

**NEW BERLIN BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING**

A regular meeting of the New Berlin Borough Council was held on September 8, 2021, at 7:00 pm at the New Berlin Borough Community Center located at 318 Vine Street, New Berlin, PA. Those in attendance were Councilman Barry Kuhns, President Julianne Finkbiner, Vice-President Lisa Decker, Councilwoman Betty Kratzer, Councilwoman Meghan Shambach and Councilwoman Lynda Frederick. Bonnie Hamilton, Mayor; Wendy Cole, Solicitor; Rebecca Witmer, Secretary/Treasurer; and Joshua Dreisbach, Officer in Charge of the Police Department. Curt Keister, Street Department Supervisor was also present. Councilwoman Barbara Stamm was absent from the meeting. Visitors present were residents Christine Benfer, Scott Benfer, John Yerger, Sally Farmer, Cindy Wray, and David Farmer.

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

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – August 11, 2021 – Councilwoman Lynda Frederick made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the August 11, 2021, council meeting. Councilman Barry Kuhns made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

VISITOR BUSINESS – Cindy Wray – Lawnmowers and Law and Order – Cindy Wray inquired about the number of police in New Berlin, the crime rate, and the chain of command. She also inquired what the phrase “Restoring law and order” means in New Berlin. She heard that someone got stopped riding a lawnmower and that person told her that the officer said something about restoring law and order in New Berlin. There was nothing to substantiate that comment, the context, nor the origin of it.

Ms. Wray next expressed discontent with the police department stopping people for driving their lawnmowers on the road in town when Curt Keister does it when he goes to mow Borough property. Chief Dreisbach stated that people have been complaining about lawnmowers driving around on the roads and them being used as personal vehicles. The police department caught

several people who were altering their lawnmowers to joyride, using them as ATV's around town. There is a difference between that and someone driving their lawnmower with the purpose of going to mow a property. Chief Dreisbach explained that there is law against driving unregistered vehicles on the roadway. The law applies to all persons. Ms. Wray next complained about the skid steer also being used by the street department on the roadway. It was explained that the skid steer is used for roadwork and other Borough business. Chief Dreisbach stated that if the police department were to use Ms. Wray's mentality, then the street department will need to put their equipment on a truck or trailer when going to mow lawns and so will everyone else.

Snow Emergency – Ms. Wray next brought up a snow emergency route which was briefly explained by council and it was stated that not everyone has driveways to park their vehicles during a snow storm.

John Yerger – Lawnmowers and Secretary/Treasurer – Mr. Yerger stated that he knows laws need to be enforced but he was one of the ones who was stopped and told it was illegal to drive his lawnmower on a roadway. Mr. Yerger asked council to make an exception to the ordinance saying that people in town can use their lawnmowers on the roadway to do certain activities. It was explained that it was a state law. Council has no control over state laws nor can they make exceptions to state laws. Chief Dreisbach explained the Vehicle Code to Mr. Yerger and gave him the reference for the Vehicle Code so he could look it up at his leisure. Mr. Yerger stated he thinks there should be exceptions to that law. He also stated that Curt Keister takes the Borough's zero turn lawnmower on the road and that is dangerous.

Chief Dreisbach stated he uses common sense when addressing issues in town. The police department did not cite anyone, they simply spoke with offenders and explained the law. However, it seems that since people are bringing concerns about fairness when enforcing the law regarding lawnmowers, Ms. Wray and Mr. Yerger are correct; what is fair is that everyone will now need to use a trailer or truck to transport their lawnmowers to and from various locations in town.

Secretary/Treasurer – John Yerger asked a few questions of the Secretary/Treasurer regarding her duties. He also asked if she had a police uniform shirt to which she answered that she does not

wear a uniform but she does wear a polo. He also stated that he knows she orientates police officers and does certain things for the police department but wondered if she was a police officer. The Secretary/Treasurer stated she is not a police officer. She also stated that everything she does is approved by council, is covered by the insurance company, and that she also has some additional needed clearances.

COMMITTEE REPORTS –Sally Farmer - DCNR Study Committee – Consultant Recommendation –

Sally Farmer stated she was asked to give a recommendation from the study committee regarding a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for the former elementary school. Two design companies responded with proposals; the study committee unanimously agreed to recommend the Environmental Planning and Design Group. The firm exhibited much more attention to detail than the other firm and this firm’s timeline for public participation was longer and the group felt they would really listen to the public input.

Motion – Feasibility Study Consultant - Vice-President Lisa Decker made a motion to hire Environmental Planning and Design Group, as recommended by the study committee, pending DCNR approval. Councilwoman Betty Kratzer made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

Police Committee – The police committee made a recommendation to promote OIC Joshua Dreisbach to Chief of Police.

Motion – Chief of Police – Vice-President Lisa Decker made a motion to promote OIC Joshua Dreisbach to Chief of Police with the standard pay raise. Councilwoman Meghan Shambach made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

Fire Company Liaison – Events – The Fire Company Liaison reported that the New Berlin First Responders will do a Halloween Parade on October 28, 2021, with a rain date of October 29, 2021. The post office will be a drop-off location for the candy again this year.

Firefighter Applications – The New Berlin Fire Company received two new applications for firefighter.

FEMA Grant – The fire company applied for a FEMA grant to purchase oxygen packs.

Finance Committee – The finance committee has started working on the budget.

POLICE REPORT – August 2021 Police Report – The August 2021 Police Report was reviewed.

New Hire Update – Officer Engleman completed the firearms qualification for New Berlin and his uniforms have been ordered.

Grant Body Cams – Application Submitted – The grant for the body worn cameras has been submitted.

