

Jermyn Borough
Council Organization Meeting

1/6/20

The Jermyn Borough Council held a council organization meeting on Monday, January 6, 2020 at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers of the Jermyn Borough Building, 440 Jefferson Ave, Jermyn PA.

Frank Kulick, Kevin Napoli, Jennifer Schreiner, and Carl Tomaine were sworn in by Mayor Anthony Fuga Jr. The Mayor welcomed Robert Hunt, who was sworn in prior to the meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Fuga with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Fuga welcomed Isabella Brown as Jermyn's Junior Council Member.

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

Nominations for President: Mayor Fuga asked for nominations for Council President. Cindy Stephens nominated Frank Kulick. There were no other nominations. Mayor Fuga requested a roll call vote: F. Kulick - abstain, K. Dougherty – yes, K. Napoli – yes, J. Schreiner – yes, C. Stephens – yes, C. Tomaine – yes, R. Hunt – yes. Vote total 6 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention.

Nominations for Vice President: Mayor Fuga asked for nominations for Council Vice President. K. Napoli nominated K. Dougherty. There were no other nominations. Mayor Fuga requested a roll call vote: F. Kulick - yes, K. Dougherty – abstain, K. Napoli – yes, J. Schreiner – yes, C. Stephens – yes, C. Tomaine – yes, R. Hunt – yes. Vote total 6 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention.

Mayor Fuga handed the gavel to President F. Kulick.

Nominations for President Pro Tem: F. Kulick asked for nominations for President Pro Tem. K. Napoli nominated J. Schreiner. There were no other nominations. All members in favor, motion carried.

Correspondence: None.

Public Comment: Basil Kleha, 600 Washington Ave., congratulated all the council members and thanked them for their service. He welcomed new council member Robert Hunt and Junior Council member Isabella Brown

Bills Payable: D. Markey read the bills payable. A motion was made by C. Stephens to pay the bills as presented. Seconded by J. Schreiner. All members in favor, motion carried.

Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by K. Napoli to accept the minutes from 12/19/19 as presented. Seconded by K. Dougherty. All members in favor, motion carried.

A motion was made by K. Dougherty to accept the minutes from 12/23/19 special meeting. Seconded by C. Stephens. All members in favor, motion carried.

F. Kulick asked if we have received any letters of interest yet for tax collector? D. Markey stated no letters of interest, but there were a few people who showed interest. F. Kulick asked D. Markey to send formal thank you letters to the dignitaries who attended the Jermyn 150 Celebration last Friday evening.

State of the Borough: F. Kulick read a state of the borough address, and announced it will be part of the meeting minutes.

Committees: F. Kulick stated he is going to change a few things regarding committees.

Finance: C. Tomaine (chair), F. Kulick, and R. Hunt

DPW: J. Schreiner (chair), K. Napoli, C. Stephens

Public Safety: K. Napoli (chair), J. Schreiner, C. Stephens

Grants: K. Dougherty (chair), C. Tomaine, C. Stephens

MS4: K. Dougherty (chair), R. Hunt, J. Schreiner, Richard Farrell

Liaisons:

Employee Liaison: F. Kulick

Recreations Commission: C. Stephens

Planning Commission: K. Napoli

Crime Watch: J. Schreiner

Shade Tree: R. Hunt

Appointments: F. Kulick announced the council needs to appoint officials as well. He explained the vacancy board and what the role of the vacancy board chair is. F. Kulick nominated Kyra Davey to the vacancy board. There were no other nominations. All members in favor, motion carried.

J. Wilson was Lackawanna County Tax Committee Liaison. F. Kulick asked if there were any volunteers? If not, we won't send a liaison.

A motion was made by J. Schreiner to appoint W. Aquilino as solicitor. Seconded by C. Tomaine. All members in favor, motion carried.

A motion was made by K. Dougherty to appoint W. Aquilino as code enforcement officer. Seconded by C. Stephens. All members in favor, motion carried.

A motion was made by K. Napoli to appoint S. Hallowich as fire chief. Seconded by J. Schreiner. All members in favor, motion carried.

F. Kulick asked for a motion to appoint Ralph Bensing as EMA director. K. Napoli asked D. Markey if Mr. Bensing got back to him yet? D. Markey stated not yet. K. Napoli asked to table the appointment until the next meeting.

A motion was made by C. Stephens to appoint KBA as borough engineer. Seconded by C. Tomaine. There were four members in favor, three opposed. Motion carried.

