Borough of Jefferson Hills

Agenda Meeting of Council

February 3, 2021

 The agenda meeting of Council was called to order by President Bucy at 7:00 p.m. via zoom, in the Municipal Centers, 925 Old Clairton Road. Following Pledge of Allegiance, Council Members Reynolds, Ruscitto, Sockman, Steffey, Vice President Montgomery, President Bucy and Mayor Cmar answered to roll call. Finance Officer Drager, Solicitor Gabriel, Lt. King, Borough Engineer Glister, Consulting Engineer Minsterman and Public Works Director Volpe were also Present. Mrs. Ielase was absent.

4. President’s Message:

 Good evening Jefferson Hills residents,

 I am composing this message to address numerous concerns that have been sent to me via email.

 First, a question regarding abstaining from voting was asked. Councilmen and Councilwoman have been elected to serve the community and cast votes on policies. He or she can abstain from voting, and it is usually for a reason citing a conflict. The decision to abstain can be stated, but it is not mandatory. If everyone on Jefferson Hills Council abstained from voting a quorum would not be achieved, and the Borough business would remain unfinished. Most of the in-attendance council voting members must be attained to pass a motion, resolution, and or an ordinance.

 Second, a question was asked by a resident, if a resident submits a letter to Council is it a public document? Whether a letter is marked confidential or not it can be referred to in conversation by Council members. Council members are individually responsible for the method and way they speak to residents. Council members who speak to residents in a discourteous and disrespectful manner impair effective communication. This point has been brought forth to Jefferson Hills Council before by residents who thought their messages were not received professionally. Although Jefferson Hills Council members may disagree with residents; civility and respect should be always displayed.

  At the last Jefferson Hills Council special meeting, Councilman Reynolds stated that JHFR had misappropriated funds. This reference to misappropriated funds was regarding how payments are made for the 2 persons shift crew. Chief Chalfant was not able to address this remark because the platform of Facebook Live does not permit access to the zoom meeting. Therefore, Chief Chalfant was not able to respond to this accusation, and he was not afforded his due process rights. For not asking to clarify the specific details of Councilman Reynolds’ comment during that time, I apologize to Chief Chalfant. As a result, I have authorized access to Fire Chiefs Chalfant, Withers, and Felix and EMS Chief Pascoe to all Jefferson Hills Council zoom meetings in order to answer any questions or remarks regarding the fire stations or EMS station. Also, in the future if other residents submit letters to Jefferson Hills Council and a Council member responds, he or she should also be permitted access to reply to a comment.

 At two previous regular Council meetings, Finance Director John Drager, was asked about allocation of funds in JHFR bank accounts. He stated that he felt that there was no misappropriation of funds. The procedure of payment for the 2 persons shift crew has been executed in the same manner since its inception approximately 20 years ago. Recently, the personnel committee approved Schneider Downs to conduct an internal review of all the fire companies financial accounts and documents. During this process, the payment for the 2 persons shift crew and other fire department banking processes can be evaluated. If any procedural errors for any fire departments have occurred, this is the vehicle that can bring the issues to light and provide possible remedies. Therefore, both the finance director, John Drager, and I have endorsed pursuing this internal review.

 A more detailed explanation of fire department shift crew should be clarified for all Jefferson Hills residents. The purpose of 2 person shift crew was first established to guarantee fire and rescue protection to all Jefferson Hills residents due to a lack of volunteers in the daylight work hours. Then, the 2 persons shift crew expanded to cover 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The 2 persons shift crew is a rotating roster of 20 to 25 individuals who are available to be scheduled. Each shift crew member has earned the certificate of Fire Fighter 1, and some have obtained Fire Fighter 2 certification. The 2 persons shift crew members must adhere to the safety requirements of the National Fire Protection Association. Previous councils strategically placed the shift crew at the 885 station because of volume of calls served and the station’s closest access to the Jefferson Hospital, TJ High School, Jefferson Elementary School, CCAC, several Jefferson Hills nursing homes, Rte.51 corridor, State Route 885, and the Rte. 43 state expressway.

 Each shift crew person is paid 12 dollars an hour. This is the same pay rate that Jefferson Hills Council pays for summer help for cutting grass and recreation helpers. Shift crew members receive a paycheck and a W-2 form that is prepared by a bookkeeping company paid for by JHFR. The total cost for the 2 persons shift crew for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year of guaranteed fire and rescue protection is $210,000. If Jefferson Hills taxpayers want more 2 persons shift crew added to other stations in the borough, to improve the fire and rescue protection of the entire community, then this cost needs to be added into upcoming budgets. Additional fire and rescue protection can be possibly implemented. However, plans for scheduling, payment of services, and use of facilities will have to be formulated. The cost will also be funded by taxpayers. The information for the entire fire protection budget and the entire Jefferson Hills Borough 2021 budget is posted on the Jefferson Hills website for your review.

 If there are any other questions or comments, that residents specifically want answered, please contact me at kbucy@jeffersonhills.com.

