

**NEW BERLIN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the New Berlin Borough Council was held on April 13, 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, Councilwoman Barbara Stamm, Vice-President Barry Kuhns, Councilwoman Julianne Finkbiner, Councilman Michael Palermo, and Councilman David Wertz. Joshua Dreisbach, Chief of Police; Rebecca Witmer, Secretary/Treasurer; Solicitor Wendy Cole; Mayor Scott Benfer; and Street Department Supervisor Curt Keister were also present. Councilwoman Lynda Frederick was absent from the meeting. Teri Provost, SedaCOG, was present to discuss Union County's American Rescue Fund allocation. Visitors present were residents Kaylene Trick, Ed Pilko, Mary Palermo, Christine Benfer, John Showers, Nancy Showers, and Sharnel Pilko.

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

**VISITOR BUSINESS – Kaylene Trick – Feral Cats** – Resident Kaylene Trick spoke in support of the effort of some borough residents who are feeding, trapping, and spay or neutering feral cats. Ms. Trick presented information regarding feeding feral cats and proposed an Eagle Scout project of making feeding stations for feral cats. The information on the feeding stations will be given to the feral cat committee for consideration. It was stated that, at the present time, feeding cats is still an ordinance violation.

**Edward Pilko – Various Topics** – Resident Edward Pilko stated that starting next month he is making it a target of his own that the borough and citizens target noise and speeders in the borough.

**Acoustics in Community Center** – Mr. Pilko also stated that he would like to start talking next month about the poor acoustics in the community center and the possibility of a sound system for the building.

**Secretary/Treasurer Compliments** – He next praised the borough secretary/treasurer for all she does for the borough and borough residents and stated he has talked to others in the borough who feel the same. He further stated that a lot of people know the secretary/treasurer as the go-to person in the borough who knows what to do in all situations that may occur.

**Pilko Residence - 427 Market Street** – Mr. Pilko stated that he realizes his property is seen as an eyesore in New Berlin but stated that he would like to explain the circumstances. He has 4 special needs children and an 88-year-old father-in-law for which he and his wife care. He is working on his property as well as the inside and outside of his house on a regular basis. When he is finished, his house will be a beautiful landmark in New Berlin.

**Teri Provost – Seda-COG – American Rescue Funds** - Teri Provost stated that she and the secretary/treasurer have met quite often the last few months regarding Union County's ARPA funds with which the county is extending grant opportunities to municipalities and non-profits. She and the secretary/treasurer have discussed several possible projects for which to make application to the county for funding. The secretary/treasurer sought an opinion of probable costs for the Walnut Street Bridge repair/replacement and worked with the Chief of Police to obtain a quote for body cameras and in-car cameras.

Ms. Provost and the secretary/treasurer are requesting to make application to the county, on behalf of council, for grant money for both projects. The bridge replacement project is expected to cost approximately \$466,000.00. The grant application will show a borough of match \$66,756.76, which is the borough's remaining ARPA funds. The body and in-car cameras and supporting equipment will cost approximately \$11,808.00. The grant application will show a borough match of \$1,180.80.

**Motion Grant Application-** Councilman Michael Palermo made a motion to apply for the ARPA for Union County for both projects. Councilwoman Julianne Finkbiner made a 2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – March 9, 2022** – Councilwoman Julianne Finkbiner made a motion to approve the March 9, 2022, minutes. Councilman David Wertz made a 2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS – Fire Company Liaison – AED** – Councilman David Wertz stated the Fire Company is placing an automated external defibrillator (AED) in the social hall. He recommended placing one in the community center as well and stated the New Berlin Fire Company and EMS would ask for the AED on behalf of the Borough. After discussion it was decided to ask the New Berlin Fire Company and EMS to seek grants for an AED in each police car, one for the borough office, and one for the community center.