A motion was made by J. Schreiner to appoint Brian Kelly, CPA & Associates as auditor. Seconded by C. Tomaine. All Members in favor, motion carried.

A motion was made by K. Napoli to appoint Robert Chase as zoning officer. Seconded by K. Dougherty. All members in favor, motion carried.

A motion was made by K. Napoli to appoint John Marino & NEIC as the Building Code Official. Seconded by C. Stephens. All members in favor, motion carried.

A motion was made by K. Napoli to appoint Daniel Markey as borough manager, secretary, treasurer, Right to Know Officer. Seconded by C. Stephens. All members in favor, motion carried.

A motion was made by K. Napoli to appoint William Arthur as police chief. Seconded by J. Schreiner. All members in favor, motion carried.

Madison Ave. No Parking Ordinance: F. Kulick explained the ordinance prohibiting parking at 626 Madison Ave between the entrance and exit of the parking lot has been duly advertised, and is ready for passage. This will be Ordinance 01-2020. A motion was made by K. Napoli to pass. Seconded by K. Dougherty. All members in favor, motion carried.

Amend Tax Ordinance 9-19: F. Kulick announced we need to amend Ordinance 9-19, which sets the tax rates for 2020, and a motion is requested to allow advertisement of the ordinance amendment. The amendment removes the 4 mill special tax for police protection, and replaces it with a 4 mill special tax for debt reduction purposes on debt incurred pursuant to 53 PA. C.S. Pt. VII Subpt. B (relating to indebtedness and borrowing). A motion was made by J. Schreiner to advertise the amended tax ordinance. Seconded by K. Napoli. All members in favor, motion carried.

New Business: D. Markey advised that the bidding requirement thresholds have increased for 2020. Purchases & contracts below \$11,300 need no bid or quote. Between \$11,300 and \$21,00 require 3 written or telephonic quotations. Purchases & contracts above \$21,000 require formal bidding.

F. Kulick announced that we have a phone system with a phone tree, and if any council members or members of the public have a complaint about anything, they can call the borough office and dial the appropriate number for the appropriate liaison.

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 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Daniel Markey

Borough Manager

STATE OF JERMYN 1-6-20

BY: FRANK KULICK

I FELT IT TO BE AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO GIVE A STATE OF THE BOROUGH REPORT AS I BEGIN MY SECOND TERM ON COUNCIL, HAVING SERVED AS PRESIDENT THE LAST 4 YEARS.

4 YEARS AGO, THE MAKE UP OF COUNCIL CHANGED DRAMATICALLY WITH THE ELECTION OF MYSELF, DAN MARKEY AND KEVIN NAPOLI. OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS, THROUGH RESIGNATIONS, APPOINTMENTS, AND ELECTIONS COUNCIL HAS EVOLVED SOME AND NOW WELCOMES ROBERT(BUZZ) HUNT AS ITS NEWEST MEMBER. I WANT TO THANK THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED ALONGSIDE ME THESE LAST 4 YEARS INCLUDING THOSE SITTING HERE TONIGHT AS WELL AS FORMER MEMBERS BOB PARKS, JOE SMITH, JOHN MARK AND JOANNE WILSON. COUNCIL MEMBERS SERVE WITHOUT PAY PUTTING IN MUCH MORE TIME IN ADDITION TO JUST MEETING TIME.

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ACCOPMISHMENTS OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS. ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS WE DID WAS TO MOVE THE SORELY NEEDED PAVING PROJECT FROM SOMETHING BEING TALKED ABOUT FOR A FEW YEARS TO REALITY. WE HAVE WORKED ON IMPROVING ALLEYWAYS IN THE BOROUGH AND MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE PAVING PROJECT BY HOLDING UTILTY COMPANIES RESPONSIBLE FOR PROPER REPAIR OF ROADWAYS WHEN PAVE CUTS ARE NECESSARY FOR UTILITY REPAIRS.

WE HAVE UPGRADED THE EQUIPMENT IN OUR DPW DEPARTMENT ADDING EQUIPMENT AND MOST RECENTLY PUTTING UP A BUILDING TO HOUSE THE EQUIPMENT. WE SOLD OFF THE OLD DPW BUILDING WHICH WAS BADLY IN NEED OF COSTLY REPAIRS AND INADEQUATE FOR OUR NEEDS. THROUGH A GRANT WE SECURED A NEW TRUCK AND THROUGH OUR DPW DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP WE HAVE INSTITUTED REGULAR MAINTANENCE PROGRAMS TO KEEP OUR EQUIPMENT IN TOP SHAPE.

