

Borough of Alburtis

Meeting Minutes

August 9, 2023

The August 9, 2023, meeting of Borough Council was called to order by Council President Ron Delaco at 7:00 p.m. in the Borough Hall, 260 Franklin Street, Alburtis, PA.

Council members in attendance:

Ron Delaco Steve Hill Chad Atkins Hector Moss
John Aleszczyk Ashlynn Rivera Mehmet Birtek

Associates of Alburtis in attendance:

Dave Knerr, Solicitor Kathleen Palmer, Mayor Stephen Nemeth, Manager
Chris Basile, Auditor

Visitors in attendance: Gary DeRoner Steve Werley Brooke Tom
Victoria Cerulli Chuck Deprill Mike Weber Steve Williams

PUBLIC COMMENT – No Public Comment

MAYOR'S REPORT – No Mayor Report, Kathy Palmer requested an executive session for the next meeting.

POLICE REPORT-. No comment was made on the Police Report

MEETING MINUTES OF July 26th, 2023 – Steve Hill made a motion to approve the Minutes of July 26, 2023, Chad Atkins 2nd and a unanimous vote followed. Motion passes 7-0.

DeIaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk- yay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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BILLS FOR PAYMENT – August 9th, 2023 – Chad Atkins made a motion to pay the bills of August 9th, 2023, Ashlynn Rivera 2nd and a unanimous vote followed. Motion passes 7-0.

Delaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk- yay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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TREASURER'S REPORT - Chad Atkins made a motion to accept the treasurers report, Steve Hill 2nd and a unanimous vote followed. Motion passes 7-0.

DeIaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk- yay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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ENGINEER'S REPORT – Mehmet Birtek made a motion to accept the Engineer's Report, Steve Hill 2nd and a unanimous vote followed. Motion passes 7-0.

DeIaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk- yay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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MACUNGIE AMBULANCE CORPS – No Comment was made on the Ambulance report. Chad Atkins made motion to accept the Ambulance Report, Mehmet Birtek 2nd and a unanimous vote followed. Motion passes 7-0.

DeIaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk-yay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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ADMINISTRATION

Financial Status Presentation- Chris Basile presented that he has been auditing the borough for 10-12 years. Spoke to Steve Nemeth he requested that he come in and present where we are financially since he is new.so we took a look back to the records for the last 5 years since 2018. We have been pretty consistent along the way. One thing that we have been very good with is going for state and local grants. His opinion is to keep up with the grant writing. Any time the state helps pay for our projects, take advantage of that. We pay into the state funds and might as well try to get as much of those funds back into the borough. John asked if Chris took a look at the projects and the costs of the grants. How much the projects were and how much we spent, for example Chestnut Street; the grant was 200,000 the bid was for over 200,000 and the engineering was about 130,000. Si 130,000 is an expense to the borough. Franklin Street bid was for 500,000 spent 100,000 in engineering. Now that is an expense to the borough also. Chris mentioned yes, but at the same time you budget for these items and are hitting the bottom line. John mentioned that we did not budget for engineering. John said the 120,000 budgeted in the sewer, you cannot use to compensate for the projects engineering costs. Kathy Palmer asked Chris if it was normal for municipalities to take from one fund and cover another. Chris mentioned technically sewer and water have to be spent on sewer and water, but if you have a road project that includes sewer and water you can cover that in water and sewer. John mentioned that we are absorbing the cost of doing resident curbing, sidewalks, and driveways. Ron mentioned that the grants' purpose is for those items. John mentioned if you look at Franklin Street the Bid was for 500,000, we spent 500,000 we are eating the rest is not covered by the grant. Kathy mentioned fiscally Chris Basile mentioned when it comes to the borough you have no debt, glad John is fiscally conservative we have money in the back and no debt they project matching. John mentioned that we have to watch general fund can't borrow from the other funds unless you pay it back. John mentioned it's been mentioned that you get the reimbursement back in two weeks; chestnut circle was completed in November and still haven't received it. Ron mentioned chestnut circle is still in the process of being resolved with the contractor. John asked Ron, do you really believe we will see the 1.5 within 2 weeks. Ron replied once the project is complete you then can submit all of the paperwork. John asked then why we haven't done that with franklin st and chestnut circle. Steve Nemeth mentioned that once all of the documents and punch lists are finalized and submitted, that's how the process goes. Ron mentioned that we can always take a short-term loan when we start the project and pay it back as soon as we get our reimbursement. Dave Knerr mentioned that before you go for a loan you will borrow from your water and sewer. Mehmet mentioned that we all get your concerns, and they are valid. The ultimate solution is we all have to pay careful attention to cash flow, and there are options that we can take to solve the solutions at this moment no need to raise taxes just have to look at things diligently. Ron mentioned if this project is overrun, we have to look at the project and cut it out. Chris mentioned that you can turn down the project and return the grant. You can either do the project or return the grant you can walk into any back in the valley and ask for a quick loan knowing that you have grant money coming back. Hector mentioned that ultimate concern is with the number of projects coming up and the cash flow. We have to take account for, we need to take a better grasp of the projects that we have coming down the road. We need to work together to strategize the projects to prevent taxes or even taking out a loan. Chris Basile mentioned that he can sit down with Tracy and Steve to create a spreadsheet and attach it to the treasures report once the bids come in. John mentioned that you get an amount of dollars for the grant but what you don't know is the figures for the engineering. Hector mentioned that often times when you plan a project you allow for a buffer in case there are any issues. Chris is happy that we are fiscally responsible but there are ways to do it and you are biting off a huge project. Kathy mentioned she is tired of hearing people think we are raising taxes guts roll around every time she hears john talk about raising taxes. She thinks maybe we should just stop the project; you think every household likes what they hear lately at these meetings, John agreed. Kathy asked

John what you would do to solve the problem, John stated that he would stop the project. Chris Basile mentioned that as of now the finances of the borough are fine.