 Mr. Reynolds stated in reference to you singling me out saying that Mr. Chalfant did not have an opportunity to respond. Our dialogue went back and forth for 15 minutes talking about the misappropriation of funds.

Mrs. Bucy stated it was at the second meeting.

We had open dialog and I don’t know why you are singling me out in that situation.

 When you’re talking to Mr. Drager, he’s only looking if the funds are misallocated it’s not his responsibility once it’s in their hands. He was 100% correct, it was paid the why it should. My issues were what JFR did with the money after they received it.

5. Report from Borough Boards and Commissions

Rec Board representative, Rhianna Miller stated, what I’m proposing for consideration is a Jefferson local market night every Thursday from May 27th to July 29th from 5:00-8:00 p.m. Similar to a farmer’s market, we are looking to have 30 vendors spaced out to allow for social distancing. We are going to be charging $25 a table. If they sign up for the entire time, we are hoping to have them pay in full at $200. It will take place rain or shine. We have at least 10 vendors are already interested, but it’s hard to move forward with commitments until this is approved by Council. It will be located at 885 Park in the back fields by the stage where the Community Day is set up. During this time there would be baseball game allowing people to see the vendors and get more traffic. We would have to monitor the parking between the upper parking lot and along the road and the overflow parking behind the fire hall.

Mr. Reynolds stated I think this is fantastic idea but maybe we should handle the parking like Community Day and shut the parking off and only allow the vendors and handicapped go past the snack shack to protect the kids. It’s a huge concern and a big liability for the Borough.

Mrs. Steffey stated they will have a barricade preventing people to go past a certain spot

Mrs. Ruscitto stated this is a fantastic idea and all these little details can be worked out at some point.

Ms. Miller stated it is not like you are going to have 500 people at one time. They kind of sprinkle out because they know it is happening all summer.

The second one will depend on the guideline for COVID-19, we want a Friday night concert series on May 28th, June 25th and July 30th. From 7-10:00 p.m. For the first one we have the Steel Blossoms for May 28th. They are relatives of Jefferson Hills Lawn and will be sponsored by them. They are pretty well known. This will be their only Pittsburgh show they will be performing for. It would be free with 6-8 different food vendors.

Mr. Montgomery asked if they had insurance?

Mr. Stinner stated typically we get a daily rider for the day.

Greg Palmer & Tom Dugan discussed the new Code of Conduct for sports league and new software purchase for scheduling.

Mr. Dugan stated the Rec Board would like to introduce a new Code of Conduct for all youths’ organizations within the Borough. By agreeing and signing the Code of Conduct we would have a fair, safe and transparent relationship with the members in our community. It would also allow the Recreation board to have check and balances with various groups. We are asking that all the organizations read it, debate it and sign and agree to it to offer a better experience all around. This will go along with all permits given out.

Mrs. Steffey stated these two events just discussed are time sensitive to get it out and asked if these can be on the agenda for Monday.

Mr. Stinner stated he will be going over it tomorrow with Mr. Gabriel to make sure it’s sound. It will be amended and in included in your packet for Monday.

Michelle Zacur asked if we are ok with Community Day on June 12th.

Mr. Montgomery stated it depends on COVID.

Mr. Stinner stated they want to make sure they are ok moving forward in the direction to start planning it. We already had the fireworks moved to this year from last year.

Mrs. Steffey stated a lot of the vendors will have COVID-19 waivers as well as ours that we would have to look at. We are making sure there is a clause in any contract that we sign that this is up to the COVID regulations.

Mr. Stinner stated at the Rec Board meeting last night we discussed bylaws that would clearly define the discrimination between the recreation fund and the annual appropriation from the Borough budget.

Mrs. Ruscitto thanked the Rec Board for volunteering your time tonight. It’s helpful for you to come and tell us what is happening at the meeting. Helps with the transparency issues.

Mr. Stinner stated in council packets is a copy of the standard operating procedures for Boards and Commissions. They will be introduced to the other Boards and Commissions over the next month.

1. Borough Resident/Taxpayer Comments on Agenda Items

Mandy Kozlowski, 118 Hillview Rd, I want to keep this as short and to the point as I can.
As a tax paying resident of Jefferson Borough I just want adequate fire protection from a department close to my home. I really don't care what the station number is. I don't care what number is on the truck. I don't even care what they call themselves! I just want to be assured they will respond as quickly as possible, from the closest station with as many qualified fire fighters to put the fire out. I'm sorry if this sounds harsh, but quite frankly many of the residents are not interested about the firehall politics, we just want adequate fire protection right here in Gill Hall. So all I'm asking is that you ALL work together and figure this issue out now, not later. It's gone on for entirely too long already and we deserve adequate protection here, NOW.

Joy Mann, 2621 Ridge Road, to whom it may concern: As a resident of Jefferson Hills, I put my faith in my local elected officials to take my best interests into consideration when voting them into their position. I appreciate the time that they take away from their homes and families to serve the community to the best of their ability.