WE PUT THE RAPID CAST NOTIFICATION IN PLACE TO HELP KEEP RESIDENTS INFORMED OF BOROUGH EVENTS AND EMERGENCIES.

WE HAVE TAKEN STEPS THROUGH ADDING AN ADDITIONAL FULL TIME POLICE OFFICER POSITION AND BRINGING OUR RATE OF PAY FOR OUR PART TIME POLICE IN LINE WITH NEIGHBORING TOWNS TO HOLD ON TO OUR PART TIME OFFICERS WHICH WILL REDUCE OVERTIME COST AND INSURE SHIFT COVERAGES TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE 24 HOUR POLICE PROTECTION FOR OUR TOWN. WE HAVE ALSO UPGRADED OUR VEHICLE FLEET BY ADDING A NEW VEHICLE WHICH WE JUST RECENTLY TOOK POSSESSION OF. FURTHER WE NEGOTIATED AND AGREED TO A 5 YEAR CONTRACT WITH CHIEF ARTHUR WHICH BRINGS STABILTY TO THE POLICE FORCE AND CONTROLS OUR COST OVER THEIR CONTRACT PERIOD.

THROUGH A SERIES OF PERSONNEL MOVES I FEEL WE HAVE STRONGLY IMPROVED OUR DAY TO DAY RUNNING OF THE BOROUGH. WE NOW HAVE A BOROUGH MANAGER IN PLACE WHO IS PRO ACTIVE IN FINDING WAYS TO SAVE THE BOROUGH MONEY- WHO STAYS ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN OF PAPERWORK REQUIRED TO INSURE THE BOROUGH IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH ALL COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS-WHO OFTEN ON HIS OWN TIME PARTICIPATES IN WEBINARS OR ATTENDS SEMINARS TO MAKE SURE HE IS WELL EDUCATED –HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE PROCESS OF GETTING RAND L TRUCKING TO COMMIT TO BUIDLING A NEW TERMINAL IN JERMYN. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO HAVE SOMEONE WILLING TO STEP OUT WHEN NEEDED TO ENSURE THE BOROUGH’S INTERESTS ARE PROTECTED WHEN OUTSIDE ACTIVITY MAY BE TAKING PLACE SUCH AS UTILITY WORK, ETC. - I WILL SAY THAT IT TOOK US AWHILE TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A FULL TIME COMPETENT BOROUGH MANAGER -SOME THROUGH TRIAL AND ERROR-BUT CLEARLY EVEN A SMALL BOROUGH SUCH AS OURS CANNOT FUNCTION WITH OUT STRONG DAY TO DAY LEADERSHIP. RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR ESTABLISHING THE POSTION AND FILLING IT WITH A QUALITY PERSON SUCH AS DAN MARKEY I FEEL IS ONE OF THE BEST THINGS THIS COUNCIL ACCOMPLISHED.

WE ARE FACING A BUDGET WITH BOTH A TAX INCREASE AND AN INCREASE IN THE GARBAGE FEE. NEITHER IS WELCOME BUT BOTH ARE NECESSARY. THE TAX INCREASE TO ALLOW US TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE AROUND THE CLOCK POLICE PROTECTION AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE SERVICES OUR RESIDENTS WANT AND DESERVE. THE HARSH REALITY OF 2020 IS THAT AS A BOROUGH WE FACE

MANY COST INCREASES AND CHALLENGES PUT ON US BY THE STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WHICH PLACES FINANCIAL BURDENS UPON US. WE ARE DILLIGENT IN SEEKING OUT AND APPLYING FOR GRANTS TO HELP US CONTINUE TO TRY AND MAINTAIN SERVICES AND LOWER THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF DOING SO.THE GARBAGE FEE IS SIMPLY OUT OF OUR CONTROL. WHEN THE BIDDING WAS PUT OUT IN 2016 COUNTY WASTE CAME IN MUCH LOWER THAN OTHERS. BY LAW IF A BIDDER FOR MUNICIPAL WASTE COLLECTION MEETS THE BID SPECS AND IS LOW BIDDER WE HAVE TO AWARD THEM THE BID. WE DID LOWER THE FEES OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS BUT THE NEW BID FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS REQUIRES US TO RAISE THE FEE. IT IS A FEE NOT A TAX AND WE CAN ONLY CHARGE TO COVER THE ACTUAL COST WITH A SMALL RESERVE FOR UNCOLLECTABLE ACCOUNTS-THE BOROUGH DOES NOT MAKE ANY PROFIT ON THE GARBAGE FEE.

