

**NEW BERLIN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

A regular meeting of the New Berlin Borough Council was held on July 10, 2019, at 7:00 pm at the New Berlin Borough Community Center located at 318 Vine Street, New Berlin, PA. Present were President Julianne Finkbiner, President Pro-Tem Betty Kratzer, Councilwoman Barbara Stamm, Vice-President Elaine Hopkins, Councilwoman Lisa Decker, and Councilwoman Meghan Shambach. Wendy Cole, Solicitor; Bonnie Hamilton, Mayor; Curt Keister, Street Department Supervisor; and Rebecca Witmer, Secretary/Treasurer were also present. Councilwoman Lynda Frederick and L. Eric Hassenplug, Chief of Police were absent from the meeting. David and Sally Farmer and Barry Kuhns, residents of New Berlin, were present to observe; Tim Shaffer, New Berlin Fire Chief; Brandon Resseguie, Assistant Fire Chief of New Berlin Fire Company; Jared Stumpff, EMS Captain; Brad Benfer and Eric Wetzal, Fire Company Personnel; and James Emery, Central Keystone COG were present as visitors.

The meeting was brought to order by President Julianne Finkbiner with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 12, 2019** - Discussion was brought regarding the June 12, 2019 minutes. Vice-President Elaine Hopkins made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilwoman Lisa Decker made a 2nd to the motion. A typo was noted. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

**VISITOR BUSINESS – New Berlin Fire Company/Ambulance** – Tim Shaffer, New Berlin Fire Chief stated he was present about the recent letter sent to council from Evangelical Community Hospital. Fire Chief Shaffer stated that Evangelical Community Hospital is reorganizing its services and the ambulance services will be run by its own entity, separate from the hospital. The letter was nothing more than a solicitation for the local services provided by New Berlin to be turned over to the hospital. The Chief explained that if New Berlin were to join the hospital's ambulance service it would thereby be abandoning New Berlin's local ambulance service. It was also explained that if the local ambulance services are terminated, the fire department will soon need to dissolve because some of the ambulance revenue helps support the fire company. Council assured the fire company it had no plans of going with anyone other than New Berlin's local company.

Other details regarding the daily operations of the ambulance and fire company were discussed.

It was stated that there are a dwindling number of EMS volunteers due to the demand for mandatory training, the ever increasing amount of hours required for the training, and the cost involved.

James Emery, Central Keystone COG, offered services to the fire company stating the CKCOG will to help them check any structure after a fire. All the fire company would need to do is call them and they will come out either the night of the fire or the next day. The CKCOG website also has a fire referral form that the fire company can fill out.

**James Emery, Central Keystone COG – 327 Front Street – Apartment Unit** – James Emery stated that after the borough secretary received a consensus from council, he received an email asking the CKCOG to inspect the rental unit located at 327 Front Street. The tenant had contacted the borough office a few days prior asking for the occupancy permit to be revoked for her unit due to her health issues and the recent fire there. CKCOG followed up with the tenant who then communicated to CKCOG that she no longer had the keys to the apartment. The landlord was contacted and permission was given for CKCOG to enter the property any time to do the inspection. CKCOG will do the inspection sometime in the near future.

407-411 Front Street – An engineer was hired to inspect the property at 407-411 Front Street as per council's motion at the last meeting. The inspection report has not yet been finalized. However, it was noted during the inspection that the property is in very poor condition. The state of the property is in what is known as "accelerated rate", which means if something isn't done with the property soon, it will deteriorate much faster. Specific items noted during the inspection are as follows: the structure is tilted; the floors are sagging; the supports in the basement have not been properly installed, which is causing the structural issues; water in the basement; mold which is at the point where it will cause a serious health issue; beams in the house are dry rotted; plumbing and electrical need to be reinstalled; the chimney needs to be rebuilt or removed as it is starting to lean and the mortar is gone; and the stones in the foundation are falling out, further contributing

to the structural issues. Also, the garage floor is cracked; there is an unsupported loft inside; and windows need to be repaired or replaced. It should be noted that if anyone goes up into the loft, it will collapse. The engineer's report will ensure that any potential buyer is fully informed of the issues. Council will continue to proceed with the condemnation until then.

**608 Spangler Street** – Solicitor Cole stated she filed with the court for a Petition for Possession. The court order has not yet been issued. As soon as it is issued, the demolition can proceed.

**Tornado Standard Operating Procedure** – Mifflinburg Borough has been working on a tornado siren Standard Operation Guideline (SOG) or Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which is expected to be adopted at Mifflinburg's next council meeting. A final copy of the SOP will be sent to New Berlin's Secretary/Treasurer.

**Activities Committee – 4<sup>th</sup> of July** – The 4<sup>th</sup> of July was a success. It only rained during one event, which was held under the pavilion. The fireworks were approximately 25 minutes long.

