

***MINUTES OF THE
BOROUGH OF TOPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, July 25th, 2022***

The regular semi-monthly meeting of the Tipton Borough Council was called to order by Council President Lorah at Borough Hall, 205 South Callowhill Street, Tipton, PA 19562 at 7:01 PM. Present were Mayor Biltcliff, Council Members C. Cook, A. Falcone, E. Polinsky, M. Lorah, E. Stoudt, M. Stoudt, Borough Manager Stacy C. Milo, and Borough Secretary Courtney M. Corona.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Lorah began by discussing the purpose of the meeting. She explained that, in order to complete the 2023 budget and capital plan, Council will be breaking up topics and covering those topics during the second monthly Council meetings.

DISCUSS BUDGET AND CAPITAL PLAN NEEDS – STREETS AND ALLEYS

Mr. Polinsky started the conversation by reiterating that there is no way we can repair our streets and alleys with impact by ourselves; the Borough will need help from other funding sources to complete these projects. He presented three options for funding: the PA Infrastructure Bank, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and receiving a loan from a private lender. Mr. Polinsky added that we have \$75,000 budgeted for streets/alleys this year. Beyond budgeting funds, we will need to take out a loan of some sort for these projects. Mr. Polinsky brought up his idea for narrowing certain streets in town, and he added that there are grants for that specific part of the projects. Ms. Falcone disagreed with Mr. Polinsky's idea of street narrowing. She argued that it is not the best action to take to address the speeding on streets. Mr. Polinsky clarified that the purpose of street narrowing is not to slow down traffic but to reduce the amount of asphalt needed. He added that there is also not a need for street parking on the streets that he is suggesting be narrowed. He finished his thought by stating street narrowing is a low impact way to improve the area.

For more information on the USDA loan option to pay for the street paving, Council discussed the project with Tonya St. Clair by telephone. Ms. St. Clair is a Loan Specialist for the Rural Development sector of the USDA. Ms. St. Clair started the conversation with a summary of what it would look like for a borough of Tipton's size to request a loan from the USDA. Borough Council gave Ms. St. Clair some preliminary information for the project. Council stated that the Borough needs about 7 miles of streets done, some resurfaced and some completely reconstructed. The Borough will also need to install ADA curbing, sidewalks, and ramps. Ms. St. Clair informed Council that the Borough does not qualify for grants from the USDA for ADA improvements because the service area for the Borough has a median household income above the threshold based on the 2010 US Census. The median income for a Borough is \$40,000 to be eligible for funding, and the median income of the Borough of Tipton is well over that. That

means the Borough's only option with the USDA would be to take out a loan from the agency. Ms. St. Clair explained that there is a two-step process for applying for and using a loan from the agency. First, she will need a cost estimate of the project and a rough idea of the whole project. That will be reviewed within 45 days. Next, she will need the schematic plans, a more comprehensive cost estimate, and an environmental survey of the land will need to be done. She also stated that the whole project needs to be done by the same contractor, so the project can only be bid once. For an approximation, Ms. St. Clair estimated that we would need about \$4,000,000 for the project. If the Borough agreed to a 20-year loan at the current 3.25% interest rate, the loan repayment would be \$22,720 monthly. The Borough would have five years to use the funds. The total amount to be paid to the USDA would accumulate to \$5,452,800. Council thanked Ms. St. Clair for her time, and ended the telephone call.

In discussion of the conversation with Ms. St. Clair, Ms. Lorah started by saying that Council talked about having this money allocated in the budget already. Mr. Polinsky added that a loan of that size does not seem feasible for the Borough at this time. He presented the idea of using our liquid fuels allocation every year as our loan payment to the PA Infrastructure Bank, and the Borough should see how much it could borrow with that amount being their yearly payment. Mrs. Stoudt added that before the Borough paves a street, we need to check the pipes and infrastructure below the street. Mrs. Stoudt also spoke about the water pipes below Keller, East Barkley, and Franklin Streets. She noted that the pipes have broken 5 times under Keller Street alone. She suggested Council consider prioritizing which streets get paved first depending on the condition on the infrastructure below them. Ms. Falcone asked what the life expectancy is of a street that gets repaved. Mr. Polinsky answered that PennDOT does not specify, but they do give you information on how to keep your roads drivable for longer.

