

# BOROUGH OF AMBRIDGE

## MINUTES

Council Meeting: February 11, 2020  
Ambridge Borough Building



- **The February 11, 2020 meeting of Ambridge Borough Council was called to order at 6:30PM within Council Chambers of the Ambridge Borough Building, 600 11<sup>th</sup> Street.**

Mr. Mikulich announced that the Council met for an executive session prior to this meeting to discuss personnel and legal matters.

- **Roll Call:**

Present: Mr. Dunn  
Mr. Flannery  
Mr. Gill  
Mrs. Miller  
Mr. Mikulich  
Mrs. Tessaro  
Mayor Drewnowski

Also Present: Borough Manager Kauer, Chief Romutis, Chief Gottschalk, Engineer Suehr and Solicitor Start

Absent: Mr. Cafarelli

- **Invocation** – the invocation was conducted by Mrs. Barbara Costa, Trinity School for Ministry.

- **Pledge of Allegiance**

- **Presentations** - None

- **Citizen's Participation On/Off Agenda Items (5 minutes per speaker)**

1. **Mr. Tom Friend, 511 Merchant Street**, expressed concerns to Council that the stop signs along Merchant Street within the downtown are hard to see at night.
2. **Ms. Cathy Holler, 824 11<sup>th</sup> Street**, questioned a \$7 charge on the water bills. Mr. Mikulich advised her that, that fee is not a Borough fee and that she should direct that question to the Water Authority. Ed Dzubak, Water Authority Board Member, who was in the audience, stated that the fee is dedicated to replace capital assets of the Water Authority and that it was always part of the service fees assessed.
3. **Mr. Doug McCombie, 638 Maplewood Avenue**, questioned how residents could dispose of large amounts of yard waste and tree branches. Mr. Mikulich stated there is a special bin at the Public Works Facility where residents could drop off such materials.
4. **Lorianne Burgess, 570 Merchant Street**, urged the Borough Council to apply for a COPS hiring grant. She would like to see some of our part-time officers get full-time positions.

- **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes  
January 6, 2020**

Mrs. Miller made the motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Dunn; a roll call vote was taken:

Council	VOTE	Council	Vote
Mr. Cafarelli	Absent	Mrs. Miller	Yes
Mr. Dunn	Yes	Mrs. Tessaro	Yes
Mr. Flannery	Yes	Mr. Mikulich	Yes
Mr. Gill	Yes	Mayor Drewnowski	

Motion carried.

**January 14, 2020**

Motion was made by Mr. Flannery, seconded by Mr. Dunn; Mr. Flannery pointed out a typographical error that he'd like to see corrected; a roll call vote was taken:

Council	VOTE	Council	Vote
Mr. Cafarelli	Absent	Mrs. Miller	Yes
Mr. Dunn	Yes	Mrs. Tessaro	Yes
Mr. Flannery	Yes	Mr. Mikulich	Yes
Mr. Gill	Yes	Mayor Drewnowski	

Motion carried.

- Borough Bills and Expenses**

Motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. Flannery, seconded by Mrs. Miller; a roll call vote was taken:

- |    |                                 |                     |                   |
|----|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | General Fund                    | Unpaid: \$80,615.91 | Paid: \$30,878.38 |
| 2. | Grants / Special Project Fund   | Unpaid: \$125.00    |                   |
| 3. | Recreation Fund                 | Unpaid: \$0.00      | Paid: \$0.00      |
| 4. | Escrow Fund                     | Unpaid: \$15,662.14 |                   |
| 5. | Police Pension Fund             | Unpaid: \$7,915.91  |                   |
| 6. | Service Employees Pension Fund  | Unpaid: \$1,073.98  |                   |
| 7. | Firemen's Pension Fund          | Unpaid: \$3,144.28  |                   |
| 8. | Drug Investigation Fund         | Unpaid: \$0.00      |                   |
| 9. | Fire Apparatus Replacement Fund | Unpaid: \$0.00      |                   |

Council	VOTE	Council	Vote
Mr. Cafarelli	Absent	Mrs. Miller	Yes
Mr. Dunn	Yes	Mrs. Tessaro	Yes
Mr. Flannery	Yes	Mr. Mikulich	Yes
Mr. Gill	Yes	Mayor Drewnowski	

Motion carried.

