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| **Mayor**Robert Mullen**Solicitor**Elliott, Greenleaf & DeanAtty. Matthew Boyd**Chief of Police**David Homschek**Secretary**Kelly O’Brien**Treasurer**Jennifer Davitt**Engineer**PennEastern Engineers, LLCPaul Pasonick | Borough of Avoca950 Main St.Avoca, Pa 18641Secretary@AvocaBorough.comTelephonesSecretary: 570-457-4947 Fax: 570-451-1750Police Department: 570-457-4011 Street Department: 570-451-0625 | **Council**PresidentBob Dommermuth Vice PresidentGary HalagardaMichael FullerJoe Satkowski Jr.John D. Boone John VolsFrank Marriggi Stanley J. WaleskiJim Emlaw  |

**AVOCA BOROUGH**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14TH, 2021 – COUNCIL MEETING**

**MEETING MINUTES**

 The regular monthly meeting of Avoca Borough Council was held on Thursday, October 14th, 2021 with Council President, Bob Dommermuth, presiding. The work session began at 6:30pm. The regular monthly meeting was called to order at 6:36p.m. and Pledge of Allegiance was said by Jim Emlaw.

 Council members in attendance: John D. Boone, Jim Emlaw, Mike Fuller, Gary Halagarda, Frank Marriggi, Joe Satkowski, Stanley Waleski and Bob Dommermuth. John Vols was absent.

 Also in attendance: Mayor Robert Mullen, Atty. Matthew Boyd, Chief Dave Homschek and Secretary Kelly O’Brien. Engineer Paul Pasonick was absent.

 Please note, there was an executive session held prior to the Council meeting, from 6:10p.m. until 6:30p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel and contract negotiations.

 Motion by Joe Satkowski, second by John Boone to accept the minutes of the September 2021 regular Council meeting as presented. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by Stan Waleski, second by Mike Fuller to pay all bills presented with funds available. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by Gary Halagarda, second by Joe Satkowski to accept new correspondence as presented. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by Joe Satkowski, second by Stan Waleski to accept the police report prepared by Chief Homschek and read aloud by Mayor Mullen. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by John Boone, second by Frank Marriggi to table quotes from both James T. O’Hara ($5900) and Latona Trucking & Excavating ($12,789) for cleaning out the Mill Creek debris basin. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

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 Motion by Joe Satkowski, second by Jim Emlaw to hire Charles Yarick as a part time police officer contingent upon all state certifications & requirements. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by Frank Marriggi, second by Mike Fuller to approve pay request from Don E. Bower in the amount of $14,933.70 for the Main & McAlpine Inlet Project. Please note, $1659.30 (10%) has been retained from their original bid price until they submit the maintenance bond that was required. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by Mike Fuller, second by John Boone to ratify the approval of insurance renewal quotes from Joyce Insurance for police professional’s policy at an annual cost of $12,900 (expiring $13,862) and public officials policy at an annual cost of $11,949 (expiring $11,725). Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by Joe Satkowski, second by Jim Emlaw to approve a bonus of $2500 for each full time police officer, subject to union approval and Solicitor’s memorandum of understanding that will accompany the approval. Funds will come from the American Rescue Act funds and will be distributed after January 1st,2022 to each officer. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by Joe Satkowski, second by Jim Emlaw to approve a bonus of $500 each to all other full time borough employees (2 Street Department workers & Borough Secretary). Funds will come from the general fund and will be distributed after January 1st,2022 to each employee. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by Jim Emlaw, second by Joe Satkowski to accept the first reading of the proposed 2022 budget prepared by Steve Yokimishyn and read aloud by Atty. Boyd. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by Jim Emlaw, second by Joe Satkowski to approve a request from Mike Riddle of Greater Pittston Crossover to use the Community Center from November 6th, 2021-January 28th,2021 for a winter youth basketball league, subject to Solicitor’s approval and submitting all required & proper paperwork requested by the Borough. It was agreed upon that Mr. Riddle will rent the gym at a cost of $1000 for his season. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Motion by Jim Emlaw, second by Mike Fuller – Resolution 11 or 2021, applying for DCED’s Community Development Block Program Cares Funding in conjunction with Pittston City to establish a regional home rehabilitation program that will focus on ventilation needs for area residents and seniors. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES

 Engineers report was prepared by Paul Pasonick and read aloud by President Dommermuth. See attached.