On Wednesday, January 20, 2021, I have never been so disappointed and disgusted to be a resident of this community. Borough Council members allowed fellow Councilman Keith Reynolds to baselessly attack our highly qualified and well-respected fire chief, Brian Chalfant, by implying that he had misappropriated funds for JHFR, without Chief Chalfant being on the meeting to defend himself or even comment against Councilman Reynolds’ words. It is clear that Councilman Reynolds had a motive attempt to defame Chief Chalfant’s character and reputation by implying that he was misappropriating Borough funds to the residents of Jefferson Hills to further his agenda for Gill Hall Volunteer Fire Company.

During the meeting on January 11, 2021, Councilman Reynolds had made the same accusation towards Chief Chalfant regarding the paid two-person shift crew and how Chief Chalfant pays them. Mr. Reynolds’ words proven inaccurate and incorrect not only by Chief Chalfant, but also by Finance Officer John Drager, who stated that Chief Chalfant was NOT misappropriating funds, but that it was a separate line item which had been discussed and was done per the Borough’s recommendation, NOT Chief Chalfant. This discussion went on for several minutes, so I would imagine when this was brought up yet AGAIN at the last meeting, everyone on council knew exactly what Councilman Reynolds was referring to.

Additionally, during the January 20, 2021 meeting, Councilman Reynolds also mentioned

“Chalfant’s wife (in reference to Kathy Kelley-Chalfant)” who had written to council with questions that she wanted to be answered from the point of view of a taxpaying resident of Jefferson Hills, NOT from the point of view of Chief Chalfant’s wife. He said this in a derogatory, discourteous, and highly unprofessional manner and neither Chief Chalfant or Kathy Kelley-Chalfant were permitted to join the call to speak on their own behalf. Councilwoman Ruscitto then condoned the behaviors of Councilman Reynolds by mentioning a separate instance where insults were thrown, an instance where all parties involved were present and permitted to speak. I am a resident of Jefferson Hills. My taxes spend the same as anyone else – the same as Councilman Reynolds. His behavior is abhorrent. His actions and words, meeting after meeting, do nothing but make our entire borough look like a circus. Is it appropriate for Councilman Reynolds to attack any resident in a public forum, with other residents watching, and not permit them to respond to his accusations? Is it fair for ANY resident to feel that if they speak up and voice concerns or opinions that they will then be attacked with no means to respond? How would any one of council feel if this attack was towards them? If this attack was towards your spouse? Your child? Your parent?

How many times has Councilman Reynolds made false statements to mislead the public? How many times has he been asked to apologize? He stated the Councilwoman Steffey has a conflict of interest in voting, even though Solicitor Gabriel has confirmed there is no conflict (5/11/20). He made accusations towards Councilman Sockman regarding a lawsuit that was dropped – Councilman Sockman, with candor and more respect than he was given, put out a request for Council to work together and not try to publicly shame others (6/8/20). In the meeting on

11/4/20, he was asked to apologize for his rude and incredibly out of line language to fellow Councilwoman Steffey, at which point he REFUSED TO DO. He characterized JHFR as “not a legitimate fire service”. The list goes on and on. At what point is this behavior no longer condoned by the other adult members of Council?

It is my personal opinion that the council owes both Chief Brian Chalfant and his wife, Kathy Kelley-Chalfant, an apology for allowing Councilman Reynolds to behave in the manner that he did, and I feel that Councilman Reynolds should directly address his behaviors and inappropriate actions towards these tax paying members of our community at the next meeting.

Mr. Reynolds stated this letter is misleading. The statement that I said JHFR is not a valid fire co was in reference to the legal side that all the paperwork was filed. Has the transmission been made officially? I was 100% accurate in making that statement. In terms of misappropriation of funds, I’m 100% accurate and proud to address what I see is wrong. Is the fire tax money being used to pay the shift crew? It’s only to be used for equipment and repairs. He was using some of that money to fund the shift crew then was reimbursed by the Borough and that was proven. They just turned in 7 months of invoices and it was used by fire tax money until they got it back. They didn’t turn in invoices for 7months tells you that people were receiving their paychecks and how was that done if they weren’t using the fire tax money. I was 100% and spot on with my assessment. I don’t feel I acted in any manner that I wouldn’t be proud of.

Ms. Mann stated so even though the whole discussion went round and round for 15-20 minutes, you found the need to bring it up again when he wasn’t on along with his wife as a taxpayer and you acted like he had the nerve to write a letter? You don’t think that’s disrespectful?

Mr. Reynolds stated, I will continue to bring up items that I see fit when I know it should be addressed. If I feel it needs to be discussed to protect the residents as a whole. Until we get to the bottom of it, I will continue to bring it up. For decades, Council has turned the tax money over to the fire dept with 0 accountability.

Ms. Manns asked what equipment did Gill Hall need if they are not even serving the community?

Mr. Reynolds stated that $20,000 was always given out to help the stations with their operations. To make sure they keep their heat and lights on to stay active. It’s our choice not to have them active. The fire that drives me is not for GHVC it’s for the residents of Gill Hall. I feel they should have adequate fire protection. We have not even come up for a solution. I keep voting for Gill Hall because I support them to protect the residents of that area.

