

Stewartstown Borough Council
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 5th, 2020

Members present

Brittany Barnette
Donna Bloom
Polly Kreiss
Gordon Wisnom, Sr.
Bill Gemmill
Roy Burkins
Mike Ellinger

Others present

Mayor Kenton Kurtz
Stacy Myers, Recording Sec'y

Visitors present

Joan Wisnom
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Trout
Dave Ewell

1. The meeting was called to order @ 7:00p.m. followed by the pledge to the flag.
2. **Public Comment/Visitors**—the following were present to address Council:
 - Joan Wisnom, who's been a resident at 40 Church Street for 51 years expressed her frustration about the residents at 43 Church Street and the condition of their property. She distributed pictures to Council members that show the extent of storage bins, furniture, children's toys, and many other items that are being piled up in the driveway. Ms. Wisnom stated the current owners moved there about 3 years ago and while she has only spoken to them twice, they seem like nice older people. She & other nearby residents believe the residents buy storage units, then bring the items to the 43 Church Street property to either sell later or simply store there. Ms. Wisnom thought they would sell some of the items at the Borough's recent yard sale; however, the day after, they arrived with a trailer piled high with even more items that they left outside. The property is more of an eyesore now than it ever was & the neighbors fear it's lowering their property values. Ms. Wisnom said her lot at 42 Church Street will probably never be bought & built on if someone must look across the street at the eyesore of 43 Church. Ms. Wisnom expressed her disappointment that Borough Council has not done anything to resolve the situation & force the 43 Church residents to clean up their property.

Ms. Wisnom's granddaughter rents the home at 44 Church Street & is very disgusted that the view she has from both her front windows is the mess at 43 Church Street.

Attorney Sharnetzka explained that, although he agrees this property is creating an eyesore for the neighbors, many of the items in the pictures shown tonight cannot be enforced or removed by any Borough Ordinance. He and the Borough's Zoning Officer have driven past the property a month or so ago & saw that the storage totes were closed, bags of mulch were unopened and many other items were stacked up, but at that time, he saw no violations of the Borough's Nuisance Ordinance.
 - Brian Trout & his wife have been residents of 50 Church Street for the past 6 years. They are frustrated that the neighboring property seems to be getting worse & more of an eyesore. Mr. Trout stated that last year, he began seeing rats around his home & he believes they're coming from 43 Church Street. Many of the items can offer rats & other vermin places to nest & stay warm as the weather turns colder. Mr. Trout has shot 20 rats just since last year & he stated the neighbor at 45 Church Street has also killed several.

Attorney Sharnetzka said if several residents are seeing rats around their properties that is certainly something that can be addressed as a public safety issue. After looking at several of the pictures from 43 Church, he said Section 2A(1-b) of the Borough's Nuisance Ordinance prohibits the collection and storage of "refuse & rubbish" that can include items such as wooden & metal furniture, boxes, cartons & other like items that the residents of 43 Church seem to be storing on the property.

The Nuisance Ordinance, Section 2A (1-e) prohibits storing materials that may attract vectors, to include rodents, flies, mosquitoes, etc.

- Mr. Burkins made a motion authorizing Atty. Sharnetzka to send a violation letter to the 43 Church Street homeowners, including pictures provided by surrounding residents, giving them the allowed amount of time to bring the property into compliance; Mrs. Bloom seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.

3. **General Business**

- Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - Mr. Burkins made a motion to approve the September 8th, 2020 Meeting Minutes; Ms. Kreiss seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
 - Mrs. Bloom made a motion to approve the September 22nd, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes; Ms. Kreiss seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
- Approval of Financial Statements
 - **General Funds**—Ms. Kreiss made a motion to approve General Fund bills dated September 4th thru October 1st, 2020 totaling \$23,915.80; Mr. Burkins seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
 - **Sewer Funds**—Mrs. Bloom made a motion to approve Sewer Fund bills dated September 4th thru October 1st, 2020 totaling \$32,386.58; Mr. Burkins seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
 - **Water Funds**—Ms. Kreiss made a motion to approve Water Fund bills dated September 4th thru October 1st, 2020 totaling \$43,625.38; Mrs. Bloom seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.

