|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Mayor**Robert Mullen**Solicitor**Atty. Matthew G. BoydUfberg & Associates**Chief of Police**David Homschek **Secretary**Sandra Van Luvender **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** **President**Holly Homschek **Vice President**Gary Halagarda Michael FullerJoe Satkowski Jr.Jim Emlaw Stanley Waleski Bob DommermuthDennis O’BrienAlan Kiesinger  |

**AVOCA BOROUGH**

**Thursday December 14, 2023 – Council Meeting**

**Meeting Minutes**

 The regular meeting of the Avoca Borough Council was held on Thursday December 14, 2023, with Council President, Holly HOMSCHECK, presiding. The work session began at 1833HRS. The regular meeting was called to order at 1842HRS, and Pledge of Allegiance was said by Bob DOMMERMUTH.

 Council Members in attendance: Holly HOMSCHEK, Gary HALAGARDA Dennis O’BRIEN, Jim EMLAW, Joseph SATKOWSKI, Mike FULLER, Bob DOMMERMUTH, Jonathan GEDRICH and Alan KIESINGER.

 Also in attendance: Mayor Robert MULLEN, Attorney Matthew BOYD, Police Chief Dave HOMSCHEK, Borough Engineer, Paul PASONICK and Secretary, Sandra VAN LUVENDER.

 Motion by Mike FULLER, second by Joseph SATKOWSKI to accept the minutes from last month’s meeting. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

 Motion by Alan KIESINGER, second by Bob DOMMERMUTH to pay all bills presented with monies available. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

 Motion by Alan KIESINGER, second by James EMLAW to accept new correspondence as presented. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

 Motion by Bob DOMMERMUTH, second by Dennis O’BRIEN to accept police report prepared by Chief HOMSCHEK and read by Mayor MULLEN. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Alan KIESINGER, second by Michael FULLER at enactan ordinance of the Borough of Avoca, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania fixing the tax rate 3.1 mils for the calendar year 2024. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Alan KIESINGER, second by Bob DOMMERMUTH to enact an ordinance re-enacting the wage tax ordinance of the Borough of Avoca, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, without substantial change from the original wage tax ordinance enacted June 29, 1962(1%), and authorizing publication and registration of said ordinance. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Dennis O’BRIEN, second by Michael FULLER to enact an ordinance of the Borough of Avoca, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania fixing the tax rate 1% for the transfer of the titles of real estate and the taking possession thereof for property situated in the Borough of Avoca for the calendar year 2024. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Dennis O’BRIEN, second by Jonathan GEDRICHto enactan ordinance re-enacting the local services tax (LST tax) of the borough of Avoca, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, without substantial change from the original local services tax (LST tax) ordinance enacted November 2007 and authorizing publication and registration of said ordinance.Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Bob DOMMERMUTH, second by Alan KIESINGER to adopt Resolution 1 of 2024, imposing an annual tax in the amount of $75.00 on each amusement device located within the Borough of Avoca. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Dennis O’BRIEN, second by James EMLAWto adoptResolution 2 of 2024**,** reenacting no member/employee contribution to the police pension fund for the 2024 calendar year. Voice Vote: (8) Eight Yes – Holly HOMSCHEK abstain.

Motion by Joseph SATKOWSKI, second by Bob DOMMERMUTH **s**etting the regular Council meeting dates for the

2024 calendar year. Meetings will be the 2nd Thursday of each month with the work session beginning at 6:30p.m. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Dennis O’BRIEN, second by Joseph SATKOWSKI to accept second reading of 2024 Budget. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Dennis O’BRIEN, second by Joseph SATKOWSKIto appoint, James EMLAW as the Avoca representative to L.L.V.S.A. Board for a (5) five-year term. Roll Call Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Joseph SATKOWSKI, second by Dennis O’BRIEN toadoptOrdinance 6-2023 - clarification of wording on police pension. Voice Vote: (8) Eight Yes – Holly HOMSCHEK abstain.