Jefferson Hills Fire Rescue, Jefferson Hills stated, Council members and the residents of Jefferson Hills. We the members of Jefferson Hills Fire & Rescue (JHFR) are writing you to refute the statement made by Council member Keith Reynolds in public meetings held January 6th and January 20th. Council member Reynolds stated in both meetings that Chief Brian Chalfant "misappropriated public funds" concerning payments to the shift crew. Mr. Reynolds claim is completely false and offensive not only to Chief Chalfant but to our entire organization. We are writing to set the record straight. let us start with the Borough budget. The budget clearly outlines multiple line items within the fire budget. Line item 01-411-500 is the line item for the shift crew funding for 2020. The shift crew has been in place for nearly 2 decades and paid for from the Borough budget. Also, resolution 5 - 2019 and Ordinance 874 speak to various aspects of tax money distributions to the recognized fire departments. We have included a copy of the budget, ordinance, and resolution for your convenience. For Mr. Reynolds to make his slanderous and defamatory remarks speaks to either his lack of knowledge or utter disregard for the facts when it comes to budgetary items as well as resolutions and ordinances that pertain to the fire department.

Mr. Reynolds as well as all the incoming council members had an opportunity to reopen the budget in January 2020. This opportunity was to both educate themselves but also to make changes as they may have seen fit. They elected not to make any changes. So, after 12 months in office Mr. Reynolds has decided to resort to derogatory and slanderous statements regarding misappropriation of public funds while providing no evidence of such abuse. This clearly shows his lack of awareness when it comes to various facets the budgetary financial distributions, resolutions and ordinances. He makes his statement with no knowledge of which he speaks. Or is it that Mr. Reynolds doesn't care if what he says is correct and that the residents of our community will listen to his claims and accept them as fact. In the meeting January 6th Finance Officer Drager, explained to all of Council and those residents viewing that this wasn't "misappropriating public funds". He outlined the process for reimbursing JHFR for the shift crew so that all of Council understood the process as well as the residents viewing the meeting. But again Mr. Reynolds on January 20th makes the same false claim of funds being misappropriated. It is unacceptable for Mr. Reynolds to make these unfounded and slanderous statements about Chief Chalfant or any volunteer public servant. Mr. Reynolds should have immediately been held accountable and censured by the other 6 Council members on both occasions when he made this egregious and unsupported allegation. We would ask all that attend meetings either in person or watch the meetings online to listen to what Mr. Reynolds says with a very critical ear. We feel his desire to open the Gill Hall station trumps the truth and he will do and say things that foster his goal of opening Gill Hall despite the truth and facts.

We also are saddened and disappointed that not one member of Council spoke publicity to refute Mr. Reynolds claim of misappropriation of public funds after Finance Officer Drager's explanation. Or to ask Mr. Reynolds to retract his false claim and apologize in either meeting. Allowing Mr. Reynolds to make this false claim without a rebuttal from any member of Council may lend credence to his statement in some resident's minds. Even Mrs. Ruscitto who also wants Gill Hall opened no matter what their deficiencies and obstructionist ways didn't jump on with Mr. Reynolds as she knew what he was saying was false.

Mr. Reynolds, Mrs. Bucy and Mrs. Ruscitto all ran on the platform of common sense, civility, and collective cooperation for the benefit of the community. Mr. Reynolds if you have watched him in council meetings must have forgotten these points. Just one example would be the Oct. 12th meeting were Council President Bucy admonished Mr. Reynolds for his unprofessional behavior. See the attached election card.

As a footnote Mr. Reynolds for repeated violations to our bylaws was unanimously voted out and expelled from our organization in June 2020. During Mr. Reynolds time as a member of our organization he took no firefighting classes such as essentials, etc. nor did he work in any administrative capacity. This begs the question does he now have a vendetta against JHFR and will do what he can to harm our reputation and attack our members as he has done with Chief Chalfant. We raise this point as our concern is, he may work against our organization which could jeopardize a vital and critical component to public safety of our community.

There was discussion among the members of JHFR to just walk away. Our frustration concerning Mr. Reynolds and to some degree Mrs. Ruscitto has risen to a level of unacceptability. But our organization after further discussion couldn't just walk away leaving the residents of Jefferson Hills without our vital public safety service. Unlike the members of Gill Hall which hold ransom a station and hundreds of thousands of dollars of vehicles paid for from Borough taxpayer funds for their selfish motives we cannot do the same. We take great pride in our volunteer service to the community and get immense satisfaction in serving the residents of Jefferson Hills. So we are putting ourselves secondary for the greater good of the residents. But if we continue to be falsely attacked, we will discuss what options we may have.

We ask Borough council members to publicly challenge Mr. Reynolds when he makes false claims and not sit silent. We empathize with council members Bucy, Sockman, Ielease, Montgomery and Steffey who have to deal with Mr. Reynolds contrarian, disruptive and obstructionist ways and may have grown tired by them. We ask that the members of council request Mr. Reynolds retract his comments and offer a public apology to Chief Chalfant. Our organization needs not only councils support but that of the community. We pride ourselves on being better tomorrow than we are today as we spend countless hours of training, equipment maintenance, etc.