4. **Solicitor's Report**—Craig Sharnetzka reported the following:

- **Trash Contract**—the Agreement for refuse services with Penn Waste was before Council for action. The new contract will begin November 1st, 2020 and extend to October 31st, 2025. Mrs. Bloom made a motion for the Council President & Borough Secretary to sign the Agreement; Mr. Burkins seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
- **Theater update**—the highest bidder from the auction is moving forward and settlement should be held shortly.
- **56 N. Main Street**—a lien for the cost of lawn/property cleanup was filed on September 14th.

5. **Engineer's Report**—Jason Brenneman was not present tonight & submitted no report.

6. **Sewer/Water Supervisor Report**—Ira Walker, Jr. was not present tonight, but submitted his report for Council's review. The report will be accepted as written; Sewer & Water Authority will act on the expenses at their next meeting.

Of note, the newest Sewer & Water Department employee, Glenwood Leas resigned on Thursday, October 1st. Another employee will be sought.

7. **Mayor Kurtz' Report**—no report

8. **Treasurer's Report**—Year-to-date budget figures were distributed tonight for Council's review.

9. **President's Report**—Mr. Wisnom stated Borough Council will need to decide whether or not to agree on offering ALS (Advanced Life Support) services via a "chase truck" within Stewartstown Borough & surrounding municipalities. East Hopewell & Crossroads Borough have already voted in favor of adding ALS services & Mr. Wisnom feels certain Hopewell Township will also vote in favor at their next meeting. The emergency vehicle will be provided through UPMC and will be in operation 12hrs/day, 7 days/week in one of the above-named municipalities, but the hours of the day may vary. Cost for the ALS unit would be approx. \$175,000/year, which would be distributed among the 4 above-named municipalities based on the number of emergency/ambulatory calls each receives. Mr. Wisnom estimates Stewartstown Borough's share to be approx. \$50,000 for the first year. It's been requested that Eureka Consolidated give \$100,000/year towards ALS Services, but this will be voted on at their October meeting. Mr. Wisnom said the money in the Eureka Consolidated account was set up to continue funding EMS

services, i.e. new fire trucks, new ambulances, keeping Eureka's building structurally safe & sound, etc. That fund brings in approx. \$150,000-\$180,000/year.

Mr. Sharnetzka said the problem with ambulance & fire services is there is currently no state law allowing municipalities to charge for emergency services through any avenue other than millage. This is what drives the cost up because the money can only be raised through millage, so it comes on the back of property taxes. Mr. Sharnetzka said municipalities should stress to their legislators that emergency services should be billed on a per capita basis & through income tax.

Of note, once the ALS service starts, it can't be stopped.

Mr. Burkins made a motion to join other municipalities in offering the ALS service; Ms. Kreiss seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.

Money has been built into the Borough's 2021 Budget for this additional emergency/ambulance service.

10. **Other Council business**

- The storm sewer pipe that needs replaced at 37 S. Main Street—Mr. Gemmill spoke to Aaron Manifold, who will be handling the repair. Aaron quoted \$3,500-\$4,000 to dig, fill in the old pipe with a type of mix & then backfill. Mr. Gemmill will obtain pricing for a new pipe but wanted to get Council approval first.

Mr. Ellinger made a motion to proceed on the repair, not to exceed \$10,000; Mr. Burkins seconded. Motion carried with Mr. Gemmill & Mrs. Bloom abstaining.

- Mr. Burkins stated, at the September meeting, it was approved to spend up to \$5,000 to research the condition of the Borough's aging storm sewer system. Jason's office has obtained the York College intern who will complete this job cheaper than another firm/contractor.
- Mr. Wisnom plans to have a discussion with Jason Brenneman on whether or not he agrees to remain as the Borough & Authority Engineer.
- Mike Ellinger wishes to resign from Borough Council, end of 2020 or sooner, if someone is found to replace him. In the meantime, he will submit his resignation letter.

11. **Adjournment**—With no further business, Council adjourned the meeting @ 7:54p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Stacy Myers, Recording Secretary