Council discussed particular streets, the age of the streets, damage from trash trucks using our roads, doing all alleys first, the amount the Borough can afford each year, how to assign priority and the order of when to do each street, planning projects, getting information for grants from the engineer, the park loan proceeds balance, all current loans and which will end soon, and the time needed to actually find and receive funding, the lack of grants for street projects, and eligible uses of Liquid Fuels funding.

Mr. Polinsky advised Council that, when thinking about what projects and parts of town be done first, to make sure it is a decent size and meaningful project. He stated it is difficult to receive a bid from a contracting company for a small project in town. Mr. Polinsky then asked Ms. Milo if the Borough heard from Berks County about the ADA improvements grant that was requested for ADA curb ramps around town. Ms. Milo advised Council that Berks County has not informed the Borough but she doubts the Borough was granted funding. Mr. Polinsky noted that the Borough might not get to some of the road projects for 20 years, and Council should make sure the patchwork projects are being done to save the roads until complete reconstruction can be done. Mr. Stoudt agreed with other Councilmembers that Keller Street should be repaired first since the infrastructure beneath the road has been failing recently. He added that not only would that street be a good place to start, but citizens would see work getting done and it would give the Borough creditability that things are getting fixed. He stated that doing 5 repairs on the pipe

beneath the street may cost the same as paving another small road. Council agreed that the Borough has to take care of the water pipes. Mrs. Stoudt, Ms. Lorah, Ms. Kunkel, and Mr. Polinsky agreed with Mr. Stoudt.

Ms. Lorah summarized the conversation on streets by restating that Council should look into applying for grants to fix the infrastructure beneath the roads throughout the Borough. Mr. Polinsky reiterated that there are not grants for street reconstruction or paving and the Borough did not receive the CDBG funding from Berks County for ADA accessible curb ramps. Council stressed the importance of having sidewalks and agreed to discuss this safety issue in the future. Ms. Lorah supported a starting point for streets and alleys to be to fix all the old water pipes in the Borough and repairing Keller Street with Croll Street. Mrs. Stoudt will contact the Borough engineer regarding obtaining possible grants.

DISCUSS SOURCE WATER PROTECTION PLAN

Ms. Lorah advised Council that the Planning Commission had their quarterly meeting on Wednesday July 13th, at which the commissioners discussed the Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP). Council received their comments on the SWPP to review. Ms. Lorah added that the cost of approving the plan is minimal. Mr. Polinsky agreed and also clarified for Council that we are simply approving the ideas presented in the plan, the plan is not a binding contract, and approving it does not mean Council needs to take immediate action on the plan. Ms. Kunkel added that the plans presented are in the best interest of Council and the Borough as a whole. Ms. Cook added that there is language in the plan that needed to be corrected before the plan can be officially accepted. Ms. Lorah asked Ms. Milo what the next steps are to accepting the Source Water Protection plan. Ms. Milo answered that revisions will be given to PADEP and their consultant to finalize and return to the Borough. Mr. Polinsky stated that the plan could then be approved. Ms. Milo stated that PADEP wants Council to sign the request for approval of the plan. She added that the only cost to Council is what Council chooses to do. A motion was made by Ms. Falcone to conditionally accept the plan until the language revisions are made. Mr. Polinsky seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

HEARING OF VISITORS

No visitors had any business to present.

Ms. Falcone asked what Council would like to discuss at their next budget planning meeting. Mrs. Stoudt suggested that Council waits until the next regularly scheduled council meeting to decide what should be on the agenda. She added that we may have more information regarding streets by the next meeting. Mrs. Stoudt directed the Borough Secretary to place this on the next agenda. Ms. Lorah agreed.

Mr. Polinsky asked Ms. Falcone if she had reviewed the traffic calming policy.

Ms. Cook extended thanks to the Planning Commission for their excellent job in reviewing the SWPP and their work is very much appreciated. Mr. Leo Scott stated that the commissioners worked together well to get their comments to Council.

ADJOURNMENT

Council adjourned at 8:14 PM with a motion by Mr. Polinsky, seconded by Ms. Kunkel.

The next regular Borough Council Meeting will be held on Monday August 8th, at 7:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Courtney M. Corona

Borough Secretary