In closing our organization has delivered to council our financial statement for year 2020 as required by our bylaws. This will be an annual disclosure and what we believe to be the first ever by any of the fire companies in the history of Jefferson Hills. Our goal of transparency with regards to our finances is to show not only council members but the residents of Jefferson Hills how we spend taxpayer dollars. Respectfully the members of Jefferson Hills fire & rescue decided to resort to derogatory and slanderous statements regarding misappropriation of public funds while providing no evidence of such abuse. This clearly shows his lack of awareness when it comes to various facets the budgetary financial distributions, resolutions and ordinances. He makes his statement with no knowledge of which he speaks. Or is it that Mr. Reynolds doesn't care if what he says is correct and that the residents of our community will listen to his claims and accept them as fact. In the meeting January 6 Finance Officer Drager, explained to all of council and those residents viewing that this wasn't "misappropriating public funds". He outlined the process for reimbursing JHFR for the shift crew so that all of council understood the process as well as the residents viewing the meeting. But again Mr. Reynolds on January 20 makes the same false claim of funds being misappropriated. It is unacceptable for Mr. Reynolds to make these unfounded and slanderous statements about Chief Chalfant or any

Mr. Reynolds stated I defend my position and I have many of times. Maybe someone from JHFR can explain to us how they fund a program for 7 months if we didn’t pay them for 7 months. If the funds were used to fund a program and later refunded is a misuse of funds. I have a huge concern with how JHFR constantly represents Gill Hall and their assets being all paid for by taxpayers. Gill Hall has over 70 years of sweat equity into that building. They paid for that building, they raised money for it. That’s why we have no right to it. They discuss walking away in that letter. Do we really want one organization that keeps threatening to walk away? That is even more reason to have an independent like Gill Hall, so we have a backup.

Mrs. Bucy stated I have seen veterans that are missing limbs but the worse vets that I have seen are the one that have problems with their spirits. There are no prothesis for spirit. All these volunteer fire companies and at one point or another they have all had their spirits damaged. It’s not easy to maintain a Borough. I don’t want to see any volunteer not be rewarded for their service. The volunteers are paid nothing. They cost this borough nothing I don’t want to see volunteers have their spirts ripped out and run over repeatedly about them not serving their community well. They said they have a commitment to this Borough they want to stay strong and provide service to this Borough. Even our Council members have had their spirits mishandled at times by people and we are here to serve a purpose and they are too.

Mr. Sockman stated I want to echo statements regarding 885. I think they do a fantastic job and understand why they get frustrated. I just reviewed their monthly report along with Floreffe. They had 20 vehicle accidents, 6 smoke detectors, 5 fires, dispatched 11 times and cancelled, 2 power lines down and 1 gas leak. That’s a lot to answer in a month as a volunteer and to belittle them is ridiculous and deserve a tremendous amount of credit. I understand Gill Hall residents are upset and they have a right to be. But they should be upset with their own fire hall not us, because they are the ones who are preventing themselves from being open, not us.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated, I usually don’t say too much regarding the subject because I have a lot respect for 885. I think this would all be made a little simpler if we make Gill Hall was a part of the run cards and 885 would have the help they needed. I think a decision has to be made here shortly.

Mrs. Steffey stated, I think we missed the purpose of Miss Mann’s letter. I did speak up at that meeting to have Mr. Reynolds stop his remarks, so I do apologize on their behalf of Council. I don’t think it’s as difficult as everyone says it is, I think it’s simple. I want to challenge this Council. It’s been proven that we can’t make a decision. I think by Monday as a Council I think we need to either ask Gill Hall to merge and put them on the run cards and shut them down completely.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated I agree with you, we add them to the run cards and if they succeed, they succeed.

Mrs. Steffey stated I won’t vote unless they merge. Professionals have spoken and everything has pointed to having them merge. We are not professionals. They have all stated that the fire depts need to merge for the betterment of this community and the safety of these residents. This should be decided on by Monday so that everyone can have some peace and for us to move on and do some work for this community.

Mr. Reynolds stated once upon a time we heard from the DCED that told us that our area we should have five stations. Council has tried to destroy the spirit of Gill Hall. The report that Mr. Drager put out since 2017 to current JHFR has received $2,221,394 in support from us as a community and Gill Hall has received $65,515. I question how we are handling the spirit there and that report should be made open to the public. We should be treating people equal. One last thing, I never questioned JHFR’s ability and training. They are a very good organization.

1. Discussion to approve the monthly bills

Mr. Montgomery asked about the Wheeling & Lake Erie and Joyce Insurance bills.

Mr. Drager explained them.

1. Discussion to approve the monthly payroll
2. Discussion to approve minutes of agenda meeting January 6, 2021

Mr. Montgomery asked that Kevin King be listed instead of Chief Roach in the attendance.

