

**Borough of Windber Council Meeting
Minutes of November 13, 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, Ron Mash, Joe Pallo, Mark Portante and Rich Rummel. Dr. Ledney was absent. Ron Allison, Borough Manager, was absent. Mayor Mike Thomas, and Attorney Joseph Green were present.

Approval Minutes A motion was made by Mr. Mash and seconded by Mr. Rummel to approve the minutes of October 9 and 23, 2023 meetings. One absent, Dr. Ledney. Motion carried.

Recognition Visitors Thomas Lipsinic said he lives at 847 Park Avenue in Windber, and he discovered what seems to be a paper alley next to his house. He asked if the borough would be interested in vacating that alley.

Attorney Green said if that were to happen it would be split between the adjoining property owners. Mr. Holden said that our borough manager is not here tonight, but he will pass the information on to Manager Allison and Mr. Swiokla, the Public Works Foreman to investigate that and follow up with a phone call to Mr. Lipsinic.

Correspondence

1. Email received from Marti Lewis regarding the ballroom.
2. PSAB Update
3. Letter from the Food Pantry.
4. Minutes from Windber Library Meeting.
5. Information on recycling in Somerset

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

Approval Payroll A motion was made by Mr. Mash and seconded by Mr. Portante to approve payroll for October 6 and 20, 2023. One absent, Dr. Ledney. Motion carried.

Cash Bal./ Treasurer Report There were no questions at this time.

Council Liaisons

LaMonaca/ WMA Mr. LaMonaca said the meeting with the Windber Municipal Authority is scheduled for tomorrow.

Holden/ Library	<p>Mr. Holden said the library meeting is going to be on Wednesday. They are holding an open house on December 9, 2023. There are a couple of nice articles on the library in the Somerset Daily American and Tribune Democrat.</p> <p>Mr. Holden said the library was able to get their benches restored through a donation and also their lighting replaced in the building through donations.</p>
Light up Night	Mrs. Gates reminded council of light up night that will take place at the Gazebo on the 24 th of November at 7 p.m.
Mayor's Report	<p>On November 2, 2023, we were notified by the Department of Justice that the Borough had been awarded \$124,127.00 under the COPS FAST Grant. The grant will cover the cost of hiring a full-time police officer. The letter is in the council's packet. They will be sending more information in the coming days. Thanks to Chief Frear, Robin and anyone else involved. This grant will ensure funding to help keep our police department fully staffed.</p> <p>Mayor Thomas attended the gun bash sponsored by Windber Fire Company on November 5th at the Grand Ballroom. He was disappointed by the lack of support at the event. We need to support both the fire department and Northern EMS as both are struggling for funding to remain solvent. He was impressed by the cleanliness of the ballroom.</p> <p>Mayor Thomas participated in the Veteran's Day Parade on Saturday, November 11, 2023. He was honored to give the welcome speech. Representative Rigby also attended and participated.</p>
Solicitor's Report	There was nothing to report at this time.
Code's Report	The report is in the council's packet. There were no questions at this time.
Approval Land Merger	<p>Mrs. Gates said there is a letter from the Planning Commission in the council's packet. It states that the Commission by a vote of 3 in favor and 0 against recommends approval of the merger plan as submitted by Ronald Mash Sr. to merge two lots to one at 106 Hillside Avenue. The conditions of the Planning Commission are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change draft picture to had drawn buildings. 2. Mr. Mash to do deed description. 3. Provide a copy of the recording deed map to us. (proof). <p>A motion was made by Mr. Pallo and seconded by Mr. Rummel to approve the merger of the Ronald Mash Sr. property along with the three conditions by the Planning Commission that must be met. Roll call vote: Mr. Pallo, yes; Mr. Rummel, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Dr. Ledney, absent; Mr. Mash, abstains; and Mr. Portante, yes. Motion carried.</p>
Ballroom Report	Mr. Holden said Lauren's report is in the council's packet. It appears bookings are increasing. WAVE is going to give us their schedule and there are three Ballroom hosted events along with three fire department hosted events in 2024.

The new employee, John Price, that we hired to help Lauren up there has been doing a great job! He has installed posts with rope to keep people from driving through the landscaping. He hand dug the posts for that fence and installed it himself.

