

The regular meeting of Council was called to order by President Steffey at 7:03 p.m. in the Municipal Centers, 925 Old Clairton Road. Council Members Bucy, Vice President Budd, Lynch, Montgomery, Ruscitto, President Steffey, and Mayor McCaffrey answered to roll call. Borough Manager Stinner, Finance Officer Drager, Solicitor Gabriel, Chief Dziezgowski, Engineer Glistler, Public Works Director Volpe, and Planner Easton were also present. Consulting Engineer Minsterman was absent.

#### REPORT FROM BOROUGH BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Tom Dugan, Recreation Board, stated we are here for a couple of different reasons. Number one, to give Council an update on the activities that we are doing. Hopefully, if you've driven around the Borough, you've seen a big black and gold banner that's laying out the activities we have for the summer. The first event was our fish day. That was really successful. I think the kids had a fun time, as did the adults. We have a concert in the park on August 17th. It's an '80s band. There's the Memorial Day Service, which isn't the Rec Board, but that's still a big event in the community. There is much more.

Second, we wanted to weigh in briefly on agenda item number 24, the potential purchase of a dek hockey facility as an expanded recreation facility for the Borough. As the Rec Board, we try to give guidance to Council on all things recreation. We all met last evening, and we feel that it's something that would have a positive impact for the community. The comprehensive plan survey results came out. We had a lot of good results. Two-thirds of the results favored expansion of recreation facilities and activities. Less than 20% of the results did not favor Rec. With a lot of young families in this community we need more recreation. It's a problem, but it's a good problem to have. It also backs up what we're seeing in census. We've seen a 15% growth in the community over the last decade from the last census. I would imagine with all the trucks I see taking dirt out of this place that it's only going to continue to grow. Most of these houses are young people with families and people that want recreation. I'm going to turn it over to my colleague Blane Allan, who has a ton of experience in commercial real estate.

Blane Allan, Recreation Board, stated without the benefit of being able to research the dek hockey issue in depth, its asking price is around half a million dollars and a replacement cost of the decking alone is close to a million dollars. When you talk about value in commercial real estate, you're not only talking about the value to the community, but also the value of the building. This is an acquisition that it would seem we would be hard-pressed to lose money on if we could pick it up at a price near half a million dollars. Tom could enlighten us more on some of the ideas for expanding the facility and its varied uses for the community from a recreation perspective. The gross income over the past five years has been over \$120,000.00. The NOI, the Net Operating Income, will be slightly off of that.

Mr. Dugan stated that as we try to expand recreation facilities and activities, it seems like there's enough land there to do other things. Maybe it's additional pickleball courts, walking trails, or bike trails. Right now, it's currently just dek hockey. I don't know a lot about dek hockey. But they have 21 leagues. It's very popular. It is something that could be really neat for the community to take over. Maybe it funds itself for future expansion. First off, I think it's a fantastic price. They always say God is not making any more land. What else can we do that the community wants? It gives us some flexibility to address that. On behalf of the Rec Board, we voted in support of the Borough moving forward with that purchase.

Mrs. Steffey stated our planner, Ms. Easton, is in the back. Would you mind taking a few minutes to go over the results from the survey within the community?

Jenni Easton, Borough Planner, stated for the benefit of this evening's discussion, I can offer a little more insight on the survey results for the comprehensive plan. As part of the Borough's new long-range planning document for the next 10 years, we issued and heavily promoted a community questionnaire last summer with an aim on collecting input on the Borough's best possible future from as many residents as possible. The questionnaire was available both online and in hard copy in various locations. Every household in the Borough received a postcard encouraging participation. Through the participation of staff and elected officials in our Project Steering Committee, we promoted the questionnaire in a variety of ways: multiple features in the local magazine, pushes on social media and through email blasts, posters everywhere we could put them, appearances at community day, summer concerts, and some other events. Our methodology was not designed to yield a scientifically valid sample. It was designed to give everybody the chance to participate. That said, we recorded over 1,200 responses to the questionnaire, which equates to about 10% of the total Borough population, or 25% of households. If this were a scientific sample, it would be roughly double the sample size needed to have a 99% confidence level at a 5% margin of error. All of that is to say this is a recent data source and a rich data source for public opinion across the Borough on priorities for the next decade.