1. Discussion to approve minutes of regular meeting January 11, 2021 and continued regular meeting on January 20, 2021.
2. Discussion to approve restructuring option through PFM Financial Advisors LLC on the 2016 G.O. Bonds Series of 2016 with a call date of August 2021

Zach Willard presented to the Council their options for refinancing the Bond.

1. Discussion of joining Clairton Municipal Authority (CMA) litigation with other members of upstream communities.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated she listened in on the open panel court regarding CMA and it was moved from Judge Connelly to Judge Christine Ward and nothing will be done until April 16th. I also wanted to discuss that Mr. Barnardo made a statement in that meeting that we are joining the lawsuit when we haven’t even voted on it. He is either not telling the truth or someone here told him we are when we haven’t discussed it. I would also like to bring up the fact that CMA’s Operational Manager, Brian Cycrus resigned today. $440,000 has been racked up in professional fees and I don’t feel we are in a position to be active on this.

Mr. Stinner stated Mr. Fraas is not on the call yet.

 Mrs. Bucy stated since Mr. Fraas is not present, we should wait until Monday to discuss that.

 Mr. Montgomery stated we should be in on the lawsuit, so we have a say so in this.

1. Discussion to ratify the access agreement between Hercules LLC and the Borough of Jefferson Hills

Solicitor Gabriel explained that this is regarding the DEP mandate to repair the sewer line that was ruptured on this site. It is an access agreement to allow us to make the necessary repairs and replace the temporary repairs.

1. Discussion to ratify Resolution 03-2021 to reappoint Daniel Chiacchia to the Borough of Jefferson Hills Zoning Hearing Board (Term ending 12/31/25)
2. Discussion to ratify Resolution 04-2021 to appoint Dean Collins to the Borough of Jefferson Hills Zoning Hearing Board, finishing the term for Beverly McConeghy (Term ending 12/31/24)
3. Discussion to appoint Kevin Polick the Environmental Advisory Council (Term ending 12/31/24)
4. Discussion of Borough of Jefferson Hills Code of Conduct Policy in relation to seasonal recreation permits
5. Discussion of sending air quality letter to the Allegheny County Health Department from the Borough of Jefferson Hills Environmental Advisory Council

Mr. Montgomery stated the biggest hang up is the Allegheny County Health Dept has not issued a permit. Once they issue the permit, US Steel can do the work. They should be asking them to issue the permit.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated, looking at the letter and talking to members on the board, the letter is just in the interest of the health and safety of the borough.

Mr. Montgomery stated he just wants them to start.

Mrs. Bucy asked Mr. Montgomery to email them and ask them if they would want to put in there what you want.

8:50 Kerry Fraas arrived. Item 12 was rediscussed

Mrs. Ruscitto stated she wanted to know if he was in attendance today in the open forum regarding CMA.

Mr. Fraas stated he was not.

Mrs. Ruscitto advised him of the switch of judges. She also stated Mr. Bernardo made a statement in that meeting that we are indeed joining forces with CMA and I wanted to know where that info came from. Was he speaking out of line or was told by someone?

Mr. Fraas stated he haven’t talked to anyone about this since the last meeting with Council.

1. Discussion of draft standard operating procedures (S.O.P.’s) for Borough Advisory Commissions, Boards, and Councils.
2. Discussion to create Ordinance for impact fees tied to real estate and other development in the Borough of Jefferson Hills.

Mr. Gabriel explained the Ordinance.

8:58 Mr. Sockman left meeting

 Mr. Montgomery asked what was the difference between transportation fee and recreational fee?

 Solicitor Gabriel explained the difference.

1. Motion to accept the proposal of Tri Star Motors in the amount of $39,998.00 to purchase one (1) 2021 Ford Explorer Police Interceptor utility AWD police vehicle under the SHACOG Purchasing Alliance Program

9:00 Mrs. Steffey left the meeting and Mr. Sockman returned.

1. Discussion to approve Application for Payment No. 1 from Allison Park Contractors, Inc. in the amount of $157,225 for work completed on the Waterman Road East Stabilization project

Mr. Montgomery asked if this project was done.

Mr. Glister stated the work is substantially complete. We are not closing contract yet, we still have some punch list items to go through.

9:01 Mrs. Steffey returned.

Mr. Montgomery asked if the road is paved?

Mr. Glister stated no not until end of March/April. Public Works put millings down and will maintain that the rest of the winter. Mr. Volpe asked about guide rails for that section also. They put blocks up to create a barrier in the meantime until the spring.

1. Discussion to approve the Work Authorization dated January 26, 2021 from Gateway Engineers, Inc. to assist the Borough with preparation of the specifications and bid package for the 2021 Paving Program in the amount not to exceed $3,000.00

Mr. Glister stated this is for the annual assistance we need for bid packages.