- Consent Agenda:**

*Those matters included under the consent agenda are self-explanatory and are not expected to require further review or discussion. Items will be enacted by one motion. If discussion is desired by any member of Council, that item must be removed from the consent agenda and considered separately.*

**Motion to accept items 1 through 6 listed on the Consent Agenda; all were in favor.**

- Borough Financial Report - acknowledge receipt of the Borough Treasurer's Report.

## Treasurer's Report

February 11, 2020

Marilyn Shekheda - Treasurer

<b>General Fund Analysis</b>
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\$461,324.76	General Fund Bank Account Balance as of:	-February 11, 2020 -3:00 pm
\$120,581.14	All (including today's checks) Outstanding Checks as of:	-February 11, 2020 -3:00 pm
<b>\$340,743.62</b>	Available Balance as of:	February 11, 2020 -3:00 pm

<b>General Fund Bank Summary:</b>	<i>Totals that cleared the bank are as follows:</i>	
	<i>Deposits:</i>	\$271,063.92
	<i>Debits:</i>	\$394,282.34
	<i>-which include the following:</i>	
	<i>73 Checks</i>	\$230,804.79
	<i>2 Payroll (s)</i>	\$163,477.55

Other Fund Balances as of February 11, 2020 3:00 pm	
\$250.00	Ambridge Bicentennial 2024 Fund.
\$5,788.17	Ambridge Borough Drug Investigation Fund
\$1,952.04	Ambridge Fire Apparatus Replacement Fund
\$24,416.82	Escrow Disbursement Account
\$5,528.18	Grants/Special Funds
\$11,780.13	Liquid Fuels Fund
\$35,830.27	Recreation Fund
\$4,761.13	Sinking Fund
<b>\$90,306.74</b>	<b>Total Other Funds Balances (Restricted Use)</b>

2. Authorize the dedicated on-street handicap parking space at 1141 Maplewood Avenue as recommended by the Ambridge Police Department.
3. Authorize the dedicated on-street handicap parking space at 917 Hazel Avenue, for Apt. 6., as recommended by the Ambridge Police Department.
4. Authorize conducting a Community Tire Collection Event in partnership with the Independence Conservancy on Saturday, October 10, 2020 at the Borough Building.
5. Authorize the Ambridge Rotary Club to close Merchant Street, with parking restrictions, from 4th to 8th Streets on Saturday, July 18, 2020 from 8:00AM to 3:00PM for their annual Car Cruise and CommUnity Festival.
6. Authorize the Ambridge Fireworks Committee to conduct the annual Independence Day Celebrations in Walter Panek Park on Friday, July 3, 2020.

**New Business - Items for Discussion:**

- A. Motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-2, a Resolution of the Borough of Ambridge authorizing submission of a grant funding request to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for the Henning Street Playground Project. Motion was made by Mrs. Miller, seconded by Mr. Dunn; a roll call vote was taken:

Council	VOTE	Council	Vote
Mr. Cafarelli	Absent	Mrs. Miller	Yes
Mr. Dunn	Yes	Mrs. Tessaro	Yes
Mr. Flannery	Yes	Mr. Mikulich	Yes
Mr. Gill	Yes	Mayor Drewnowski	

Motion carried.

- B. Motion to authorize submission of Community Development Block Grants for 1) Business District Parking Lot Improvements (Melrose Lots), and 2) Commercial Demolitions of 316 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 435 Maplewood Avenue. Motion was made by Mr. Flannery, seconded by Mr. Dunn; a roll call vote was taken:

Council	VOTE	Council	Vote
Mr. Cafarelli	Absent	Mrs. Miller	Yes
Mr. Dunn	Yes	Mrs. Tessaro	Yes
Mr. Flannery	Yes	Mr. Mikulich	Yes
Mr. Gill	Yes	Mayor Drewnowski	

Motion carried.