**Feral Cat Committee** – The committee did not meet. President Shambach stated that Councilwoman Julianne Finkbiner gave her a written report about what was talked about at other feral cat committee meetings. Councilman Palermo stated he gathered information on trap and release (TNR) programs in Monroe Township and Selinsgrove Borough. Councilwoman Finkbiner stated that she checked into Shamokin Dam Borough and Selinsgrove Borough. Councilman Palermo will make copies for distribution at a later time. Solicitor Cole stated she disseminated information to the Feral Cat Committee for review as well. Also explained and discussed were court cases and the importance of bringing neighboring residents on board if someone is involved in a TNR program.

President Shambach stated that council will be asked to look over all the information received on this subject in anticipation of discussion at next month's meeting.

**Personnel Committee – Street Department Assistant Supervisor Job Description** – Councilwoman Stamm presented two job descriptions for review. Several corrections were given to Councilwoman Stamm. The corrections will be made and distributed to council.

**Motion Assistant Street Department Supervisor Job Description** - Councilwoman Julianne Finkbiner made a motion to approve the assistant street department supervisor job description

pending corrections and final draft. Councilman Michael Palermo made a 2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed.

The position will be posted by the street department timeclock after the job description is finalized and distributed to council and the Secretary/Treasurer.

**Assistant Street Department Supervisor Job Description – Motion** – Vice-President Barry Kuhns made a motion to create an Assistant Street Department Supervisor position within the Borough. Councilman Michael Palermo made a 2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

**POLICE REPORT – March 2022 Police Report** – The March 2022 Police Report was reviewed.

**Vehicle Update** – Chief Dreisbach reported that equipment came in for the 2018 Ford Explorer. It is scheduled to be installed on May 6<sup>th</sup>. The usable equipment will also be removed from the Crown Victoria and transferred at that time.

**STREET SUPERVISORS REPORT** – The Street Department Supervisor reported that Spring Clean-Up will be held on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**MAYOR’S REPORT – Nameplates** - Mayor Benfer stated that he received the nameplates and hopes they will be ready to be in use at the next meeting.

**Recreation Complex Dog Violations** - Mayor Benfer stated that he talked with someone at the Recreation Complex who wanted to come to a council meeting to discuss now allowing people to exercise their dogs inside the ballfield fences. Mayor Benfer volunteered to bring the issue to council. There are some people who do not clean up after their dogs and the kids will step in it while practicing or during games.

He was also told that someone lets their unleashed dog walk around the track while they drive around the track in their vehicle. That person was confronted about letting their dog unleashed

and they responded with “you don’t know who I am, I’m on council”. Mayor Benfer stated that doesn’t look good for the person who said it or any elected officials. Councilwoman Stamm stated that she is that person but did not say that when confronted and she has also been advocating for a dog park at the complex. Mayor Benfer stated there’s a dog leash ordinance in town and everyone should respect it, including elected officials. Councilwoman Stamm stated that she cannot walk her dog. Mayor Benfer stated she could get someone else to do it.

**Dog Park** – Mayor Benfer stated he would really like to see a dog park in town. The Mayor would like to raise funds for a dog park through bake sales or other means. Councilwoman Stamm stated she has a good place down at the New Berlin Recreation Complex and that the Recreation Association already approved a dog park in that area. Council did not have any issue with raising money for a dog park.

**Recycling Center** – Mayor Benfer stated that Marvin Wagner talked to him about his concerns with people placing incorrect items in the fire company aluminum trailer at the recycling center. Mayor Benfer stated he is just passing that information along to raise awareness about making sure items are going into the correct bin at the recycling center.

**Proclamation** – Mayor Benfer proclaimed April 2022 Safe Digging Month in New Berlin as requested by PA One Call. The proclamation was read aloud.

**SOLICITORS REPORT – Junk Ordinance Update** - Solicitor Cole stated she is currently working on an amendment to the junk ordinance for council’s review as requested last month. She will have something for review next month.

**Follow-Up on the Request Regarding Recreation Areas** – Solicitor Cole stated she is also working on the park ordinance. The solicitor inquired of council if they would like any other language or issues addressed in the ordinance besides park hours. One suggestion raised was not allowing smoking in the park.

