

**Borough of Windber Council Meeting
Minutes of December 11, 2023**

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. Ledney, Joe Pallo, Mark Portante and Rich Rummel. Ron Mash was absent. Ron Allison, Borough Manager, was present along with Mayor Mike Thomas, and Attorney Joseph Green.

Approval Minutes A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Mr. Rummel to approve the minutes of November 13, 2023. One absent, Mr. Mash. Motion carried.

Recognition of Visitors There were no visitors at this time.

Correspondence

1. Minutes from the Windber Municipal Authority's Meeting of October 10, 2023.
2. Minutes from the Windber Area Authority's Meeting of October 11, 2023.

Approval Bills A motion was made Dr. Ledney and seconded by Mr. Pallo to approve the bills for November 2023. One absent, Mr. Mash. Motion carried.

Approval Payroll A motion was made Mr. Pallo and seconded by Mr. Rummel to approve payroll for November 17 and December 1, 2023. One absent, Mr. Mash. Motion carried.

Cash Bal./ Report There were no comments at this time.

Council Liaison Reports

Ledney/ WAA Dr. Ledney said the Windber Area Authority is upgrading its computer system that will include a new type of program to be able to pay your water bill online.

LaMonaca/ WMA Mr. LaMonaca said the Municipal Authority held their wine festival and it was a success.

Library/ Holden Mr. Holden said the library had an open house last Saturday on the 9th. Santa was there playing music. They had quite a nice attendance. He thinks that is due to the Windber High School closing their library. The library is pursuing security authorizations online so students can access computers at the library to do their schoolwork and research.

The library has had a good year, Mr. Holden said, but they still need continued donations. They had the lighting recently upgraded and have a lot of good things going on.

**Mayor's
Report**

Mayor Thomas participated in the light up night festivities on Friday, November 24th. He was honored to be asked to give a welcoming speech and conduct the program.

Mayor Thomas also participated in the hats and gloves drive for kids, sponsored by Miller Martial Arts. This business is really working to become an integral part of our community. So, thank you to them.

On Thursday, December 14, Mayor Thomas will meet with officers of the Somerset County Borough's Association to plan for the Year 2024.

Mayor Thomas also received an email from PCCD that the check for the \$100,000.00 grant for the purchase of the police building was ready to be released. His signature and Chief Frear's were needed and submitted. Thank you to all who were a part of obtaining this grant, especially Chief Frear and State Representative Rigby.

Mr. Holden thanked Barry Jerley, his wife, Liz, and the DiBattista Foundation for their support for light up night. He also believes Miller Martial Arts had his students down there helping Mr. Hiteshew and his crew decorate.

Mr. Jerley said he is going to donate \$50,000 towards the purchase of the police station. It will be close to the New Year before he retains that money. Mr. Jerley said Dan Hiteshew contributes so much to this town and this is a great town, and he will continue to work with Windber Borough to keep it that way. Mr. Holden and Mayor Thomas thanked Mr. Jerley for his support.

**Solicitor's
Report**

Attorney Green said he will be meeting with a representative from PennDOT this Friday. Apparently there is a house on 24th Street that we need to take some of their land. Typically, we do it by easement but the people that own the house are deceased. No estate has ever been opened for them. The daughter lives beside them and has been paying the taxes but we have no legal entity to do an easement so we will have to do a condemnation of eminent domain.

The process will include advertising, the recording of the deed at the Recorder of Deeds and the Prothonotary's Office. Manager Allison asked if we anticipate any delays due to this. Attorney Green said no. He does not feel it is a big chunk of land. Manager Allison asked if the state does an appraisal? Attorney Green said no we would have to do that.

**Code's
Report**

There were no questions at this time.

