

Jermyn Borough

Council Meeting

3/5/20

The Jermyn Borough Council held a council meeting on Thursday, March 5, 2020 at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers of the Jermyn Borough Building, 440 Jefferson Ave, Jermyn PA.

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Kulick with the Pledge of Allegiance.

On roll call, the following members were present: Frank Kulick, Kristen Dougherty, Jennifer Schreiner, Cynthia Stephens, Kevin Napoli, and Robert Hunt. Attorney Aquilino, Mayor Fuga and Stanley Hallowich were also present. Carl Tomaine, Isabella Brown, KBA and Bob Chase were absent.

**Minutes:** A motion was made by K. Napoli to accept the minutes of 2/20/20 as presented. Seconded by C. Stephens. All in favor, motion carried.

**Bills Payable:** A motion was made by J. Schreiner to pay the bills as presented. Seconded by K. Dougherty. All members in favor, motion carried.

**Fire Siren:** Chief Hallowich reported that we received a call from Mr. Shuta, owner of the old Crystal Fire Company. He was wondering if the borough was planning on using the siren in the future. If not, he wants to have his electric changed from commercial to residential, which he cannot now due to three phase electric installed for the siren. Chief Hallowich sees no use for it any longer. It's not been working for over a year, and there haven't been issues with firefighters getting the message and getting out. K. Napoli stated for fire companies, there is really no significance any longer. T. Fuga stated its very old and costly to maintain and repair. A motion was made by K. Napoli to give permission to Mr. Shuta to change to residential electric, with the stipulation that he allows housing of the siren for the remainder of the term. Seconded by J. Schreiner. All members in favor, motion carried.

**Fire Companies:** K. Napoli reported that he met with the fire companies over a strict no alcohol policy. They met on New Year's Eve, and again in February. They were supposed to meet again tonight with both fire companies bringing a resolution or procedure outlining the no alcohol policy. No one that was invited to tonight's meeting was present. He understands tonight there was a fire that Crystal was called to a fire, but they still did not send anyone to the meeting, and the Artisan Fire Company did not send anyone either. D. Markey stated that he received a call from Artisan President Jeff McDermott at about 6:10pm. He was just getting out of work in Archbald, had to run home and change, and pick his daughter up from work. He stated that if he could make it over, it would only be for about 5 or 10 minutes, and D. Markey stated he would notify the meeting members that he wasn't able to be here this evening. K. Napoli acknowledged. K. Napoli stated that in the year 2020, he can't understand why a fire company would agree that a no alcohol policy is the right thing to do. He spoke about it with the committee that was put together, consisting of himself, President Kulick, Mayor Fuga, Chief Hallowich, and Attorney Aquilino. We are going to move forward; no members showing up tonight showed a lack of respect. The Vice President from Crystal Fire Company showed up, but he showed up on his own accord, as he was concerned about what was going on, and K. Napoli explained to him what was going on. He stated we are going to ask both fire companies to come back to us with a strict no alcohol policy by March 19<sup>th</sup>, with certain rental exceptions, and if they do not get back to us by March 19<sup>th</sup>, we will pull all financial funding from the non compliant company or companies, and also take them off the

boxes for Jermyn. If any other fire companies around would like to know why, he is open to talking to them regarding the reasons. We are also in talks regarding decertification, if it has to come to that. A motion was made by K. Napoli to allow the solicitor to write a letter to the fire companies, advising their removal of the box, and removal of financial assistance, if no alcohol policies are passed and remitted to the borough by March 19, 2020. Seconded by C. Stephens. On a roll call vote, the following votes were cast:

F. Kulick – yes

J. Schreiner – yes

K. Dougherty – yes

C. Stephens – yes

K. Napoli – yes

R. Hunt – no.

On a 5 to 1 roll call vote, the motion carries.

**Correspondence:** F. Kulick announced we received a letter from Senator Blake in response to the letter sent to him regarding the PA budget, specifically the proposal to require all municipalities to pay a fee to fund the Pennsylvania State Police. The letter was read, and Senator Blake agrees with the borough's position that we should not incur costs in the PA budget.

F. Kulick read a letter from the PA Emergency Management Agency regarding the appointment of James Perry of Jermyn's EMA coordinator, noting their endorsement, and sending to the Governor for appointment.