 Police report was prepared by Chief Homschek and read aloud by Mayor Mullen. See attached.

In other Borough matters:

Frank Marriggi thanked the street department for repairing the curb by Fourth Street in a quick manner.

Bob Dommermuth asked Micky Volch & Stan Spagnuolo of the street department if they feel they can handle the job of cleaning out the Mill Creek debris basin to which they both replied, “yes”.

Two residents, Beverly Chisdock and Diana Harris, both addressed Council with their concerns. Both ladies live on McAlpine Street and every time is rains heavy, water from Swift Street runs right down into their yards and floods their properties. They were asking if there was any solution to stop the water from going into their yards. After

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some discussion, the street department will look and see if there is anything that can be done in their opinion. They also asked if the Swift Street alley behind their homes can be fully plowed this winter. They voiced their displeasure at an abandoned home on LeHigh Street, to which Mr. Waleski advised the NorthEast Land Bank recently acquired this home in the August tax sale. Stan explained the actual deed transfer usually takes several months, and then once acquired the Borough will be able to legally start some clean up on the property. The ladies also voiced their displeasure about the condition of another property at the corner of LeHigh Street & McAlpine Street, stating there is trash and tires, among other junk in their yard.

Resident Ron Casper asked who would be running the proposed basketball league on the agenda and how much it will be rented for. Bob Dommermuth answered by stating Mr. Mike Riddle would be running the league at a cost of $1000 to help cover heat & utilities.

Stan Waleski spoke on several items. He provided Council with updates on the North East Land Bank and the tree on Mr. Coffee’s garage, stating that Mr. Coffee and adjacent property owner Ann Marie Loux got it taken down. He mentioned the drainage issues in the 400 block of Winans Court and 200 block of Wood Street, suggesting the Borough address the issues with the American Rescue Act monies the borough was recently awarded and have Paul look into possibly proceeding with the projects. Stan had several questions regarding the proposed 2022 budget regarding the police MMO, medical insurance for the office administration, expenditures for the borough building and the street department wages and positions, to which his questions were answered by Bob Dommermuth and Atty. Boyd to the best of their ability.

John Boone spoke on several items. Mr. Boone mentioned that several meetings ago there was a discussion on renaming a section of Grove Street up by Petro truck stop with the intent to prevent tractor trailers coming down on to residential borough roads. Atty. Boyd stated he will look into the specifics and will follow up with the County on the procedure to change the name of a Borough road. John stated that he heard a rumor of the east McAlpine Street water issue project being put on hold for four years and asked if it were true. Bob Dommermuth advised he was unaware of the project being put on hold and stated to the best of his knowledge the project is currently in the planning & design phase with PennEastern Engineers and the project will be proceeding as scheduled. Mr. Boone asked the street department to look at a possible drainage issue at the top of Russell Street & Winans Court. He also stated that he is aware of possibly 4 houses dumping sum pump water on the streets, specifically at the intersection of Grove St & McAlpine St, the 500 block of Grove Street and the 800 block of South Street. John advised it will become a bigger problem if it continues, as water can cause road erosion and it will turn to ice once the weather starts to become colder. He also reminded everyone it is illegal to dump anything onto a road. Atty. Boyd followed up by saying he can send letters to the residents in those sections advising them to stop. After the reading of the proposed 2022 budget, John asked if this included an increase in taxes. Jim Emlaw advised taxes did not need to be raised per Steve Yokimishyn. Mr. Boone closed by advising Council that the property at the intersection of Grove Street and McAlpine Street is a mess again and asked if it can be addressed as he is getting complaints.

Gary Halagarda spoke about the recent HARIE safety grant the Borough was awarded in the amount of $5500. He said that is right around the cost of 2 AED machines that can be put in our public buildings and purchasing a bit of the road safety equipment that was in our application. Stan Waleski advised Gary that he & The Jolly Boys organization will provide an AED machine for the community center and suggested the two the Borough can obtain through the grant be placed in the Borough building and the Borough garage. Gary and Stan agreed to follow up on the AED’s and speak about ordering them.

 Motion by Frank Marriggi, second by Joe Satkowski to adjourn meeting at 7:15pm. Voice Vote: Eight ( 8 ) YES