**Manager's
Report**

Stadium Drive/22nd Street-The following information was given to me by EADs, and proposed as a solution/response to the concerns of PennDOT on the deficiencies of the bridge: *The load rating analysis indicates that by placing concrete barrier longitudinally across the bridge on top of Beam 5, we can keep the live load off of Beam 7 and maintain the current weight posting of 13 tons. Once the barrier is placed, there will be a clear roadway width of 13.5'. Once we receive PennDOT's approval, we will provide a plan to the Borough showing the placement of the barrier that will close off the sidewalk and channel vehicles across the structure as well as the required signs for a single lane bridge.* I believe this to be the best possible solution with little or no alternatives currently.

The above plan has been implemented approved by Penn Dot. There is some signage yet to be obtained and put into place. At the 24th Street Bridge Romani property there is a piece of sewer lateral that the Borough will be taking responsibility for. EADs is drawing up the proposed plan and our Solicitor will then draw up the documents after Penn Dot approves.

Road Crew- There will be three new members added to the roadcrew for snow plowing. As an update the last candidate did decide not to move forward with the road crew responsibilities and that is what leads to needing approval for the latest candidate. The Road Crew Supervisor informed me of repaired storm water catches of concern being completed near the VFW.

Hillside Ave. Playground- I was working with EADS on a playground grant to install new playground equipment. As part of the application process, we needed to show ownership of the land. We could not locate a deed or information showing that the Borough in fact owns this property and I did have to back out of the process due to a November 30 deadline.

Ballroom- We have come to a point where monthly expenses will be in decline as the projects are complete.

Event Coordinator Report Mrs. Gates asked council to take notice of the bookings for next year already. She has 10 weddings, four parties, two conferences, 12 W.A.V.E. Hops, four Grand Ballroom sponsored events, and three Windber Fire Department events.

Mr. Holden said he thinks that Lauren's efforts working through these small events give exposure to the ballroom. We are gaining traction.

The council convened to an executive session at 7:17 p.m. for personnel and legal matters.

The council reconvened from an executive session at 7:56 p.m.

2024 General Budget A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Mr. Rummel to approve the General Fund Budget for the Year 2024 in the amount of \$2,131,427.07. Roll call vote: Mr. Pallo, yes; Mr. Rummel, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Dr. Ledney, yes; Mr. Mash, absent; and Mr. Portante, yes. Motion carried.

2024 Sewer Budget A motion was made by Mr. LaMonaca and seconded by Mr. Rummel to approve the Sewer Fund Budget for the Year 2023 in the amount of \$211,600.00. Roll call vote: Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Mr. Rummel, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Dr. Ledney, yes; Mr. Mash, absent; Mr. Pallo, yes; and Mr. Portante, yes. Motion carried.

2024 Liquid Fuels Budget A motion was made by Dr. Ledney and seconded by Mr. Pallo to approve the Liquid Fuels Fund Budget for the Year 2023 in the amount of \$128,216.02. Roll call vote: Dr. Ledney, yes; Mr. Pallo, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Mr. Mash, absent; Mr. Portante, yes, and Mr. Rummel, yes.

2024 Tax Ordinance A motion was made by Mr. LaMonaca and seconded by Mr. Pallo to approve Ordinance No. 2023-2 levying a tax of 20.92 mills for the Year 2024. Roll call vote: Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Mr. Pallo, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Dr. Ledney, yes; Mr. Mash, absent; Mr. Portante, no; and Mr. Rummel, yes. Motion carried.

Andrew Russian A motion was made by Mr. LaMonaca and seconded by Dr. Ledney to approve Andrew Russian as a part-time plow truck driver for the 2023-2024 winter season. One absent, Mr. Mash, motion carried.

Approval Manager's Agreement A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Dr. Ledney to approve the Borough Manager's Agreement for Ronald Allison (3 years). Roll call vote: Mr. Pallo, yes; Dr. Ledney, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Mr. Mash, absent; Mr. Portante, yes; and Mr. Rummel, yes. Motion carried.

Next Meeting Reorganizational meeting will be held on January 2, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

Adjourn Meeting adjourned by Council President, John Holden at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Robin S. Gates
Administrative Assistant