- C. Motion to authorize the disbursement of \$3,118 to Merit Electrical Group for Invoice No. 8 / Final of the Merchant Street Streetscape Project, electrical work. Motion was made by Mr. Dunn, seconded by Mrs. Tessaro, Mr. Gill questioned the scope of this invoice's work. The Manager explained that this invoice was the only payment the Borough made for the streetscape electrical work as it was for a change order for the signal pole at 8<sup>th</sup> Street. A roll call vote was taken:

Council	VOTE	Council	Vote
Mr. Cafarelli	Absent	Mrs. Miller	Yes
Mr. Dunn	Yes	Mrs. Tessaro	Yes
Mr. Flannery	Yes	Mr. Mikulich	Yes
Mr. Gill	Yes	Mayor Drewnowski	

Motion carried.

- D. Motion to accept the donation of and authorize the Ambridge Rotary Club to erect a pavilion within the Merchant Street Central Park. Motion was made by Mrs. Miller, seconded by Mr. Flannery; Mr. Mikulich stated that the Rotary Club intends to dedicate this shelter to the memory of Mr. Whitey Mikush and that a plaque for such will be installed within the shelter mentioning this. A roll call vote was taken:

Council	VOTE	Council	Vote
Mr. Cafarelli	Absent	Mrs. Miller	Yes
Mr. Dunn	Yes	Mrs. Tessaro	Yes
Mr. Flannery	Yes	Mr. Mikulich	Yes
Mr. Gill	Yes	Mayor Drewnowski	

Motion carried.

- E. Motion to accept the resignation of Jeffrey Wood from the Historical Architectural Review Board. Motion was made with regrets by Mr. Flannery, seconded by Mr. Dunn; a roll call vote was taken:

Council	VOTE	Council	Vote
Mr. Cafarelli	Absent	Mrs. Miller	Yes
Mr. Dunn	Yes	Mrs. Tessaro	Yes
Mr. Flannery	Yes	Mr. Mikulich	Yes
Mr. Gill	Yes	Mayor Drewnowski	

Motion carried.

- F. Motion to authorize the purchase of a 2020 Ford Explorer Police Interceptor from McCandless Ford at State Costars Price of \$33,839, and further authorizing emergency equipment upfitting from Ibis Tek. (Note: vehicle replaces 2018 Ford Explorer that was involved in a collision on January 5, 2020.) Motion was made by Mr. Flannery, seconded by Mrs. Miller; a roll call vote was taken:

Council	VOTE	Council	Vote
Mr. Cafarelli	Absent	Mrs. Miller	Yes
Mr. Dunn	Yes	Mrs. Tessaro	Yes
Mr. Flannery	Yes	Mr. Mikulich	Yes
Mr. Gill	Yes	Mayor Drewnowski	

Motion carried.

Mayor Drewnowski questioned that the 2020 budget called out for a purchase of a new police cruiser, so that in addition to the vehicle being purchased to replace the totaled cruiser, the Borough should be purchasing two this year. The Manager explained that he detailed this to the Public Safety Committee that there is a deficiency in the cash flow to the Drug Fund that is leaving the revenue short to pay for the half of the car in which we have been doing for the past couple of years. The Manager explained that this was also detailed within the Budget Report. He explained that cash flow needs to be improved and that the second cruiser could be considered in the coming months. The Manager explained in detail the purchase made possible by this motion and that the car totaled was not fully paid off, leaving the Borough short on the costs to replace it.

- **Committee Reports**

- **Code Enforcement Committee:** Mrs. Tessaro reported that the committee met on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and everyone was brought up to speed on the staff roles everyone has and the various programs currently underway. She stated that rental inspections are currently underway for the year and that a special Electronic Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event will be held at the Borough Building on March 28<sup>th</sup>.
- **Mayor's Report:** Mayor Drewnowski asked if his report could follow Public Safety Committee in the future; Mr. Flannery approved.

The Mayor stated that Coffee with a Cop will be after tonight's meeting at the Library. He also updated Council that one of the new license plate reader sites is up and running on the Ambridge-Aliquippa Bridge, and that the equipment has been helpful in already solving two hit and run accidents within the Borough. He also stated two of our officers were injured in a collision on Route 65 near the bridge at Merchant Street during an ice event. He asked Council to send a letter to PENNDOT asking for "Bridge Ices Before Roadway" signs be erected on Route. 65. Mr. Mikulich stated that we'll send a letter.

Chief Romutis summarized the recent youth law enforcement forum at the High School. He stated that the event was well attended and a success.