1. Discussion to approve the Work Authorization dated January 28, 2021 from Gateway Engineers, Inc. to provide the Borough with general Operations and Maintenance support for all 2021 Operation and Maintenance Projects in the amount not to exceed $12,000.00
2. Discussion to approve the Work Authorization dated January 28, 2021 from Gateway Engineers, Inc. to assist the Borough with surveying and preparation of an easement exhibit and legal descriptions for the relocated Jefferson Pointe Sanitary Sewer in the amount not to exceed $4,500.00

Mr. Glister stated, we fixed a problem that has been around for some time. We had a sewer line that broke and there was a temporary solution put in place at that time and we decided that we were able to complete the relocation of this line in house to avoid the grinder pump package that created the problem. Now we have to go back and do an easement. We already have an agreement in place with them. We just need to get a survey and establish the easement.

1. Discussion of Andrew Reilly Memorial Park ADA Upgrades – Phase 2 Bids (Bid opening at 11:00 a.m. on 1/29/2021, recommendation to be provided on 2/3/2021)

Mr. Glister stated this is held at SHACOG office, we are not the owner, SHACOG is. They handle the bidding process. We received a total of 4 bids and Swede Construction is the lowest bid for $45,275. This work is for Andrew Reilly Park ADA Phase 2 to install additional ADA parking, a crosswalk to get across the road by towards the concession stand and spectator viewing area and some additional concrete around the concession stand to make it more accessible. The initial grant we applied for was $46,275 and we were originally awarded $25,000, which is typical. But due to the Cares Act, we received full funding.

1. Discussion to approve paying off the remaining balance of Aerial latter truck (truck 180) in the amount of $54,962.92 and reallocating the approximate $1,100 back to the Fire Dept. budget

Mr. Drager explained the remaining payments will be drawn every month, but we could save on interest if we pay it off in full.

Mr. Reynolds applauded Mr. Drager for continuing saving the community money. In future before we make a decision it should be discussed by Council.

Mrs. Steffey stated that’s what we are doing.

Mr. Drager confirmed, it was not paid off yet, he is suggested we do to save on interest.

1. Motion to issue Request for Proposal (RFP) for security camera and access control system for Borough Municipal Complex

Mr. Stinner stated, initially went through RFP process and with each submission it was offered a complementary camera system to go along with the access points. So, we are taking both of the RFP’s and combining them and reissuing them.

1. Discussion to commence internal financial control review of Borough of Jefferson Hills Volunteer Fire Companies with Schneider Downs & Co. Inc.

Mr. Reynolds stated this is not an audit, in lieu of the fact of the concern about the money being allocated and used by the fire companies, I would be more in favor of an audit to make sure the tax money has been used correctly. I think our residents deserve more.

Mrs. Bucy stated the forensic audit you want would cost over $200,000. You haven’t even gone to step one yet. A forensic audit is when you are looking for criminal charges.

Mr. Drager explained the different funds and that different monies that are related have different controls that has to be put into place. In part what I believe what brought this up is, the monies allocated was allocated correctly into the truck account to make the truck payments. I don’t know where the financial controls are where they transfer money from different accounts. Snyder Downs will look into that. The money gets transferred to the truck account and it gets taken out automatically each month for the payments.

Mr. Chalfant stated JFR and EMS not JHFR are the co-owners of the vehicles and the shift crew. This goes a long way back that this was set-up, prior to me. As the president of JFR and EMS I welcome a forensic audit. The money is being spent for fire trucks and repairs of the apparatus only owned by JFR and EMS. We have a certified CPA that accounts for every penny. JHFR has not received $2,000,000 or whatever the report was given. Please make sure the correct names are used.

Mrs. Bucy asked if the Chief’s of the fire companies could meet with Mr. Drager and explain to him how this works? Mr. Chalfant stated there is no reason to have a meeting. It’s spelled out with the CPA on how the money is spent. The only thing we are paying off right now is the ladder truck. You can ask us to do that and we will do that, but it’s not necessary. If Mr. Reynolds wants, cut us one check for $210,000 and put it in the same account where the truck money goes, and you will have a check and balance. This works hand in hand with the Borough so we don’t leave them short.

Mr. Reynolds stated saying an audit would be $200,000 is unfair to the residents since we haven’t put it out for RFP and have no proof of the costs.

Mrs. Bucy stated she was given a ballpoint figure of the costs and that was what it is.

Mr. Reynolds stated if we don’t have a quote, we can’t put that number out there without it.

Mrs. Steffey stated they brought the information to the Council and the Council voted not to spend that kind of money on a five-year audit on the four companies.

Mr. Stinner stated if we don’t have any controls in place, what are we evaluating? The cash transactions are already audited, and their auditors are audited. The RFP’s we got for the Control reviews lists who audits them. Each one of the CPA’s for the firehalls are also audited. For $25,000 we establish controls and they follow them and then we have something to audit.

Mr. Reynolds stated if we spend a little bit of money to make sure the taxpayer’s money is properly used, is a good expense. There’s no proof of the costs.

Mr. Stinner stated originally there were four fire depts., at $10,000 per fire dept per year that’s where they are getting that costs figure.