We asked, "On a scale of one to five, how important to you are the following issues to Jefferson Hills Borough as we move forward?" We had a long list of issues that our Steering Committee identified might be important to people. Nearly two-thirds or 64% of those who responded ranked expansion of recreation facilities such as playgrounds or sports fields as a four or a five out of five, with five being very important. By contrast, only 17% ranked that issue a one or a two, with one being not important. This issue was among the five highest-ranking issues to the community in terms of importance. We also asked, "What three things would you like to see change in our community during the next 10 years?" We received over 2,200 individual comments on that question, which allowed more than one response. Of these, 24% pertained to recreation facilities, amenities, and programs. It was the most popular category, the most common thing that people asked for. Most responses suggested specific amenities, a recreation community center, a pool, a spray park, an ice rink, walking or biking trails, specific recreation amenities. There were also requests overall for more activities and events for people of all ages. We also asked, "What three things does our community do best?" Of those responses, 18%, pertained to recreation and community programming. That was the second most popular category after public safety. Responses highlighted the quality of the existing community events and activities as well as the library. Our comprehensive plan committee selected recreation facilities and programming as a key issue for the next decade due to the importance of that topic to survey takers as well as everybody who provided interviews or participated in focus groups during that first phase of the comprehensive plan.

More broadly, I should note that my firm, Pashek MTR, specializes in recreation planning. We're one of the few firms in western Pennsylvania that has full-time parks and recreation professionals certified on staff. Across the many municipalities where we work, we've seen a tremendous uptick in demand, especially after the pandemic, for time and space to gather outdoors. Trails, parks, and recreation spaces are platforms for community that seem to be increasingly important to people. Third, spaces that are not home, work, or school where people can gather and spend time together. We nearly universally see rising demand for those types of facilities in our communities.

#### BOROUGH RESIDENT/TAXPAYER COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Stinner read an email from Eric Lauver, 6013 Independence Drive. ""Members of Council, I am writing to express my concern regarding the authorization to purchase a dek hockey facility at a cost not to exceed \$500,000.00. In a growing community, we have significant challenges, not least of which is infrastructure that is not attended to. The \$500,000.00 would be better spent on paving streets or public safety than on a single facility. When the last community center survey came out, residents indicated a lack of such a facility was not a key concern particularly. It would divert taxpayer money away from other needed Borough services. Once again, it is important that the Borough consider the immediate needs of its residents over things that are wants. I urge Council to look again at reallocating funds towards the paving budget or public safety."

Mr. Stinner read an email from Lauryn Sacha, 1089 Antler Drive. "I'm writing about the possible purchase of South Hills Dek Hockey that is under discussion. I understand that the purchase price may be approaching \$500,000.00 with a possible revenue of \$80-100,000.00 per year. I find this to be an inappropriate use of borough funds and would be strongly against this purchase. While this may be a popular venue, there are multiple other dek hockey rinks in our area that are free to use. Why would Borough residents pay to use this one instead? If the revenue is expected to be \$80-100,000.00, what are the profits? How much will the borough have to spend in salaries (already our largest expenditure) and insurance costs? Finally, while our Borough does in fact need more recreational opportunities, this venue does not have the available space or resources to provide any additional activities without another huge cost to prepare the site. I find this whole project to be inappropriate and a terrible use of borough funds. Use that money to expand Lobb's park or add/replace equipment at Gill Hall. There are better ways to improve our opportunities that do not require spending hundreds of thousands of dollars for a hopeful return on investment."

Mr. Stinner read an email from Chris Kolling, 352 Christine Lane. "Will Council be able to answer these questions at tonight's meeting? Can we determine the field not playable no earlier than 4:00 p.m. on the day of? Number two, what is the process for field management by Public Works? Three, what is the budget for getting the field ready for play, quick dry? Does TJYBB contribute funds to this? Number four, with games and practices being canceled and the need for makeup games, can youth baseball utilize other fields in the community, i.e., Beedle Park, or work with the school district to utilize their fields?"