Mayor Drewnowski reported that there have been 16 drug busts in the Borough in the past year and four in January. He also stated that he has four officers assigned to a Truck Task Force enforcing truck laws. He stated that he will have a zero tolerance for trucks not following the rules and driving on posted streets. Mrs. Miller questioned, didn't we always have officers certified and serving in these roles? Mayor stated yes.

- **Public Safety:** Mr. Flannery reported that the Committee recent met and summarized that the Fire Department is doing an excellent job.

Chief Gottschalk presented a 2019 Year End Report to Council on the Fire Department's activity. He reported that the AFD responded to 349 calls for service with an average of 6-8 firefighters per call and a response time of 3-3.5 minutes in 2019. He stated that the firefighters participated in 966 hours of training and of all the property involved in fires last year, a loss of only \$138,400 was sustained. The Chief reported that proactive Code Enforcement is making a positive difference mitigating fires and emergencies in the community. He highlighted examples of finding gas leaks on inspections. Chief Gottschalk reported that the AFD received a grant for \$88,000 last year to install an exhaust system within the station and is working on an application to seek \$156,000 for new air packs. Lastly, the Chief stated that for 2020 the AFD has a goal to increase volunteer membership, get the firefighters Firefighter-2 certified and to replace the aging air packs.

Mr. Flannery stated that the Committee is reviewing other grant programs to help fund public safety equipment. He also reported that all the Crossing Guards are doing a great job so far this year and discussed other issues including two officers riding in patrol cars at the same time, revenue in the Drug Fund and annual police firearm qualifications.

The Mayor stated that the annual COPS Hiring Grant deadline is March 11. Mr. Flannery stated that manpower and scheduling are an issue worth discussing and that we must be financially responsible in considering applying for a COPS hiring grant.

Mr. Flannery also reported that the Committee is still reviewing parking concerns on 10<sup>th</sup> and Glenwood Avenue. He also reported that an elected official police survey is being circulated. Lastly, he reported that there is a shortage of available part-time police officers.

Mayor Drewnowski stated that we have an issue with low pay for part-time officers, saying they are paid \$13/hour. He asked Council to consider applying for a COPS grant to hire two additional full-time officers. The grant would fund a portion of the officer's wages over three years. He stated that the grant deadline is March 11<sup>th</sup> and that he is seeking Council's approval to apply.

Mrs. Miller stated that for year's Mr. McCoy would point out that the Police Department would ask for additional hires saying that it will reduce overtime and part-time officer usage, and time after time there has been no change. She stated that the police budget is already very high.

Manager Kauer explained part-time officer wages and stated that the part-time officers make on average \$16-\$19 per hour. He stated that \$13 an hour is the training wage and that many of the recent hires skipped right over this step.

Mr. Mikulich questioned the Mayor do we want to raise taxes to pay for additional police officers? Mr. Mikulich urged the Mayor to reschedule the officers to only put two on duty on the daylight weekend shifts.

Mr. Flannery stated that he is concerned that after the last COPS grant, balancing the budget was an issue. He stated that Council needs additional information and budget clarification before a decision could be made.

- **Public Works:** No report.
- **Parks:** No report.
- **Engineer's Report:** Engineer Suehr reported that the PENNDOT highway occupancy permit for the 8<sup>th</sup> Street ADA ramps has been closed out. He also reported that he is working with the Manager on developing estimates for 2020 road work.

- **Official Reports**

**Motion to accept the Official Reports;** was made by Mr. Flannery, seconded by Mr. Dunn; a roll call vote was taken:

Council	VOTE	Council	Vote
Mr. Cafarelli	Absent	Mrs. Miller	Yes
Mr. Dunn	Yes	Mrs. Tessaro	Yes
Mr. Flannery	Yes	Mr. Mikulich	Yes
Mr. Gill	Yes	Mayor Drewnowski	

Motion carried.

- **Other Unfinished Business** – Mrs. Tessaro reported that the Laughlin Library Board met on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and she highlighted many of the upcoming events at the Library including American Girl Doll Parties, Soup Cook-off on March 28<sup>th</sup> and urged the citizens to follow the Library on Facebook.

- **Adjournment –**

Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Miller, seconded by Mr. Flannery; motion carried unanimously  
– meeting was adjourned at 7:40PM.

Respectfully submitted:



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Joseph Kauer  
Borough Manager / Secretary