

EAST WASHINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
August 28, 2006

MINUTES

East Washington Borough Council met in Regular Session on Monday, August 28, 2006, 6:00 p.m., with the following members and Borough officials present:

Sandra Phillips, President	Mark Pacilla, Mayor
Joanne Coyle, Vice-President	Jeff Bull
Blake McCandless	Robert Dickson
Cary Jones, Solicitor	James Helicke, CEO
Heather Walsh, Secretary	Robert Redlinger, Chief of Police

Absent: Kelley Dickson

Also present:

Mark Connors; Christy Campbell, Observer-Reporter; Milton Schuler, Cynthia Schuler

President Sandra Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Robert Dickson and seconded by Blake McCandless to approve the Minutes of July 17, 2006.

Vote: All ayes. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion made by Robert Dickson and seconded by Blake McCandless to approve the Minutes of August 7, 2006.

Vote: All ayes. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF BILLS

Motion made by Robert Dickson and seconded by Blake McCandless to approve the current bills, with the addition of Allegheny Power Bill for \$29.00 and the WesBanco Loan Bill of \$1,032.00.

Vote: All ayes. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE

Council President Sandra Phillips welcomed Christy Campbell and Milton Schuler to the Meeting.

SECRETARY REPORT

Borough Secretary Heather Walsh stated that the vacuum sweeper is broken and the Road Crew would like to purchase a new one. Council members stated that a new one could be purchased. Jeff Bull stated that he would try and fix the broken one first.

The Borough Secretary stated that the Liquid Fuels Account was successfully audited by the Auditor General's Office. EMC Insurance successfully audited the payroll account for the past year.

The Secretary distributed the current financial data.

Council decided that the Borough Secretary should obtain an estimate for termite inspection/control from All-Kontrol before deciding if Selway's contract should be renewed.

Jeff Bull plans to rerun the gutters on the Borough Building during the Fall.

Council agreed that there would not be a need for the purchase of a new Polk Directory.

Motion was made by Joanne Coyle and seconded by Jeff Bull to initiate the \$100,000.00 Line of Credit with WesBanco, with the \$250.00 documentation fee.

All ayes. Motion carried unanimously.

STREET DEPARTMENT REPORT

Jeff Bull stated that repairs have been made to the tractor. He is going to try to rig up some lights on it.

The area of green space near the Schorr residence will be mowed again soon. The chipper will be in use next week.

Mr. Bull suggested that Council consider a new tractor at budget time.

Jeff Bull stated that the desks of Mr. Helicke and Chief Redlinger would be relocated to the downstairs so that the construction upstairs could be completed.

Mr. Bull will be doing wiring work on the building such as putting dusk to dawn lighting in, and moving lights and switches.

Sandra Phillips stated that she and Blake McCandless measured the painted curb lines at some intersections of streets in the Borough. They observed that some lines are painted too long and some are too short. Mr. McCandless visited the State Police barracks for information on curb painting regulations. Mrs. Phillips stated that there are curbs near fire hydrants that are not painted.

Sandra Phillips stated that she has given the list of changes to curb painting to Ron Miles of the Road Department. Mr. Miles is to make the changes after he finishes painting the crosswalks.

Mrs. Phillips also gave Mr. Miles a list of potholes to be repaired.

Jeff Bull stated that the weed killer sprayed along the curbs has improved the look of the streets.

Mrs. Phillips stated that there is a part of sidewalk on Central Avenue that should be cleared of weeds and debris and it should be replaced. This is the responsibility of the property owner.

Cary Jones stated that the Borough could spray the weeds and charge the property owner costs plus 15% for repair of same.

Jim Helicke was asked to contact the property owner and give them a deadline.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Robert Redlinger stated that the Attorney General's Office audited the Police Department and did not report any problems.

Chief Redlinger stated that the new police car was off the streets for five days so that the wiring could be changed to prevent any problems like that of the new Pittsburgh police cars, whose light wires caught fire.

Mark Pacilla asked if the police department has a computer system in the car.

Chief Redlinger stated that the department does not. It would be preferable to have a system at the station that would access other municipalities. The only grant would have to come from Homeland Security, which seems unlikely. Chief stated realistically for a borough the size of East Washington, with its types of crimes, a computer is not needed.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

CEO Jim Helicke presented the report. He is working on car removals. The W & J College building (house) at 101 S. Wade Avenue needs repairs and the College has been given sixty days to make them. Other property problems are pending. The issue with the house that needs to be painted is going to the Magistrate.