**New Berlin School Building Committee** – Vendors were contacted to obtain quotes for asbestos removal and mold remediation. Pictures were taken of the current condition of the building. T-Ross did a walkthrough and estimated \$200.00 per square foot to renovate the building, which does not include the mold remediation and asbestos removal. An official demolition quote is being solicited. Estimates for modular buildings are also being obtained.

There are two grants available through the USDA. One grant will match 15% of the borough's contribution up to \$50,000.00 for each phase of the building restoration, including the building preparation and the borough is not limited to applying for only one phase. The other grant will match a certain percentage of the borough's contribution if the borough can produce evidence that the center will create jobs. There is up to \$100,000 available for that particular grant.

**POLICE REPORT- June Police Report** - Council reviewed the June police report. No comments were made regarding the report.

**Newest Hire** – It was inquired whether or not the new hire is working out. Council agreed to contact Chief Hassenplug for that information.

**Meeting Presence** – Mayor Hamilton stated it would be advantageous to have an officer at the meetings more often in order to get some information in person rather than just seeing the statistics on the report.

**Police Hours** – The need for more police hours was discussed along with the reasons for the lower number of hours. There are several matters in the borough which seemingly aren't being addressed. More hours would allow them to address those issues.

**STREET SUPERVISOR'S REPORT – Borough Dumpster** – The street department supervisor stated the borough has not been able to place its garbage in the dumpster due to it being too full from the garbage from the recreation field. It was suggested that the recreation association could get their own dumpster during tournament season or the borough and the recreation association can come up with another solution. It is only an issue during tournament season, but is a problem because the street department has had to collect its trash and pile it somewhere inside the buildings waiting for the next pickup to make room. Councilwoman Stamm, a member of the recreation association, opposed the idea that they should rent another dumpster and listed several ways in which she believes the borough benefits from what the recreation association does and pays for. There was some back-and-forth between Councilwoman Stamm and the borough secretary/treasurer concerning this issue until President Finkbiner stepped in to sum up the situation to try to move toward a solution. She stated that the borough has always been willing to help at the ball fields when the recreation association needed it whether it is for paying for repairs, mowing, trimming weeds, emptying trash, and allowing them to use the dumpster. The funds to do that are taxpayer money, for which council is responsible. In this particular instance, a majority of the trash is being generated by non-taxpayers who are renting the fields. That should be balanced out to some degree between the recreation association and the borough. The recreation complex is visited by many people and the borough appreciates that the recreation association brings many visitors into New Berlin, which is a good thing for New Berlin Borough. However, the council is responsible for how they spend tax dollars, as well. The staff not being able to dispose of their

trash in a dumpster paid for by borough funds is an issue that they brought to council's attention. She thinks it's reasonable to ask the recreation association to get a dumpster during tournament season next year. If the dumpster is full next week again, the borough will request another pickup.

Councilwoman Shambach stated another solution would be to get a bigger dumpster during June and July next year, and split the cost with the recreation association. President Finkbiner stated the recreation association could be approached about that solution as well. Councilwoman Stamm stated the recreation association may not have tournaments next year. President Finkbiner stated if Councilwoman Stamm could find out about the tournament schedule when it approaches next year that would be helpful. Councilwoman Stamm stated she would go to the next recreation association meeting and ask them to send the borough another \$1,000.00. President Finkbiner stated that isn't what was being asked. Councilwoman Stamm stated the borough is asking for funds to help pay for a dumpster. Councilwoman Decker stated the council is asking for information so there's an acceptable solution next year, not this year.

Councilwoman Hopkins proposed that Councilwoman Stamm propose to the recreation association that they and the borough split the cost of a larger dumpster for two months next year, during June and July. Councilwoman Stamm stated she'll take care of it.

**MAYOR'S REPORT** – Mayor Hamilton stated she reported everything she had to say under the activities committee report.

**SOLICITORS REPORT – Community Center Parking Lot Lease** – Solicitor Cole stated council received a lease which, if accepted, would renew the agreement for the parking lot at the community center for a period of 10 years. There were no questions regarding the lease. Council expressed a desire to renew the lease, as is. The fire company was in agreement to renew the lease as well.

**Easement 222 High Street** – Solicitor Cole stated she is working on an easement to propose to the owner of 222 High Street. The easement will be for the next phase of the Walnut Street/High Street Tan Run project. The easement is not needed for the currently needed emergency repairs to High Street. Solicitor Cole stated she will keep council updated as to the progress.

**NEW BERLIN MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY - Minutes** – Councilwoman Hopkins stated she believes there is a typo in the Water Systems section of the NBMA May Minutes where it indicates that the cost of the weed killer is between \$200.00 and \$3,000.00. The number \$200.00 is likely meant to be \$2,000.00. The secretary/treasurer stated she would inform the NBMA Secretary.

**SECRETARY/TREASURER REPORT - Balance – General Fund** - Rebecca Witmer reported the balance in the General Fund as \$124,720.17.

