

**Borough of Windber Council Meeting**  
**Minutes of April 10, 2023**  
**7 p.m.**

The regular meeting of Windber Borough Council was called to order by Council President John Holden at 7:00 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. Ron Allison, Borough Manager, and Mayor, Mike Thomas, were present. Attorney Joseph Green was absent.

**Approval  
Minutes**

A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Mr. LaMonaca to approve the Minutes of March 13, 2023. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

**Visitors**

Barb Shark & Jim Griffith spoke to the council regarding the pickleball courts. Mrs. Shark thanked the council for everything they have done and asked what was going to happen to the court since the tree was removed. She said they have arranged a workday on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, and they will be painting new lines for the courts that will be on either side of the existing courts, so they will have four courts.

Mr. Allison asked if the area that needs patched will interfere with the painting of the lines. Mr. Griffith said they will probably not be able to use that court until the repairs are made. Mr. Allison said he was discussing this last week with Dave the Public Works Foreman, and it is just a matter of them getting some quotes for the work to be done.

Mrs. Shark asked if they could get any assistance in washing the courts off. Mr. Holden said that the fire department can probably assist with that. Mr. Griffith said the 22<sup>nd</sup> will be the day and they have the equipment to bore the holes and the yellow cement. The posts will be removable, they slide in and out. The tension of the nets keeps them in place.

Mrs. Shark asked if there was a plan to patch the cracks. Mr. Allison said we do not have a warranty for that so right now we will make repairs as we can.

Mr. Griffith said Rizzo's is paying for the nets as a sponsor. How the donations work is we have Laurel Highlands Pickleball Association through the Community Foundation and use of their nonprofit. Within Laurel Highlands Pickleball Association there is a Windber fund separate from the rest so that when money is donated to Windber it goes into the Windber fund and the same coming out. That way there is an audit trail.

Mr. Griffith said we have had a lot of interest from downtown Johnstown to create a summer pickleball league. His vision is to try to get everyone from all the different areas to play in that. Everyone will play together, and we will use those courts two nights a week for the league. The league would donate some money for using the courts. His suggestion would be to put that money in the Windber fund for pickleball for improvements to the court.

Mr. Holden said that proposal makes it easier for us to cooperate with you to make those repairs. Mr. Griffith said it makes it easy for people to donate by going on the Community Foundations website to donate. Mr. Griffith and Mrs. Shark thanked the council for everything.

## **Correspondence**

1. Conemaugh Valley Conservancy Report.
2. Windber Library Report & Recycling Event Poster.
3. PSAB Update.
4. Letter from Windber Library Requesting the Budgeted Donation for 2023.
5. Letter from the Food Pantry Regarding the Need for Donations.

A motion was made by Mr. Portante and seconded by Mr. LaMonaca to forward the budgeted donation to the Windber Public Library in the amount of \$15,000. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

**Approval Payroll** A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Dr. Ledney to approve payroll for March 24 & April 6, 2023. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

**Approval Bills** A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Mr. LaMonaca to approve the bills for March 2023. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

**Cash Bal./ Treasurer Report** Mrs. Gates said the audit report is on the table in front of everyone's seat, please review it and let her know if there are any questions. She said she has read over it and everything was in order and we have no findings. Was a good audit.

## **Council Liaisons**

**WMA/Pallo** Mr. Pallo said he still has not received a report from the Municipal Authority. We will probably have to petition them to send us a monthly report.

**WAA/ Ledney** Dr. Ledney said they have a meeting on Wednesday, so he does not have anything to report.

**Library/ Holden** Mr. Holden said as far as the library goes council received their monthly report along with their request for the budgeted donation. Their recycling event is coming up April 22, 2023.

Mr. Holden said the Mayor, Manager and Codes Enforcement Officers will update council on the active shooter drills they took place in.

**Mayors Report** The Mayor participated in a fundraiser at the Windber VFW to raise funds for injured retired Veterans to provide assist dogs to help make their lives a little easier.

Mayor Thomas participated with the police department in the active shooter drill held at the high school last Wednesday. The drill went well, with an after-action meeting held to discuss the things that went well and things that could be improved upon. This is something that continues to evolve.

Mayor Thomas also attended the R.E.A.C.H. monthly board meeting. The program has expanded into almost every school district in Cambria County and several in Somerset County. The RISE Program which is funded by the opioid settlement has enabled this program to expand.

Mayor Thomas assisted Representative Rigby in locating an office for him in Windber. He will be opening an office at Marinelli Place on Graham Avenue, with a projected opening date of May 1, 2023.

Mayor Thomas said he continues to work with President Holden, Manager Allison, and Anson Bloom on economic development.

## **Manager's Report**

**Thank You-** I wanted to take this opportunity to thank this council for approving his agreement. I cannot express how much it means to know the faith and trust placed in me to continue to move forward in this position for the better of the Borough. I extend the same thanks to all the residents within the borough for allowing me to serve them. I cannot thank you enough for the staff I have to work with and would not trade anyone here for anyone else. I promise to continue giving my best effort going into the future as I did this first year.

**USDA GRANT-** The funds {\$35,700.00) have been received and put into the General Fund

**GP11 Debris Removal Permit-** I did reach out to thank Rosebud Mining again and spoke with Mr. Sinclair. We discussed the removal of the stocked sediments. He explained that they would if council desires move some or all of it to the Recreation Park area to use for landscaping purposes. I believe recreation has a use for some of it and we can use it around the ballroom. I had EADs give an opinion on the soil, and they said it is suitable for that use. If the council approves, we will use it.