Mrs. Steffey stated I know there have been some issues with baseball fields lately with weather, there is a meeting scheduled between Public Works, TJYBB, the Recreation Board, and Mr. Stinner to discuss some solutions on how to maintain or help each other out with getting the fields prepared after three or four days of rain. That is really all that we can answer right now.

Lindsay Orlando, 122 Neilson Drive, stated as a resident of the Borough and an appointed member of the Steering Committee, I am in favor of the Borough considering the purchase of South Hills Dek Hockey. We have held several meetings. The Steering Committee, with the guidance of Jenni Easton, have heard over and over that there is need for recreation and business in the Borough. They have hosted events, sent out surveys, emails, flyers, you name it. The main thing that people say is "Recreation and more business." This purchase is a starting point to cover both of those points. It's certainly much less expensive than starting something from scratch. There are tons of families that use the South Hills Dek Hockey facility, both in and outside of the Borough. As a parent who has spent a fortune for my children to participate in organized sports, I am well aware of the money-making potential this facility can be, especially if operated on a full-time basis. I think it's an awesome idea and a step in the right direction. Our Borough is growing at an unprecedented rate with families that have children. We need to have

amenities to keep those families here. I trust our council members who have toured this facility and have looked at this purchase from different angles to be sure that they are keeping the residents in the Borough as a whole at the forefront of this decision. I unequivocally believe that they are.

Joy Mann, 2621 Ridge Road, stated this is regarding the motion to authorize negotiations to purchase South Hills Dek Hockey. Several residents have messaged not all in the Borough to me, saying how important it is for their children and how much potential the business actually has. I've never used the facility. A lot of them have used it since their kids were little. They all agree that it has a ton of potential. As a member of the Steering Committee, we hear over and over about how people want more recreation and more businesses, particularly for kids and teenagers. Families are moving in our Borough and building all of these houses. According to the US Census Bureau from 2021, and I apologize because that's the latest data that they have available, the Borough population is made up of 19.6% under 18 years of age, 22.9% over 65, and the remaining 57.5% being the in-between of 18 to 65. South Hills Dek Hockey has leagues for individuals ranging from age four to adults, which likely allows for over 50% of the Borough residents to be served by this facility if they would choose to. Dek hockey isn't for everyone, obviously. But looking at the statistics, that is the capability of this purchase. That is only within our Borough, not the surrounding area. I think it's important for residents to understand that this motion is merely an authorization to begin negotiation to purchase the business and is in no way final. I also trust a majority of our Council to do their due diligence before entering into any type of agreement because all of the members of our Council are also residents of the Borough. I think that Borough residents must also understand that it isn't just about dek hockey. The facility has the capability of renting out their facilities for parties or for practices. Just this weekend, I was at a club volleyball tournament in a huge facility that used dek hockey for a volleyball court. There are a million different reasons to purchase this.

#### AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Montgomery moved to approve the monthly bills, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Budd moved to approve the monthly payroll, seconded by Mrs. Ruscitto, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Bucy moved to approve minutes of agenda meeting April 5, 2023, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Budd moved to approve minutes of regular meeting April 10, 2023, seconded by Mrs. Bucy, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Bucy moved to approve minutes of public hearing September 12, 2022, seconded by Mrs. Ruscitto, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Budd moved to approve minutes of public hearing December 12, 2022, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Bucy moved to approve minutes of public hearing April 10, 2023, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Budd moved to table the presentation of the 2021 Audit by Steven Niedenberger, CPA, Hosack, Specht, Muetzel, and Wood, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Christopher Hardin, Manager-Air Environmental Affairs, U.S. Steel, gave a presentation regarding Environmental and Regulatory Compliance in the surrounding region.

Mr. Hardin stated I've been working with US Steel for almost 17 years now. I worked at the Edgar Thomson Plant and both the Clairton plants here in the Mon Valley in the Operation and Maintenance Department. I'm currently working in the Environmental Affairs Department out of headquarters for the past eight years now. I want to thank you for letting a US Steel representative come here tonight and talk to you about some of the environmental work that has taken place and some of the requirements that we are also applicable to and where things are from an environmental summary perspective. There are many men and women out there that put a lot of time and effort into this. Tonight, is a summary of that. If there's more information or questions that you have, I handed out my card to you. Please feel free to reach out to me. In addition to the slides, I did also hand out a document to the committee here that's titled Made in Pennsylvania. This has some information related to the US Steel impact within the Mon Valley works, as well as Pennsylvania. I would appreciate it if you could take a look at that.