Mr. Chalfant stated as President of JFR and EMS, I welcome a forensic audit. We have check and balances on how the money was distributed from the Borough Council. This Borough has only given each fire dept $20,000 each year to pay bills as we see fit.

1. Reports

Fire Chief:

Chief Chalfant – I want to clarify that I’m the Chief of JHFR and President of JFR and EMS.

EMS:

 Not present

Engineer Glister:

Nothing further to report

Consulting Engineer:

 Nothing further to report

Finance Officer/Treasurer:

Payroll report will be sent out tomorrow

Public Works Director:

 Nothing further to report

 Lt. King, Commander in Charge:

You will have my monthly for Monday’s meeting.

 Mayor Cmar:

Community Relations Coordinator, Grace Duda and I have been working to keep the public up to date with COVID vaccines on the website. I recommend everyone to talk to your doctors and pharmacists about it.

Thanked Mr. Volpe and Road crew on snowstorm this week.

Borough Manager:

Nothing further to report

Solicitor:

 Stated Borough for filled its duty and filed a brief with the Commonwealth Court in the AUUE Case. Judge James decision was upheld in the Common Pleas Court.

 Council met in Executive session to discuss personnel issues.

1. General Business

Mrs. Steffey stated:

She shared on the Recreational page and her Council page about Gill Hall having soup sale Feb 6th.

LT King, Mr. Volpe and Mr. Glister, there are lots and lots of accident on Rt. 885. Do you have any contact with PennDOT I can make to try to get remediation over there? Any suggestions you can forward to me would be appreciated.

Reiterate my challenge to Council for this Monday. There are three options we can look into or prepare for on Monday, 1) Vote to raise taxes to assign two shift crews and Foreffe as well; 2) Gill Hall be added to run cards; 3) That Gill Hall merge or if they don’t want too funding stops. And we move to getting a temporary firehouse structure. Let’s get this done on Monday

Mr. Montgomery stated:

SHACOG met for first item via zoom last month. Annual dinner is set for October 12, 2021. Police Chief met via zoom, Fire Chief’s did not. They are having training this January.

Police cars and passenger cars were put out to bid. Rock salt has increased from $78.82 a ton to $79.29 a ton and will be exercising a third-year option. Garbage volume increased due to COVID.

Waiting on a resp from dep for MS4 requirements. CDBG 45 complete. CDBG 46 all bids have been accepted except demo bids. CDBG 47 for 2021-22 is going slowly due to COVID. Golf outing is in mid-July. Reilly park ADA upgrade only cost $1,134. 40 with Cares Act.

Allegheny League of Municipalities training will be held June 18th & 19th.

Mrs. Ielase

not present

Mr. Reynolds stated

I ask that we add to the agenda that we activate Gill Hall as station 179 as an independent fire hall at the beginning of the agenda not the end. Let’s get this done.

In future I will ask Mrs. Steffey not to speak on my behalf if I choose to offer an apology I would do it myself.

Mrs. Steffey apologized.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated

Thanked the Rec Board for coming out tonight and updating the Council and residents. Hopefully we can get all our Boards and commission here to do the same.

Mr. Volpe, thank you and your guys, the County can take lessons from you on how to clean up the roads around here.

I would also like to thank Jan Reschenthaler and David Graffam for your service over the years. You will be missed.

I wish our new direct well in her new role.

Mr. Sockman stated

I would like to thank Mr. Volpe and his crew for all their work this winter.

Thanks to Floreffe & 885. I reviewed January report and 45 % are motor vehicle accidents on Route 885 and Route 51.

My apologies Chief Chalfant and his wife for the verbal abuse you have endured. I will speak up from now on.

I think the money we received from the County to do their roads is well worth it for the safety of our community, even if we went over that amount.

Mrs. Busy stated

A special thank you to police EMS and fire first responders. Extra cleaning and supervising along the way to keep everyone safe. I would also like to say when this is finally over, we would like to have something to show our appreciation for all these people.

I am in agreement with Mrs. Steffey that a decision needs to be made. I would like to have my tax dollars go for a shift crew then an audit. I know for a fact that I have spoken with many members of JHFR and anything that we can do in this community to improve the fire and rescue component he was in favor of. There is a lot to consider and shouldn’t be taken lightly. I read that Cancer for fire fighters due to materials due to what they breath in is very high and we should be grateful for their service.

ADJOURNMENT:

President Bucy at 10:02 p.m. adjourned the meeting on motion by Mrs. Ruscitto, seconded by Mr. Sockman and carried unanimously.

Executive Session:*Personnel, Lawfully Privileged/Confidential, Public Safety Preparedness, Litigation (Jefferson Estates Homeowners Association v. Zokaites Properties et al., Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Docket No. GD-17-011526; Peters Creek Sanitary Authority, et al. v. Clairton Municipal Authority, Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, GD-17-017711; AUUE, Inc. v. Borough of Jefferson Hills Zoning Hearing Board, Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County Appeal No. 871CD 2020, SA-19-000748;* *PICCO Superfund site- potential litigation involving WESA and Ashland.*

John P. Stinner

Secretary/Borough Manager