

**NEW BERLIN BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the New Berlin Borough Council was held on November 9, 2022, at 7:00 pm at the New Berlin Borough Community Center located at 318 Vine Street, New Berlin, PA. Those in attendance were President Meghan Shambach, Vice-President Barry Kuhns, Councilwoman Julianne Finkbiner, Councilman David Wertz, Councilwoman Lynda Frederick, Councilwoman Barbara Stamm, and Councilman Michael Palermo, Wendy Cole, Solicitor; Rebecca Witmer, Secretary/Treasurer; Joshua Dreisbach, Chief of Police; and Curt Keister, Street Department Supervisor were also present. Borough residents Mary Palermo, Christine Benfer, Nancy Showers, John Showers, David Farmer, Sally Farmer, and David Benjo were present as visitors.

The meeting was brought to order by President Meghan Shambach with the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – October 12, 2022 – Motion – Councilwoman Julianne Finkbiner made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilman David Wertz made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

VISITOR BUSINESS – Jeff Roat – Animal Ordinance – Jeff Roat stated that he read that council might be voting on an ordinance allowing the feeding of feral cats. He stated that if council is going to overturn the current ordinance and pass an ordinance allowing feeding of feral cats then he would like them to pass an ordinance overturning the current ordinances which do not allow him to shoot bow in town, target practice, and burn everyday.

Further, If the Council is going to put the cats before the public health and safety of residents, then shame on those who vote to allow the ordinance. People pay property taxes and own property that they don't want to see ruined by drawing cats in through feeding them. Further, he is concerned about the safety of children who may get scratched or bit by the cats. If Council votes to pass the ordinance then he is also going to trap. He has worked with the Pilko's and agreed to stop trapping as the Piklos asked him but the Pilkos don't hold up their end of the agreement; they

continue to say they will do certain things to help with the damage the cats are doing on his property but they never do.

Mr. Roat stated that he does not want to see the cats suffer and will not cause them to do so but he also has a right to protect his property.

Leaves - Mr. Roat also stated the Marvin Wagner has been picking up leaves for people around town since the Borough's leaf machine broke and he wanted to have that recognized on the record.

John Showers – Museum - John Showers stated The Heritage Association had an event called "A Night at the Museum" last week. He reported that the event was a great success. At one point, someone counted 65 people in the upstairs of the museum during the event.

The museum has a wonderful collection which started to be built in 1976. Recently, The Heritage Association spent well over \$80,000.00 purchasing Pennsylvania Long Rifles that were crafted in New Berlin. They are really beautiful, precious pieces that they were able to procure for the museum.

The event also raised over \$1,200.00 for Lungs for Logan.

John Showers - Animal Ordinance – John Showers stated that when discussing the animal ordinance last month Jeff Roat's name was brought up and it was asked what council should do about his complaint and it was inquired how council could do nothing. Mr. Showers explained that being a former County Commissioner, he understands that council can't do it all; they can't make Jeff happy and everyone in New Berlin who likes feeding cats happy. So, council may decide to do something and they may not, that's how priorities are established. Several years ago council had no problem doing nothing about burning complaints, speeding cars, cars running stop signs, and noisy motorcycles, junk in yards, and trash in yards.

Discussed was that PennDOT has been contacted numerous times over the years regarding traffic patterns and that PennDOT has done traffic studies on the intersection and other areas in town. It

was stated that the crosswalks in the center of town were not painted this year because PennDOT was going to be resurfacing the road.

Also discussed were the traffic patterns and the busiest times at the 4-way intersection.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – Fire Company Liaison – The AEDs discussed at previous meetings should arrive in approximately 5 months.

Finance Committee - 2023 Budget – The 2023 Budget was discussed. It is recommended that the police department purchase body cameras and in-car cameras with the surplus in their 2022 budget. It is also recommended that the police officers and chief receive a raise to be more competitive with other part-time police patrol positions. The secretary/treasurer will receive a raise and the street department workers will all receive a raise to make their pay more realistic. Some of the other budget lines were raised due to inflation. The budget was balanced at \$301,640.00 with a tax rate of 4.10.

Motion to Advertise Budget – Councilman Michael Palermo made a motion to advertise the 2023 Budget as open for inspection for 10 days. Councilman David Wertz made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

POLICE COMMITTEE – New Hire – The police committee recommended for hire Officer Baumwoll. Baumwoll works at Buffalo Valley Regional Police Department and has extensive police training and experience.

Motion – Councilman Michael Palermo made a motion to hire Officer Baumwoll as a part-time, probationary Patrolman with the standard starting rate. Councilman David Wertz made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

POLICE REPORT – October Police Report – The October 2022 Police Report was reviewed. There were no questions or comments from council.

STREET SUPERVISORS REPORT – Leaf Pick-Up Machine – The leaf pick-up machine suffered a major mechanical issue and will be inoperable for the remainder of the season. Several alternative options for leaf pick-up were explored such as renting machines or hiring someone to complete the leaf pick-up season. As of the meeting, no alternatives have been successful.

After discussion of even more possibilities, it was decided to ask residents to find alternative ways of recycling leaves this season. Residents are always able to take leaves to the grass bin at the recycling center as well. The street department will pick-up leaves with the pick-up truck for those residents who call the office stating they have no other options for removing leaves from their curbside. It will be recommended that the leaves be in some type of container so they can be easily dumped into the back of the truck.

MAYOR’S REPORT – Mayor Benfer apologized and stated he planned to attend the “Night at the Museum” event but he had the date incorrect.

SOLICITORS REPORT – Solicitor Cole had nothing to report.

NEW BERLIN MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY – Minutes – There were no questions regarding the minutes.

Grant – The NBMA Engineer is applying for a grant to upgrade parts of the sewer system.