Corey and Kimberly's Ride Signage and route request- Victoria Cerulli from Corey and Kimberly's ride introduced fellow members Mike Webber, Steve Williams, and Chuck Deprill. Victoria mentioned the history of the organization and what their purpose is for the community. Victoria thanked the borough for allowing her to present this info to the council. Thanked Steve Nemeth for taking all of the calls from her and assisting her with every question, mentioned that Steve Nemeth always showed an enthusiasm towards their organizations purpose. Chuck Deprill mentioned that their request is to hang a banner across main street; they are a no profit 501c3 entity entirely with volunteers that help individuals with substance abuse. Money used previously has gone to humanistic change, youth assistance. Additionally, 50 people were able to attend the Iron Pigs game, on substance abuse awareness night. Offer hope to those who battle the disease of addiction; while those in attendance. Stories from those struggling messages of hope. Banner would cross over main street, only location that they found was 208 main street. The council asked how it would get hung. Chuck Deprill mentioned that he is friends with fire Chief Nosal who would assist with using one of their trucks. Chuck mentioned he is aware of needing PennDOT's approval. Ron and Steve mentioned that there is no pushback from council on the sign. Ron asked if Steve Nemeth could collaborate with them to find a location for the sign. Chuck also requested if they could move the staging area from school street to 3rd street for the event. The location of street closure would be from main to chestnut and from the times of 9am- 11am. Ron said he doesn't believe this would be an issue. Work this out with our maintenance department to post the no parking signs and organize with our Chief Alsleben and Steve Nemeth.

Chad Atkins made motion to allow for 3rd street blocked off from main street to chestnut street from 9am- 11am, Ashlynn Rivera 2nd and a unanimous vote followed. Motion passes 7-0.

Delaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk- yay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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Mehmet Birtek made motion for Steve Nemeth to assist in finding a location suitable for a sign to be placed, Ashlynn Rivera 2nd and a unanimous vote followed. Motion passes 7-0.

Delaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk- yay	Atkins- yay	Birtek- yay	Rivera- yay
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Ott Recommendation to Pay Application No.2- Mehmet asked if this was one of the projects that we previously mentioned. Mehmet mentioned the 20% is not that bad, overruns are to be expected in projects if you manage it well. Mehmet asked if the checklist was checked off by Ott and was it also checked off by somebody within the borough. Mehmet asked if it is feasible within the borough to do the job of a consultant to look at projects pay an annual salary instead of paying per hour to Ott. Steve Nemeth referred to Dave Knerr to ask if it would go against our contract with our engineer. Dave Knerr mentioned we need to be very careful; this is starting to sound more like a question of do you trust your engineer. If you don't trust your engineer then get a new one, if you trust him then he has a reason for everything that he is doing. If he is doing his job and has to spend more time watching what the contractor is doing that is why you have an engineer. Part of the background here is before you get into a project and don't trust the engineer, get a new engineer. If you trust him discuss your concerns about wanting to know prior to an overrun, but that's why you build in contingency plans contingency plans. Comments like they have a blank check to do whatever. What this tells me is I don't trust engineering. If you do trust the engineer, then stop those comments. John mentioned that errors do happen, things get missed, there is no control, they have a blank check, we never know how much something is going to cost. Mehmet mentioned having an in-house engineer would make more sense rather than paying consulting an hourly rate. Ron mentioned that he believes after this project we don't foresee any large-scale projects on the horizon. Mehmet mentioned that we need somebody on our team's side to audit the work done by

the contractor; and check the bills that OTT gets from the contractors. John said his issue is not that he believes OTT is doing work properly and trusts their signoff method. Mehmet asked sounds like issue is not with the work its with how they bill us is two separate issues. John mentioned to Dave we know your fees are a fixed amount, what we don't have with the engineer is a fixed number, it is mostly all an estimate.

Steve Hill mentioned the main issue with the sidewalks and curbing has been bad for so long, we pushed it off for so long, because we said didn't want to burden the people down there his advice is don't get caught up with this again. Has to agree with John a bit, everyone in the borough is paying for the engineering fees for this project. Hector mentioned that Steve Hill said is correct that this is something where we need to get a head of the project; say if we need to take out a loan, taxpayers will need to pay the loan amount. Ron mentioned we got the grant to give better access to the park and to the school. Hector mentioned that when we first agreed to this grant, we were under the notion the grant would cover the entire project, here we are now, and the citizens may need to pay the burden. Wants to emphasize that OTT does a great job, but we need to do a better job managing their projects.

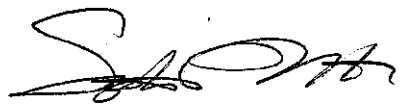
Mehmet Birttek made a motion to Pay application No. 2 to Grace industries Steve Hill 2nd and a unanimous vote followed. Motion passes 7-0.

DeIaco- yay	Hill- yay	Moss-yay	Aleszczyk- yay	Atkins- yay	Birttek- yay	Rivera- yay
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Civil Service Committee- Dave Knerr mentioned that currently we only have three members on the civil service committee. with an alternate spot which has since been vacated, we feel that it would be necessary to fill this plus add up to a total of 3 alternates. In order to have a quorum for a meeting you must have all 3 members in attendance, or an alternate can fill in. Just something to begin to think about possible people that could be alternates.

A motion to adjourn at 8:21 p.m. was made by Mehmet Birttek, 2nd by Chad Atkins and a unanimous vote followed.

Meeting minutes were taken and submitted by:


Stephen Nemeth, Borough Manager.