**Public Comment:** Andrew Goodwin of 607 Jefferson Ave. is here to speak about the fire company issue. This is something to him that is quite near and dear to him. He stated it appears that council has a good understanding of the issues, but he doesn't feel council was aggressive enough in the motion that was made, and he thinks the borough should move towards decertification. He gave his credentials as to why he believes he is qualified to speak on the subject. He cannot believe that this is still a subject in this day and age, and this shouldn't ever be a topic of discussion; it's unacceptable from a public service agency. He referenced the newspaper article from January 3, 2020 regarding the Crystal Fire Company member giving keys to minors to secure alcohol. Who was fighting the fires in Jermyn on New Years Eve, if the fire company had an alcoholic party? Also he noted the boyfriend left \$20 for the firefighters. He asked is a speakeasy being run in a Jermyn fire department? Why are we not being more aggressive with this? Why is the fire company not decertified? He stated tonight there was a council member that voted no on this, and that is their prerogative, but maybe they do not understand the issue. The last house fire in Jermyn was a year ago. What are we doing in the meantime? There's no training, no public service. As a citizen, he demands more from his local fire departments. He read some newspaper articles about firefighters fighting fires and driving firetrucks while under the influence, some even killing others. Why in 2020 is this still acceptable? He read research about firefighters and alcohol use, and the correlation between firefighters and binge drinking. He stated at the last meeting that Councilman Napoli stated he was getting intimidation from members of the public asking why he can't leave the fire companies alone? Why doesn't the public understand that this is such a significant problem? He stated when he was new to the fire company, he thought the drinking was normal, but he learned that it's not. It's dangerous and unacceptable. Job stress is not an acceptable excuse, bonding is not an excuse. They should be training together instead. He wants to see this problem get solved and has a possible solution. He believes that each fire company should adopt the drug and alcohol policy put forth by the International Association of Fire Chiefs. The general public has placed their faith and trust in these volunteers, and 'we are volunteers' are not an excuse for the alcohol problem.

Katelyn English from Lackawanna County read numerous flyers for county-wide events.

**CDBG Co-Op Resolution:** A motion was made by K. Dougherty to pass the CDBG Co Op Resolution (Resolution #4-2020). Seconded by J. Schreiner. All members in favor, motion carried.

**Flood Plain Management Ordinance:** D. Markey stated he sent to all council members. A motion was made by K. Dougherty to advertise the floodplain management ordinance. Seconded by K. Napoli. All members in favor, motion carried.

**New Business:** F. Kulick stated there is a new tax collector in town, Kathlyn Goodwin. From what he understands from the Borough Manager, she has been very proactive and attentive in her job. She passed her online training in prompt fashion. President Kulick read a report from her. President Kulick states he is happy she is paying close attention to her job.

J. Schreiner stated she and C. Tomaine attended the Newly Elected Municipal Boot Camp a couple weeks ago. It was very helpful, and she highly recommends it. She thanked the borough for sending them. She took away two very important things. 1. This council is very fortunate to get along so well. Although council members sometimes disagree on things, everyone can discuss and ask questions and have enough respect for one another to do what's best for the borough. Other boroughs that they have talked to during the training have half of the council members against the other half, and sometimes people will vote against something just because someone they don't like makes the motion, or votes for it. 2. They kept talking about things that D. Markey has already showed or taught, and we are very fortunate to have the borough manager we have. He is on top of things, making sure we're doing things the right way, in compliance, etc.

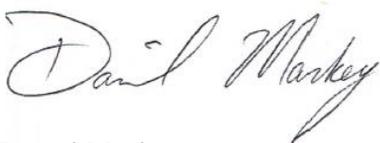
D. Markey stated that Bob Chase couldn't be here tonight, but had some things from the planning commission to bring to council; he will do it at the March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. John Sheridan states he wants to put a variety store at the corner of Washington and Franklin. Mr. Charlie Battenberg mentioned about the new historical society building, and how it might fit into zoning. That may be what Mr. Chase wanted to discuss. Mr. Basil Kleha stated if parking is an issue for the variety store, parking would be an issue with every business on the main street. D. Markey stated per a text from B. Chase that Mr. Sheridan would need a zoning use permit, and should submit an application.

D. Markey advised the parking lot paving was advertised for bid. The pre-bid meeting will be March 10<sup>th</sup> at 10am in the borough building. Bids will be opened at the council meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup>. K. Dougherty asked for KBA to be here on the 19<sup>th</sup> when we open the bids.

B. Kleha asked if the borough picks up the garbage at 616 Washington Ave? D. Markey stated no, they are on the lock list. B. Kleha stated there is a white pickup truck that hauls the trash away on Thursday nights. D. Markey states if it is being hauled to somewhere else in Jermyrn, it violates our ordinance.

**Adjournment:** With no other business to come before the meeting, a motion was made by K. Napoli to adjourn, seconded by C. Stephens. All in favor, motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Daniel Markey

Borough Manager