Stones in Sewer – Several months ago the NBMA staff found stones in the sewer pipe in the vicinity of 814 Market Street. Sunbury Municipal Authority was hired to come clean the pipe out and explore that area with a closed circuit TV. A hole was found that allowed stones to get into the pipe. The pipe will be completely cleared of the stones and fixed.

1975 Ordinance - The Borough has an ordinance from 1975 which prohibits discharge water from sump pumps, cellar drains, down spouts, and other mechanisms into the sanitary sewer lines. Discussed was that there are several outdated sections of that ordinance pertaining to inspection and the penalties for violation.

The NBMA will be putting an informational, friendly notice on one of the batches of upcoming water/sewer invoices to make people are aware that connection of the mentioned mechanisms for discharging water are prohibited to be connected to the sanitary sewer line. The notice will also likely be included on some subsequent invoices as well. In the meantime, it was discussed if the Borough should update the outdated sections of ordinance. It was suggested that the NBMA Solicitor update the ordinance to ensure that the language in those sections reflect how the NBMA needs the sections to legally be stated according to DEP and other regulations. The ordinance will still need to be advertised and then passed by the Council if there is any change.

Meters – Twenty-five water meters have already been replaced. The replacement will be ongoing with some more meters to be replaced next year.

DEP Reports – The NBMA filed all required reports with DEP. There were no violations.

Well #6 – DEP indicated to the NBMA that a permit amendment would be needed to remove one of the wells from the distribution system. In the past, any unused wells were capped. However, permission was asked to keep Well #6 open so the fire company can use it for washdowns.

SECRETARY/TREASURER REPORT - Balance – General Fund – The Secretary/Treasurer reported the balance in the general fund as \$127,456.65.

READING AND SIGNING OF BILLS/PAYROLL – Councilwoman Julianne Finkbiner made a motion to pay the bills with any additions. Councilman Barry Kuhns made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken on the motion with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

BILLS TO BE PAID – GENERAL FUND

M&T Bank – Service Charge	25.00
AT&T Mobility	131.26
Cardmember Service	58.08
Environmental Planning & Design	4,717.76
H.A. Thomson Company	683.00
Kim Barton	170.00

Curt Keister	643.67
Jason Engleman	240.40
Joshua Dreisbach	967.36
Martez Faulkner	176.94
Michael Mattocks	530.63
Rebecca A. Witmer	2,586.85
Rex Solomon	681.71
Rodney Styers	78.09
WEX Bank	378.40
Association of Mayors of the Boroughs of PA	50.00
Coles Hardware	26.86
Mifflinburg Lumber	109.50
PA State Association of Boroughs	171.00
PP&L	924.34
Windstream Buffalo Valley, Inc.	445.15
PA Department of Revenue	184.59
US Treasury	1,243.30
DE LAGE LANDEN Financial Services, Inc.	75.57
Hornings Attachments LLC	7.65
PP&L	338.09
R.W. Maust Jr. Garage, Inc.	269.25
The Repair Shop Auto Repair, LLC	1,754.60
AT&T Mobility	131.26
Environmental Planning & Design	4,199.10
TOTAL	21,999.41

OLD BUSINESS – Junk Ordinance – The Junk Ordinance was advertised as required by law. As discussed at the last council meeting, subsections “a” and “b” of Section 5 of the ordinance were reversed.

Motion – Junk Ordinance - Councilwoman Julianne Finkbiner made a motion to adopt Junk Ordinance 2022-2 as advertised. Councilman David Wertz made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

Animal Ordinance – The animal ordinance was advertised as required by law. The ordinance was discussed as well as who should pay the cost of tags for the traps. Also discussed was the

procedure council wanted staff to follow to implement certain sections of the ordinance regarding sponsors and caregivers. The possibility of establishing a committee to work out the logistics and/or approve sponsors and caregivers was discussed as well as the possibility of council approving applications for caregivers and sponsors at each council meeting. Discussed was how the ordinance was advertised specifically regarding who would be performing those tasks and that the ordinance would need to be rewritten and readvertised accordingly, if needed.

Animal Ordinance – Motion – Councilman Michael Palermo made a motion to table the animal ordinance and discussion of the animal ordinance altogether, indefinitely. Lynda Frederick made a 2nd to the motion. Council discussed that indefinitely meant that the subject is done and would not be visited by council again. It was also stated that it means that the old ordinance would be the one that is active and relevant. Vote was taken with all in favor and President Meghan Shambach opposed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS – Grants – Councilwoman Barbara Stamm stated that Selinsgrove, Lewisburg, and Mifflinburg seem to always receive a large amount of grant money for items such as decorative lighting while the smaller boroughs such as New Berlin get looked over even if their needs are more detrimental to public safety. It was stated that New Berlin receives grants, but only applies for those that they really need, especially due to the struggle to save for matching funds. Councilwoman Stamm stated that she is not criticizing the secretary/treasurer or her grant writing abilities, it just seems that the larger towns like Mifflinburg, Lewisburg, Kelly Township, and Selinsgrove who don't really need the funds because they have a larger tax base and bring in more money seem to get all the grants rather than smaller towns that really need it. For instance, Lewisburg recently received several large grant fund allotments from several different sources for a new, improved Huffnagle Park when they already renovated it just a few years ago. It was stated that all the smaller towns like Harleton, Millmont, New Columbia, New Berlin and others likely do not get as many grants because they aren't large, college towns.

Q&E Open House – It was mentioned that each member of council received with their meeting paperwork an invite to a QE open house event.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion – Councilman Michael Palermo made a motion to adjourn. Councilman David Wertz made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca A. Witmer,
Secretary/Treasurer

MAYOR