Sandra Phillips asked the status of the rental permit for the owner of the house at the corner of Lockhart St. and Christman Ave.

Mr. Helicke stated that he has not issued a license. The property owner has provided a notarized statement that claims that no more than two persons are living at the residence. An inspection of the property is scheduled for Tuesday morning.

Jim Helicke stated that he and Blake McCandless are continuing to pursue improvements on North Avenue.

Sandra Phillips stated that she and council members McCandless, Coyle, Bull, and Kelley Dickson toured North Avenue, walking from one end to the other, in pursuit of any violations to property maintenance codes. A list of infractions was made and letters to property owners have been sent. Some have been sent to the Magistrate for a hearing date.

Jim Helicke stated that he issued an occupancy permit to the new building on Gerry Stebbins property, a garage with an apartment above.

Sandra Phillips asked CEO Jim Helicke to investigate whether there are people living on the third floor of the W & J College Alumni House.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Jeff Bull – No report. He would like Council to hold an Executive Session after this meeting.

Blake McCandless asked if the ordinance prohibiting R.V.s parked in front of homes also prohibits them being parked on the street.

Cary Jones stated that if it were over 5,000 pounds, it would currently be prohibited.

Mr. McCandless stated that he would like Council to consider an ordinance for permit parking on Penn & Sherman Avenues. He stated that a standard parking place is 19 feet in length.

Mrs. Phillips stated that the permit-parking ordinance would be instituted on those streets as a convenience to the homeowners, who have a terrible parking problem due to the W & J College students.

Joanne Coyle – No report.

Jeff Bull brought a newsletter from the landlord service bureau and distributed copies.

Mr. Bull stated that he would like the Borough Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance to be completed as soon as possible. He stated that the Borough should look into publishing it on its own.

Cary Jones stated that its possible the work might have to be done by an official publisher. Its not just a matter of scanning documents, it is also changing numbers and editing and cross-referencing. Publishing the book is an extensive process. Mr. Jones would like to check the law.

Mayor Pacilla stated that since the Borough can pay for the publishing by installments, it would be a good idea to have it professionally done.

Mrs. Phillips stated that it was put in the Budget.

Sandra Phillips – No report.

Robert Dickson – No report. (Mr. Dickson excused himself and left the meeting.)

ACTION ITEMS

Board Vacancies

Sandra Phillips read the resignation letter from Councilman Andrew McIlvaine, who resigns from Council and the Planning Commission.

Sandra Phillips read the resignation letter from Susan Priest, who resigns from the Council Vacancy Board.

Mrs. Phillips stated that letters of interest in the vacant Council position have been received. Mr. McCandless and Mrs. Phillips interviewed Milton Schuler of Wilmont Avenue for the position.

Mrs. Phillips introduced Mr. Milton J. Shuler at this time.

Mr. Schuler stated that he has lived in East Washington since 1994. He would like to do his best to assist the Borough in moving forward.

Mrs. Phillips stated that she and Mr. McCandless recommend Mr. Schuler for the vacant Council position.

Motion was made by Jeff Bull and seconded by Blake McCandless to appoint Milton Schuler to Borough Council.

Vote taken: All ayes. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Mark Pacilla administered the Oath of Office to Milton Schuler.

Voting Precinct 1 Moving

Sandra Phillips stated that the Washington County Elections Office has approved the Borough moving the Precinct 1 voting from the Borough Building to the second floor of First Christian Church, beginning with the next election. Therefore, all voting for the Borough of East Washington will take place at First Christian Church, at the corner of Wilmont Avenue and East Beau Streets. Precinct 1 will vote upstairs, and Precinct 2 will vote downstairs. The County Elections office will assist the Borough in making the change with signs and advertising. The Church was more than happy to accommodate us.

Mrs. Phillips clarified that in the 2007 election, the new seat filled by Milton Schuler will be on the ballot for a two-year term, and Jeff Bull's and Blake McCandless' positions both will be on the ballot for four-year terms.

Mrs. Phillips' Council position will be on the ballot, as well as Robert Dickson's, both for four-year terms.

Comcast

Sandra Phillips noted she's been receiving advertisements from various new companies offering cable services and asked about the status of an agreement with the Borough and Comcast.

Cary Jones stated that Comcast has not contacted him after his last contact.