**Ballroom-** The shed is under construction and Borough crew is in the process of preparing the site for the shed. Mr. Markovich is going to have the outline of the proposed sidewalk up at the Ballroom for council to view prior to approval of the project and please if you can, over the weekend pay a visit to see the path. I will have an estimate price for the meeting.

**Stadium Drive/22<sup>nd</sup> St.-** I have researched that if the property is obtained at the end of 22<sup>nd</sup> St. liquid fuel funds could be used to build a road bridging Stadium Dr. and 22<sup>nd</sup> St. After last month's meeting I did approach the owner of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street address and did come to a tentative agreement to purchase the property. Matter to be discussed in executive session. Upon making this tentative I approached via phone Amy Hoffman who at the last meeting was elected spokesperson for the neighborhood and had a discussion on whether this would be an acceptable alternative to the bridge. I also explained that the reality of the Borough being able to replace the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street bridge was not possible, especially in the near future. She said she would continue to pursue avenues to getting a new bridge and I explained the Borough would be supportive of those efforts. She stated the addition of the road at the property location would be a help.

**Emergency Management-** The Borough took part in an active shooter training scenario at the school on 4/5/2022. Specific duties were assigned during this training should the situation

ever occur, and the Borough is filling some of those responses. Anson Bloom, Mike Thomas, John Holden, Robin Gates, and I will transition to cover, and the Borough building will go into a lock down state. Due to the sensitive nature of operations the specifics will be discussed in the executive session.

**Captains Position-** This position has been filled by Dan Croyle.

**Economic Development- DOLLAR GENERAL,** New location. Next step Zoning Planning Approvals. This process will follow all borough and state requirements to the letter of the law. The planning commission will meet and hold a public hearing. This Office has worked over several months to get in place a new DOLLAR GENERAL location in Windber Borough. Proposed is a new 12,000 sq. ft. store.

**Solicitor's Report** Attorney Green was absent. There were no reports at this time.

**Code's Report** Officer Bloom said there will be a planning commission meeting here on April 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m., regarding the Dollar General Store location and the steps in getting a zoning variance, they would need. That would require a council meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup> to go over the findings and approve whatever the planning commission lays out at that point.

**Ballroom Update** Mr. Holden said Manager Allison has already mentioned the sidewalk project. He said he does not know if anyone has seen the finished dance floor. If you get a chance, go and look at it. It turned out amazing.

Mr. Holden said Lauren has a Bridal Show scheduled along with a wedding resale event that will take place May 6 & 7, 2023.

A shed was ordered to store tables and chairs and equipment. We also must decide on painting and get quotes from painters to get that started.

Also, as Mr. Allison commented, the material extracted from the spill way by Rosebud is dewatering to be used for landscaping at the ballroom. There are just a lot of finishing touches Mr. Holden said.

**Event Coordinator Report** Mr. Allison said Lauren has mentioned the current schedule of bookings in her report and it is filling up. She has numerous showings weekly.

**Ernie Heinrich Pension** Mrs. Gates said that Mr. Heinrich is not leaving here he is still going to remain working full-time he is just going to begin collecting his pension. PSAB/MRT has no issue with Ernie collecting his pension at this time they however like council to be made aware and approve it also, since Ernie will no longer be contributing to his pension plan the borough will no longer be contributing to his plan.

A motion was made by Mr. Portante and seconded by Mr. LaMonaca to approve Ernie Heinrich to begin collecting his pension plan. The borough would no longer be contributing to his plan. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

<b>Approval Miner's Day Donation</b>	A motion was made by Dr. Ledney and seconded by Mr. Pallo to approve the budgeted donation to the Eureka Coal Heritage Foundation for the Miner's Day Event in the amount of \$500. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.
<b>Approval Request Tax Forgiveness</b>	<p>Ron Mash Sr. is in the process of buying three pieces of property that lie in Windber Borough. The first property on map # 50-33-17 at Hillside Avenue, Windber will be purchased through a private sale. Arrangements for the existing house will be torn down by him. The house is abandoned and dilapidated and the tear down aligns with Windber Borough's Blight and Remediation Project.</p> <p>There are two smaller properties adjacent. The first property ID # 50-0-012570. In line with the Borough's Blight and Remediation Project he is asking the borough to forgive all back taxes and interest that total \$140.60.</p> <p>The second property ID# 50-0-013350 will become landlocked if not purchased and will sit unattended and off tax rolls. He is also asking for forgiveness of back taxes and interest that total \$620.48 for this property.</p> <p>Mr. Bloom said this house was scheduled for demo in the original blight remediation project. It went back and forth, and they would not release the property willingly Mr. Mash made an offer to the owner, and they accepted so now he can legally demo it with no cost to Mr. Mash but he asked if we could waive the back taxes on those three properties so he can move forward with beautifying the land. Mrs. Gates reminded the council that this will put those properties back on the tax rolls.</p> <p>A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Mr. Portante to approve the request by Mr. Ron Mash Sr. to waive taxes for the properties mentioned above in the amount of \$761.08. Roll call vote: Mr. Pallo, yes; Mr. Portante, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Dr. Ledney, yes; Mr. Mash, absent; and Mr. Rummel, yes. Motion carried.</p> <p>Council convened to an executive session at 7:33 p.m. for personnel matters.</p> <p>The council reconvened from an executive session at 8:08 p.m.</p>
<b>Approval Full-time Officer</b>	A motion was made by Mr. LaMonaca and seconded by Mr. Pallo to place Brian Miller on the Windber Borough Police Department roster as a full-time police officer. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.
<b>Next Meeting</b>	Next Council meeting will be April 24, 2023, at 7 p.m.
<b>Adjourn</b>	Meeting adjourned by Council President, John Holden at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Robin S. Gates  
Administrative Assistant