The Chief was asked if there were any other issues he would like addressed in the ordinance. Chief Dreisbach stated that, for police department purposes, he is only asking for the time restriction due to certain activities that happen after dark. Chief Dreisbach also gave an example that if someone was sleeping in any of the recreation areas and there are no park hours, the police do not have any authority to make them leave. The Chief also stated that the police are not interested in stopping organized or legitimate activities. The goal of the ordinance is to give the police a legitimate reason to approach someone in the park after hours and the authority to keep them moving if they do not have legitimate business there. It's a way of keeping the parks clean, nice, and safe for enjoyment for families and others who are legitimately using the park areas in New Berlin.

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

**Sinkholes at Messiah Lutheran Church** – Some holes have opened up in front of the Messiah Lutheran Church. The doppler was brought in but no water issue was found. PennDOT will look at the area to be sure but does not think it is anything for which they would be responsible.

**NBMA Board Appointment – Eric Wetzel** – Eric Wetzel submitted a letter of interest to be appointed to the New Berlin Municipal Authority Board.

**Motion – NBMA Board Appointment** – Councilwoman Barbara Stamm made a motion to appoint Eric Wetzel to the NBMA Board. Vice-President Barry Kuhns made a 2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

**SECRETARY/TREASURER REPORT - Balance – General Fund** – The Secretary/Treasurer reported the balance in the general fund as \$72,418.11.

**2021 Audit** – The 2021 General Fund Audit was completed with no findings. There were several checks that were written that didn't make the minutes. The Secretary/Treasurer is awaiting the list from the auditors and will send them to council once received.

**2022 Liquid Fuels Allotment** – The 2022 Liquid Fuels payment was received on March 21, 2022, in

the amount of \$29,094.39.

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

**BILLS TO BE PAID – GENERAL FUND**

M&T Bank – Service Charge	25.00
WEX Bank	340.06
American Rock Salt Company LLC	1,489.12
Betty Kratzer	120.00
Cardmember Service	1,053.63
County of Union	79.34
Kim Barton	95.00
Matthew Hamilton	120.00
New Berlin Fire Company	436.41
Curt Keister	364.06
George Geise	307.56
Jason Engleman	317.36
Joshua Dreisbach	786.78
Martez Faulkner	109.63
Michael Mattocks	340.33
Rebecca A. Witmer	2,676.70
Rex Solomon	265.66
Rodney Styers	68.73
Eagle Point Gun/TJ Morris & Sons	308.67
Hometown Disposal, lp	89.22
PP&L	912.51
The Daily Item	421.95
Wendy Yoder, Tax Collector	770.00
Windstream Buffalo Valley, Inc.	433.81
PA Department of Revenue	631.87
US Treasury	4,379.84
Berkheimer	626.54
PA UC Fund	19.99
AT&T Mobility	131.17
DE LAGE Laden Financial Services Inc.	75.57
PP&L	433.98
TOTAL	18,230.49

**OLD BUSINESS – Flowers for New Berlin Signs** – President Shambach stated that several years ago council discussed planting flowers under a few of the Welcome to New Berlin signs. She has some flowers from her garden that she separated and is willing to plant them where discussed if there were no objections. Council raised no objections.

**NEW BUSINESS – Vo-Tech School Graduation** – The Sun Area Vo-Technical School is having their graduation outside on their lawn this year on May 25<sup>th</sup> with a rain date of May 26<sup>th</sup>. They sought and were granted permission to use the elementary school property as overflow parking. A certificate of insurance will be obtained.

**Letter Regarding Recreation Complex Vegetation** – A frequent user of the New Berlin Recreation Complex wrote a letter to Borough Council asking them to consider not mowing the strip that lies on the east end of the park, between the track and the farm field. There was discussion about the farmer having the legal right to access his field for farming and that the farmer will mow that area if someone else doesn't. After discussion it was decided that although the borough owns the recreation complex property, the letter should be referred to the recreation association who mows that area of the complex.

**Senator Yaw Workshop** – Councilwoman Stamm announced that Senator Yaw will be having a grant workshop for those interested in attending. President Shambach stated that any councilperson interested in attending should see Councilwoman Stamm.



April 13, 2022

**ADJOURNMENT – Motion** – Councilwoman Julianne Finkbiner made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Michael Palermo 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

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MAYOR