Grant – Reporting System – The Chief and the Secretary/Treasurer just today found a grant for an updated police reporting system. Funding is through Pennsylvania Crime and Delinquency Commission. The police department cannot apply for the grant. Grants through the commission need to be applied for through the Borough.

Motion – Councilwoman Meghan Shambach made a motion to apply for the grant for an updated reporting system. Vice-President Lisa Decker made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Motion carried.

Chief Dreisbach – Chief Dreisbach thanked council for its recommendation for Chief of Police and stated he looked forward to serving New Berlin.

STREET SUPERVISORS REPORT – Leaf Pick-Up - The Street Department will begin picking up leaves on October 12th.

Fall Brush Pick-Up – The Fall Brush and Limb Pick-Up will be held on October 9th.

MAYOR'S REPORT – Mayor Hamilton stated that New Berlin Day went well and that it was nice to see the increased police coverage in New Berlin.

SOLICITORS REPORT – Former 407-411 Front Street Property - Solicitor Cole stated that all of the structures on the Front Street property have been demolished.

NEW BERLIN MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY – Minutes – There was no question regarding the minutes.

Logging Company Update – The NBMA received a quote for the trees from the logging company as mentioned in previous meetings. The NBMA Attorney is now not sure the NBMA can sell the trees without Borough permission and without putting it up for bid. The NBMA Solicitor is looking into the matter and will provide an update.

Debt Statement – The NBMA took out a loan several years ago in the amount of \$258,000.00; they only used \$229,000.00 of the loan. The Borough may need to do an updated debt statement if the NBMA finds they need to do paperwork for the unused portion of the loan.

NBMA Board Appointment – The New Berlin Municipal Authority Board does not yet have a recommendation for appointment to the NBMA Board.

SECRETARY/TREASURER REPORT - Balance – General Fund – The Secretary/Treasurer reported the balance in the general fund as \$155,507.39. That balance still includes 50% of the American Rescue Plan Funds recently received.

American Rescue Funds – The Secretary/Treasurer sought permission from the US Treasury to use the American Rescue Funds for a Walnut Street storm water runoff project. The US Treasury would not provide a definite answer about using funds for the project. The Secretary/Treasurer plans to meet with Seda-COG to discuss options they are exploring with regards to administering the American Rescue Funds for municipalities.

Improved Security Cameras Installed – Improved security cameras have been installed at the recycling center and outside the Borough Office.

READING AND SIGNING OF BILLS/PAYROLL – Councilman Barry Kuhns made a motion to pay the bills with any additions. Councilwoman Lynda Frederick 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
Cardmember Service	299.48
Coles Hardware	22.30
DE LANGE Landen Financial Services, Inc.	75.57
Iddings Quarry, Inc.	37.05
Mifflinburg Lumber	14.68
Windstream Buffalo Valley, Inc.	412.08
Cole and Varano	797.50
PP&L	299.30
AT&T Mobility	91.13
Martin’s Small Engine Repair	31.49
A1 Lock & Key	1,080.00
Bing’s Auto LLC	57.97
H.A. Thomson Company	200.00
Martin’s Small Engine Repair	32.89
Pittsburgh Public Safety Supply	161.95
Richard’s Portable Toilets	160.00
Share Corporation	226.31
Topp Business Solutions	19.57
Zimmerman’s Supply, LLC	13.60
Curt Keister	697.36
George Geise	303.58
Jason Engleman	114.74
Joshua Dreisbach	941.00
Martez Faulkner	250.37
Michael Mattocks	1,149.70
Rebecca Witmer	2,963.35
Rex Solomon	203.97
Riley Bremigen	1,819.89
Rodney Styers	208.55
William Stamm	1,212.64

A1 Lock & Key	2,974.00
Cardmember Service	415.40
Kim Barton	125.00
PA Department of Revenue	257.90
US Treasury	1,831.28
PP&L	899.13
Coles Hardware	121.83
Cooper Electric	9.99
DE LANGE Landen Financial Services, Inc.	75.57
Hometown Disposal, Ip	73.76
Mifflinburg Lumber	362.99
NAPA Auto Parts	24.99
Pittsburgh Public Safety Supply	909.87
PP&L	303.88
Quill Corporation	106.18
Windstream Buffalo Valley, Inc.	412.08
B.S.& B. Repair, Inc.	12.28
J.D. Welding	1,475.83
New Berlin Fire Company No. 1	3,592.21
PA Dept of Revenue	411.38
US Treasury	3,015.08
PA UC	17.78
Berkheimer	535.39
Total	31,886.82

OLD BUSINESS – Community Center Fence Quotes – Clarification was made that the quotes included demolition of the community center fence. Barry Kuhns stated that if the Borough Street Department workers demolished the fence, it will save \$350.00.

NEW BUSINESS – Recycling Containers – Recreation Complex – A Girl Scout from New Berlin is looking to earn her gold award by placing recycling containers at the New Berlin Recreation Complex. Several designs were discussed as well as placement of the containers. The Borough Street Department was already spoken to regarding the project and stated they would empty the containers on a regular basis.

Motion – Councilwoman Meghan Shambach made a motion to allow the construction and placement of the recycling containers for a Girl Scout Gold Award. Vice-President Lisa Decker

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made a 2nd to the motion. Vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. Julianne Finkbiner abstained due to having a close, mentoring relationship with the Girl Scout. Motion carried.

Keep America Beautiful Grant – The Recreation Association did not get awarded the grant for the dog park at the New Berlin Recreation Complex.

Lawnmowers – There was more discussion about the lawnmowers on the roads, enforcing the laws, the complaints received regarding the lawnmowers, and liability issues.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion – Councilwoman Meghan Shambach made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice-President Lisa Decker 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