WE HAVE PUT PEOPLE AND PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO MAKE A STRONG EFFORT TO CLEAN THE TOWN OF PROPERTIES THAT ARE NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH CODE OR ORDINANCES. WE HAVE AGRESSIVELY PURSUED THIS WITH MANY CASES GOING TO THE DISTRICT JUSTICE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON THIS AND CLEAN UP OUR TOWN. WE ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE A CODE OFFICER WHO IS ALSO OUR SOLICITOR WHICH ENABLES HIM TO EXPEDITE THE RPOCESS REQUIRED TO GET THESE PROPERTIES CLEANED UP.

FINALLY, AS WE ENTER THIS THE 150TH YEAR CELEBRATION YEAR FOR OUR BOROUGH-WE HOPE TO SEE GROUND BROKEN ON THE MULTI MILLION DOLLAR R AND L TRUCKING FACILITY WHICH EVENTUALLY WILL ADD TO OUR TAX BASE AND BRING SOME EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY TO OUR TOWN. LONG TERM I AM HOPEFUL WE CAN SOMEHOW -THROUGH GRANT OPPORTUNITES – FIND A WAY TO BEAUTIFY OUR MAIN STREET AREA AND ATTRACT SOME RETAIL BUSINESS TO IT.

I WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS AND UPDATE THE RUSHBROOK CREEK PROJECT. IT IS DISHEARTENING THAT THIS LONG OVERDUE PROJECT REMAINS CAUGHT UP IN GOVERNMENTAL RED TAPE. WE HAVE, EVERY YEAR FOR THE LAST 4 YEARS HELD A TOWN HALL TYPE MEETING TO KEEP RESIDENTS APPRISED OF WHAT IS GOING ON AND ALLOW THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO DIRECTLY ASK QUESTIONS OF THE VARIOUS AGENCIES INVOLVED WITH THIS PROJECT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO BY SCHEDULING ANOTHER MEETING IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. TO THOSE THAT

WISH TO TAKE TO SOCIAL MEDIA TO SUGGEST THAT THIS COUNCIL OR FOR THAT MATTER COUNCILS BEFORE US ARE TO BLAME FOR THE LONG DELAY I SUGGEST YOU TURN YOUR ENERGY TO WRITING YOUR STATE AND FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVES ESPECIALLY THE FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVES TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE IN GETTING THIS PROJECT ROLLING. THE BOROUGH IS AT A STANDSTILL ON THIS-OUR HANDS ARE TIED- WE CANNOT TAKE ANY ACTION UNTIL DEP AND ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS ISSUE PERMITS AND TELL US WE CAN BEGIN THE PROCESS OF SECURING EASEMENTS ETC.

FINALLY, I WOULD LIKE ADDRESS THE RELATIVELY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO CHOOSE TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS TO QUESTION AND BASH DECISIONS MADE BY COUNCIL ON JUST ABOUT EVERY DECISION. OF COURSE, EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO AN OPINION. WE ARE OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS. COME TO A MEETING. CALL THE BOROUGH OFFICE. SEND CORRESPONDENCE. IF YOU WANT TO ACCUSE US OF SOMETHING DO IT TO OUR FACE NOT ON A FACEBOOK POST. WE ARE ELECTED OFFICIALS. VOTED INTO OFFICE TO DO THE BEST WE CAN AND MAKE DECISIONS TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY FOR THE GOOD OF THE ENTIRE BOROUGH. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO JUST THAT. WE ARE NOT PERFECT. WE CAN MAKE A MISTAKE OR HAVE AN ERROR IN JUDGEMENT. IF WE REALIZE WE HAVE DONE SO WE TAKE ACTION TO CORRECT IT. IT MAY NOT ALWAYS BE THE POPULAR THING TO DO BUT IT IS THE RIGHT THING.

THERE ARE A LOT OF CHALLENGES BEFORE US. I BELIEVE WE HAVE THE RIGHT GROUP OF PEOPLE TO NAVIGATE THE CHALLENGES AND MOVE THE BOROUGH FORWARD.