**DCNR Grant Closeout** – The final inspection of Plum Street Park has been completed. All required paperwork was sent to DCNR. The final disbursement of funds was requested.

**Motion to Pay Bills** – Councilwoman Elaine Hopkins made a motion to pay the bills with any additions. Councilwoman Betty Kratzer made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

**BILLS TO BE PAID FROM M&T GENERAL FUNDS ACCOUNT**

M&T Bank – June Checking Service Charge	25.00
M&T Bank – July School Payment	1,994.26
PA Department of Revenue	163.74
US Treasury	1,271.98
Bilger Automotive	30.00
Valley Pest Management	500.00
M&T Bank – Deluxe Checks	76.87
Custom Products Corporation	151.86
Most Dependable Fountains, Inc.	1,835.00
AT&T Mobility	134.61
New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co., Inc.	375.39
Richard’s Portable Toilets	160.00
Union County Commissioners	17.00
Andrew Bustin	23.93
Curt Keister	559.24
Jacob Shipman	353.96
Leif E. Hassenplug	629.38
Michael H. Mattocks	719.15
Rebecca A. Witmer	2,115.38
Rodney E. Styers	69.82

William Stamm	849.60
Barbara Stamm	150.00
Betty Kratzer	150.00
Bonnie Hamilton	150.00
Elaine Hopkins	150.00
Julianne Finkbiner	150.00
Lisa Decker	150.00
Lynda Frederick	150.00
Meghan Shambach	125.00
Coles Hardware	87.14
Ervin Blank Associates, Inc.	125.00
Kathy A. Diehl	45.00
Kim Barton	35.00
Marco Technologies, LLC	124.30
Martin's Small Engine Repair	19.90

TOTAL \$13,667.51

**OLD BUSINESS – Plum Street Park Electric** – President Finkbiner stated two quotes were received for placing electric at the Plum Street Park pavilion. One was from Phil Miller’s Electric for \$5,000.00 and one was from Complete Electrical Services in the amount of \$8,416.17.

**Motion** – Vice-President Elaine Hopkins made a motion to accept the quote from Phil Miller Electric for \$5,000.00. Councilwoman Lisa Decker made a 2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed.

**High Street Culvert - Demolition Permit** – The culvert pipe will be delivered soon and work will start on the High Street on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**SEDA-COG** – Requests will be sent out to engineers seeking proposals for engineer services for the Liberty Street Bridge. Council should expect to award services at the September meeting.

**Tornado Warning System** – Councilwoman Shambach encouraged the fire department to adopt the same tornado warning practice as Mifflinburg or a similar one. There was discussion about the functionality of the New Berlin Fire Department’s siren and possible ways New Berlin could

implement a similar system. The decision will ultimately be left to the fire company with council's support on whatever they decide. If cost sharing is needed to repair or change the fire department siren, council would entertain sharing the cost of that expense.

**NEW BUSINESS – Pollination Gardens** – The Fish and Wildlife Commission is expected to soon take a vote to make the Monarch Butterfly an endangered species. PennDOT and Wingspan currently have programs that encourage and support the planting of pollination gardens. PennDOT will help support the pollination gardens only if they are within the PennDOT right-of-way. Councilwoman Shambach would like to see a small pollination garden at each of the New Berlin welcome signs and at the property owned by the borough which is situated across the bridge in Jackson Township. Councilwoman Shambach requested council move to allow an application to be completed and submitted to PennDOT for the gardens.

**Motion** – President Elaine Hopkins made a motion to submit application to PennDOT for the pollination gardens. Other discussion followed with no second to the motion or motion being voted upon.

**Planting of Crown Vetch** – The street department supervisor suggested planting crown vetch along the creek bank to cut down on the amount of mowing. Council discouraged the placement of crown vetch but encouraged a less invasive species of ground cover.

**Walking Heritage Trail** – Councilwoman Meghan Shambach will be approaching the New Berlin Heritage Association about creating a walking heritage trail. There was discussion regarding including the New Berlin Planning Commission, potential areas, and permission to place signs.

**Improvements to Borough Building** – Councilwoman Decker inquired how the improvements are going to the borough office. The project has not yet been started. Council encouraged the street department supervisor to purchase the lumber and other needed materials and to start the project as soon as possible.

**RTK Resolution** – The Right-to-Know Law was briefly discussed and tabled until the next meeting.

**Amendment to Towing Section of Ordinance 88-5** – An amendment to the Borough’s Ordinance 88-5 was proposed to be advertised based on the section no longer being in compliance with the Vehicle Code.

**Motion** – Councilwoman Meghan Shambach made a motion to advertise the amendment to Ordinance 88-5. Vice-President Elaine Hopkins made a 2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT – Motion** – Vice-President Elaine Hopkins made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Betty Kratzer made a 2<sup>nd</sup> 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