 Motion by Gary HALAGARDA, second by Jonathan GEDRICH to accept insurance renewal quotes from Joyce Insurance (Risk Strategies) for: General Liability -$12,725, Auto - $13,219, Property - $9,923, inland marine(included) and Cyber - $2,670. Total cost of renewal $38,573 – expiring cost $35,021 – increase of $3,552. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by James EMLAW, second by Bob DOMMERMUTH to hold the Bi-Annual Reorganization meeting and the regular monthly meeting for January 2024 on January 2, 2024, beginning at 6:30pm. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Bob DOMMERMUTH, second by Joseph SATKOWSKI to hire Joseph Delaney as a full-time Police Officer, effective January 02, 2024. Officer Delaney will be subject to a (3) month probationary period as per CBA. Voice Vote: (8) Eight Yes – Holly HOMSCHEK abstain.

Motion by Joseph SATKOWSKI, second by Jonathan GEDRICH to purchase cameras for the Borough Garage.Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

Motion by Michael FULLER, second by Jospeh SATKOWSKI set 2024 refuse fee schedule as follows:postcards to residents during week of December 26, 2023. Voice Vote: (9) Nine Yes

**-Pay in Full**

 $250 per unit from January 1 – February 29th, 2024

 $275 per unit from March 1 – April 30th, 2024

 $300 per unit from May 1 – June 30th, 2024

After June 30th, $350 per unit (Fee with penalties) and property owners may be subject to further legal action and penalties.

**-Pay in Installments**

 Your total owed may be split into two payments during each period.

 **Street Department**:

 Michael VOLCH and Stan SPAGNUOLO were present at the meeting. There was discussion regarding water run off on 3rd Street and Pittston Ave. Issue has been ongoing for years, cold weather makes run off freeze and ice over the roadway. The Street Department has been salting the area every day.

**Audience:**

Resident Kevin O’BRIEN asked if there had been any changes to the 2024 proposed budget. He was advised that there had been no changes. O’BRIEN also questioned if the Avoca Borough was receiving a franchise fee from the local cable companies. He was advised that the Borough did receive a fee and council member, Michael FULLER reported that he believed the fee received was 5%. It was confirmed that both Comcast and Astound give the Borough a 5% fee.

Avoca Fire Chief, Thomas MATTHEWS asked if the Borough could set a meeting date with the Hose Company for January 2024. He was advised that one could be arranged.

Resident Michael LAMPMAN advised that he had a few questions about the proposed budget for 2024.

* The insurance line item on the Budget – does that include all of the Borough Insurance? Holly HOMSCHEK responded no that it did not. LAMPMAN asked if it included the Hose Company workers compensation insurance? After review of the proposed budget, Holly HOMSCHEK reported that the line item did include all of the insurance.
* Under the notes on the last page of the Budget – the total increase of the salary cost for the police is going up by $65,000, yet the line item for the police budget only increased $37,000 from 2023 Budget. Where is the other $28,000 listed in the budget? LAMPMAN advised that it was a question for the accountant, Steve YOKIMISHYN.
* LAMPMAN suggested the Borough Budget Proposal could be set up like other Boroughs, listing the previous, current, cost to date and proposed budgets all on the same page for comparison. He was informed that it would be taken under advisement.
* LAMPMAN commented that the current budget is 1.3 million dollars and with rising costs in (5) five years we will be at 2 million dollars, can the borough keep up with that without raising taxes. What is the tipping point for the Borough? He was advised that Steve YOKIMISHYN does the projected budget, but unsure if he goes as far as (5) five years.

**Council Members:**

Bob DOMMERMUTH **–** bid farewell to Joseph SATKOWSKI.

Joseph SATKOWSKI – great to work with the council and for the citizens.

Holly HOMSCHECK – welcome Jonathan GEDRICH to council. Wanted to thank Lowe’s for their improvement work at the Little League (painting and fixing the dugouts).

**Engineer:**

Avoca Borough Engineer’s Report (dated December 14, 2023) prepared by Paul PASONICK. (See attached)

**Police:**

The Police Report was prepared by Chief David HOMSCHEK and read by Mayor Robert MULLEN. (See attached). Avoca Patrol Officer, Jonathon ALAIMO was also present at the meeting.