(Robert Dickson returned to the meeting.)

NEW BUSINESS

Planning Commission Meeting Report

Mayor Mark Pacilla stated that the Borough Planning Commission met in August to hear a request from W&J College to convert an existing parking lot along East Pine Avenue to an outdoor basketball court. The Planning Commission determined that the court would need fencing entirely around it, and it recommends that the court not have lighting. The Planning

Commission would like the College to also maintain parking there. The Planning Commission recommends approval, with the aforementioned stipulations.

Motion was made by Jeff Bull and seconded by Blake McCandless to approve the change of use request made by W & J College to convert an existing parking lot on East Pine Avenue to an outdoor basketball court, with the stipulation that the court must be entirely fenced, not have lighting, and have parking.

Vote taken: 5 Ayes, 1 abstention (Dickson). Motion carried.

Blake McCandless stated that he would like the College to submit a revised plan showing the change.

Cary Jones stated that he would notify the College of the approval with the conditions.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Mark Pacilla stated that W & J College is now back to school. The Borough officer on duty during this meeting has written 14 parking tickets so far. The parking problems continue.

Mayor Pacilla stated that Borough residents would like the Borough continue on the path set at the town meeting held previously regarding the historical district ordinance. Residents are hoping to see progress and more results on the issues they raised, such as code enforcement.

Mayor Pacilla stated that some Borough residents are also interested in the issues regarding the school district associated with the Borough.

Cary Jones stated that he would discuss school voucher research in his report.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Cary Jones stated that the PaDOT program of turn back does not apply to the Borough because East Beau Street and North Avenue do not have the low-average use required.

Mr. Jones stated that Pennsylvania does not have a school voucher program. Pennsylvania does have an educational improvement tax credit. A corporation can give money to an organization. That organization would give scholarships to children who would then use it to go to a school of their choice.

Cary Jones stated that General Code can do a three-year financing for the publishing and codifying of the Borough ordinances. It would cost \$3,500.00 per year for three years without the re-zoning. For five years, inflation would have to be considered, so it would be \$3,270.00 per year for five years, again without zoning. To add in the zoning ordinance would not be very costly.

Jeff Bull asked that Mr. Jones find out if there is publishing software that could be use instead.

Mr. Jones will also find out about the cost of adding on the re-zoning.

Cary Jones stated that there was a recent dog attack of a woman within the Borough. Council may want to consider a dangerous dog ordinance.

NEW BUSINESS

East Wheeling Street No Parking

Sandra Phillips stated that a temporary No Parking for 90 Days Ordinance for East Wheeling Street from Olin Fine Arts to S. Wade is up for consideration by Council. This is due to a problem for emergency and other large vehicles getting through the location.

Robert Dickson stated that he is against the ordinance because it would push cars to park on to S. Wade Avenue.

Blake McCandless suggested trying it for 90 days to see what issues arise.

After discussion, Council decided to revisit the issue at the September 18, 2006 Meeting.

Permit Parking Ordinance

Cary Jones drafted a Permit Parking Ordinance similar to one from Greenville Borough. It evaluates what is called “impacted streets”. It considers a car space to be 20 feet. A permit is applied for to the Police Chief, who verifies residency and car ownership. A place is not guaranteed, but a permit is guaranteed. Restrictions for hours and days could be included. Visitors’ passes could be issued for an additional fee. Permits are not transferable.

Blake McCandless stated that permits are issued to landlords for distribution. A permit sticker would be in a visible location on the vehicle.

Sandra Phillips stated that Sherman, Penn and Chestnut Streets should be considered for the permit parking.

Cary Jones will advertise that the ordinance will be brought before Council for passage at the September 18, 2006 Meeting. Council will then designate the streets that are affected.

Ordinance Prohibiting Trailers, etc. from Parking

Cary Jones is working on a parking ordinance amendment for the Borough that would prohibit the parking of trailers, PODS, dumpsters, jet-skis, R.V.s, etc., on Borough streets. The ordinance would be advertised and considered by Council at the September 18, 2006 Meeting.

Board Vacancies

Sandra Phillips stated that there are two board vacancies in the Borough, the Planning Commission and the Council Vacancy Board.

Robert Dickson stated that he would like to be considered for the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Jeff Bull and seconded by Joanne Coyle to adjourn the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council went into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING IS ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2006, AT 6:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Walsh,
Borough Secretary