

**MINUTES OF THE
BOROUGH OF TOPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, November 28th, 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 7:03 PM. Present were Mayor Biltcliff, Council Members C. Cook, A. Falcone, M. Kunkel, M. Lorah, E. Polinsky, E. Stoudt, and M. Stoudt, Borough Manager Stacy C. Milo, and Borough Secretary Courtney M. Corona.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

An executive session was held prior to the regular meeting to discuss personnel matters. The meeting began at 6:48pm and ended at 7:00pm.

BOROUGH MANAGER

Ms. Milo explained to Council that she has been revising the budget per Council's requests over the past few months. Ms. Milo provided them with the most recent version of the budget. Ms. Lorah asked Council for their input about the current budget that Ms. Milo provided.

Mr. Polinsky asked Ms. Milo if there was a specific number that she had in mind for raising sewer rents. Mrs. Stoudt said that it is hard to nail down a sewer rate because Council does not know if they will get the grant for the Washington Street Pump Station. Mr. Polinsky mentioned that if Council is considering raising sewer rents, the increase should apply to residential, industrial, and commercial accounts. Ms. Milo reminded Council that they are in negotiations for a new water well, which will cost millions of dollars. Ms. Falcone stated that Council should look at how much money the Borough will need every year to sustain the infrastructure. Ms. Falcone continued that since Council will be raising taxes and sewer rents, water rates should not be raised as well; that raising too much at one time will hit residents too hard. Ms. Cook and Mrs. Stoudt verbally agreed.

Mrs. Stoudt asked Council how much taxes should be raised. Mrs. Stoudt explained that every mill, that taxes are raised, is \$150 per \$100,000 property assessment. Mrs. Stoudt asked Council for a more exact number for next meeting of what they believe taxes should be raised.

Ms. Falcone expressed her concerns with a large amount of items in the budget. Ms. Falcone expressed that she believes Council should cut all nonessential spending before considering raising taxes. Ms. Falcone continued by saying that Parks and Recreation and entertainment is a large portion of nonessential spending she believes Council should cut. Ms. Falcone stated that on entertainment this year the Borough spent \$3,800 on bands to perform, \$1,400 on candy for the Halloween parade, trunk-or-treat, and the tree lighting, \$739 on a bounce house rental, \$750 on a mobile petting zoo, \$6,100 towards the TCOC parade, and \$6,500 to subsidize the YMCA

park program. Ms. Lorah disagreed with Ms. Falcone's proposal to cut all events and park and recreation program. Mr. Polinsky also disagreed with Ms. Falcone's proposal and stated that he values the entertainment in Topton and would not want to see it go away for our residents. Mr. Polinsky continued by saying cutting \$5,000 here and \$5,000 there will not fix the budgetary problems the Borough has. Ms. Falcone stated that the Borough is not here to entertain its residents, the Borough Code says nothing about entertaining residents. Ms. Cook agreed with Ms. Falcone, stating that people in the community are hurting financially and Council should start cutting expenses before raising taxes.

Ms. Cook informed Council that she is also in favor of cutting back on what the taxpayer pays for. Ms. Cook informed Council that there is a line in the budget that gives \$15,000 to Brandywine Community Library. Ms. Cook informed Council that Topton's contribution is significantly more than the other three municipalities that contribute while Topton's population is significantly smaller. Ms. Cook proposed that Council decrease their funding to the Library from \$15,000 to \$10,000.

Ms. Karen Winegardner from Brandywine Community Library (BCL) was in attendance at the meeting. Ms. Winegardner addressed Council and stated that BCL has reached out to the other municipalities for more funding, but no one has offered them more money. Ms. Winegardner provided Council with a short explanation of what the library does and how it serves the community, stating that the library also has a \$10,000 deficit in their budget that they are trying to sort out. Ms. Winegardner explained that the library is seeing an influx of community members, especially youth, using free services; BCL is one of the few places that has free Wi-Fi in town. Ms. Winegardner expressed her gratitude for the funding and explained that for every dollar municipalities give them, they receive that in state funding as well.

Ms. Falcone asked Ms. Winegardner if BCL could do fundraisers in Topton Park to raise money for the library. Ms. Winegardner explained that they do most of the fundraisers in house and do not have to worry about paying for a location or anything like that. Ms. Winegardner continued that BCL receives more funds from personal donations and fundraising than they do from municipalities. Mayor Biltcliff addressed Council and Ms. Winegardner by stating that BCL provides an invaluable service to the Topton Community and is something that should be preserved.

HEARING OF VISITORS

Mr. Steve Rogers thanked Council for serving and acknowledged that it is not an easy job to do. Mr. Rogers urged Council to remember that the median age of residents is quite high. Mr. Rogers stated that someone of his age may be able to bounce back financially from a sewer and tax increase, but someone of a higher age with a fixed income may not be able to recover as easily. Mr. Rogers urged Council to keep that in mind for future budget conversations.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council entered into an executive session at 8:07pm.

Council adjourned their executive session at 8:46pm by a motion from Mr. Polinsky, seconded by Ms. Kunkel.

ADJOURNMENT

Council adjourned at 8:47pm by a motion from Mr. Polinsky, seconded by Mr. Stoudt.

The next regular Borough Council meeting will be held December 12th, 2022 at 7:00PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Courtney M. Corona
Borough Secretary