front porch are actually Penn Metal Fabricator's. Bill Bahorik has offered to powder coat those and finish those for us and has agreed to help us by donating gravel to the parking lot area. Landscaping on the exterior parking or exterior of the building will have to wait until March.

Mr. Holden said the bridge meeting will be our dry run for council to see the building. We are talking about holding the open house on February 26, 2023 which will include a sock hop.

The ballroom is beautiful inside. We do not have enough wood to finish the north wall so we had to order more wood to finish it.

Mrs. Gates said to date we have used the entire one million dollars. The Office of the Budget has notified me today that three of our requests for payment have been approved and forwarded on to be paid. Those reimbursements will be put on the one-million-dollar loan once received. We are now going to the soft cost loan to finish paying for the construction cost. After construction cost is complete we will have a balance of approximately \$66,000 that will most likely be used for final payment to engineer and/or architect.

**Security System**

Mr. Allison said the bids we received for the security system for the ballroom came in at approximately \$34,000 to \$39,000. Given what we got, his suggestion is we look at a system that is more affordable.

The Council convened to an executive session at 7:34 p.m. for personnel matters. The Council reconvened from executive session at 8:08 p.m.

**Captain's Position**

Approval of the Captain's position has been tabled.

**Economic Development**

A motion was made by Mr. LaMonaca to earmark funds in the amount of \$22,000 from the ARPA Fund. Motion seconded by Mr. Portante. Roll call vote: Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Mr. Portante, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Dr. Ledney, yes; Mr. Mash, absent; Mr. Pallo, yes; and Mr. Rummel, yes. Motion carried.

**Misc.**

Mr. Rummel said someone asked him if our streetlights were LED? Mr. Allison said he believes some of them are. Mr. Rummel said he was told Penelec came in and redid all the lights for them and saved them a bunch of money, but you must purchase the lights.

Mr. Bloom said they just did the same thing at the fire department; it is basically a Green Initiatives Grant. He got \$60,000 to do the whole facility and the parking lot, all they had to do was buy the lights, everything else was covered. You must write it to where it shows the savings, and they will show you that. He said they took their electric bill from \$500 a month to \$150. Mr. Holden asked if they wanted to explore that, and the council said yes. Mr. Bloom said he has the information on it.

**Next Meeting**

Next council meeting will be February 13, 2023, at 7 p.m. at the Windber Grand Ballroom.

**Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. by Council President, John Holden.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Robin S. Gates  
Administrative Assistant