Manager's Report

Ballroom-All the grass is now established at the areas planted. We did have a country night that was successful because there was good turnout from an advertising perspective and hopefully gets the word out. I was in attendance and heard numerous comments from citizens outside Windber who did not know improvements were made till this event. The Fire Department and Borough did bring in approximately \$1900.00 in donations to split after covering the cost. We are thankful to the sponsors who brought forward funds to support the effort.

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 all 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 approved by PennDOT with several barriers added. The Borough is currently working with a local contractor to place barriers with appropriate signage, when completed an inspection will be made.

Road Crew- The candidate selected did turn down the opportunity for the position. We did however move John Price into this position as he will cover the opening and the work at the Ballroom for the time being. I have discontinued interviews.

Sediment Removal Mine 35- I spoke with a representative of Rosebud to follow up on the removal. He will be getting back to me with approximate status for hauling to begin.

The council convened to an executive session at 7:22 p.m. for police and personnel matters.

The council reconvened from an executive session at 7:45 p.m.

General Fund Budget

Mr. Holden said council discussed taking the millage increase to 2 and increasing the carry over to provide a half mill for Northern EMS Ambulance Service. Mrs. Gates will make the changes and provide us with a new budget via email.

A motion was made by Mr. Mash and seconded by Mr. LaMonaca to tentatively approve the General Fund Budget for the Year 2024 with the changes above and will be in the amount of \$2,131,427.07. Roll call vote: Mr. Mash, yes; Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Dr. Ledney, absent; Mr. Pallo, yes; Mr. Portante, no; and Mr. Rummel, yes. Motion carried.

Sewer Fund Budget	A motion was made by Mr. Mash and seconded by Mr. LaMonaca to tentatively approve the Sewer Fund Budget for the Year 2024 in the amount of \$211,600.00. Roll call vote: Mr. Mash, yes; Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Dr. Ledney, absent; Mr. Pallo, yes; Mr. Portante, yes; and Mr. Rummel, yes. Motion carried.
Liquid Fuels Budget	A motion was made by Mr. Mash and seconded by Mr. Pallo to tentatively approve the Liquid Fuels Budget for the Year 2024 in the amount of \$128,216.02. Roll call vote: Mr. Mash, yes; Mr. Pallo, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Dr. Ledney, absent; Mr. Portante, yes; and Mr. Rummel, yes. Motion carried.
Advertise Ordinance	A motion was made by Mr. Mash and seconded by Mr. LaMonaca to approve to advertise Ordinance No. 2023-2 Levying a tax of 20.92 mills for the Year 2024. Roll call vote; Mr. Mash, yes; Mr. LaMonaca, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Dr. Ledney, absent; Mr. Pallo, yes; Mr. Portante, yes; and Mr. Rummel, yes. Motion carried.
Approval Per Capita Occupation Additions	A motion was made by Mr. Mash and seconded by Mr. Pallo to approve 2024 per capita and occupational additions. One absent, Dr. Ledney, motion carried.
Plow Driver	A motion was made by Mr. Mash and seconded by Mr. Rummel to approve Thomas Gordon as a part-time plow truck driver for the 2023-2024 winter season. Roll call vote: Mr. Mash, yes; Mr. Rummel, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Dr. Ledney, absent; Mr. Pallo, yes; and Mr. Portante, yes. Motion carried.
Plow Driver	A motion was made by Mr. Mash and seconded by Mr. Pallo to approve Doug Walters as a part-time plow truck driver for the 2023-2024 winter season. Roll call vote: Mr. Mash, yes; Mr. Holden, yes; Dr. Ledney, absent; Mr. Portante, yes and Mr. Rummel, yes. Motion carried.
Resolution 2023-1	A motion was made by Mr. Rummel and seconded by Mr. LaMonaca to approve Resolution Number 2023-1 for the Police Station Grant. One absent, Dr. Ledney. Motion carried.
Next Meeting	The next meeting date will be December 11, 2023, at 7 p.m.
Adjourn	Meeting was adjourned by Council President, John Holden at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Robin S. Gates
Administrative Assistant