We'll go over a few of the items that are on the slides that we handed out. First one being what's called Environmental Management System, or ISO 14001. Each of our three facilities, Clairton, the Irvin Plant, and the Edgar Thompson Plant are all ISO 14001 Certified. We do have internal and external audits to continue that certification annually. It is a system that basically manages our environmental performance and procedures. It has checks and balances within our system to make sure that we're doing what we say we're going to be doing. There is also a QR code that will take you to a Clairton Operations and Environmental Report from 2022. I would suggest if you have time and are interested, please take a look at that report. There's a lot of information in there as far as the safety commitment, environmental commitment, and a lot of details in there about the operations at the plant. Also included towards the back of that report is some information on the community projects that we've worked on here in the Mon Valley. I think some of that information would be useful.

We did want to note that environmental excellence is a core value at US Steel. We continue to work to achieve 100% compliance. We know we're not perfect. But we are striving to be 100% in compliance with all federal, state, and local agency regulations to protect the environment. US Steel is subject to some of the most stringent rules and regulations. That includes a litany of emission limit standards, different monitoring, reporting, work practices, and air pollution control equipment requirements as well. We are monitored at the Clairton plant seven days a week. We have inspectors from the Allegheny County Health Department there, as well as a third-party contractor that works for Allegheny County Health Department. We have them there seven days a week.

One other item to note here is the progress that the county has made as it's associated with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. These standards are determined by the EPA to be protective of human health and environment. For the first time ever Allegheny County has been able to show the attainment with all monitors to the NAAQS standards. Those pollutants of concern related to the NAAQS are PM2.5, PM10, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxides, ozone, and lead. The monitor showed attainment. The next step in the process is for EPA to make an attainment redesignation. The Allegheny County Health Department takes the lead on that. The first step in the process is the monitors have to show attainment, which they did for PM2.5 here recently. What ACHD does next is they submit

a clean data determination for PM2.5 that's submitted to the EPA for approval. EPA has issued a clean data determination for Allegheny County. The other pollutant here recently, SO<sub>2</sub>, has also attained the SO<sub>2</sub> standards for three consecutive years. As ACHD has noted publicly that they are working on the next step in redesignation, which is for EPA to issue a clean data determination for SO<sub>2</sub>.

The county executive, Rich Fitzgerald, whose term is ending later this year. He has been in office for 12 years. He issued a press release noting that in the 12 years that he's been in office, the fine particulate pollution has decreased approximately 32% at the Liberty Monitor. He notes here that it's quite an accomplishment. Its largest decreases anywhere in the country. At the bottom of the slide there, there's some information on the monitors with Allegheny County related to PM2.5.

Moving on to benzene. What is benzene? Where does it come from? Benzene is a colorless, flammable liquid with a sweet odor. It quickly evaporates. It is formed from both natural processes and human activity. Not only does it come from industry, but it can also be found from emissions from forest fires, volcanoes, gasoline stations, et cetera. It is widely used in the United States and ranks in the top 20 produced chemicals. We did also want to make the committee aware that ACHD does monitor benzene at the Liberty Monitor and has been doing so for many years. A note here, we have data for 2021, 2022 data is not yet available from Allegheny County Health Department. But once it is, we'll review that.

Mrs. Ruscitto asked will you be able to provide us with that data.

Mr. Hardin responded yes; we can do that.

Mrs. Ruscitto asked is it fence line monitoring?

Mr. Hardin responded no. Allegheny County Health Department has a monitoring station. We call it the Liberty Monitor as identified in their documentation. It's at South Allegheny High School.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated I am curious as to why there is no fence line monitoring when all other refineries in the nation are required to have fence line monitoring.

Mr. Don German, Plant Manager, U.S. Steel, stated the U.S. Steel plant is not a refinery. The EPA came in two weeks ago and did fence line monitoring. They found no signs of benzene. No signs of SO<sub>2</sub> around our fence.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated on that particular day.

Mr. German stated they do an audit. Allegheny County has these monitors at these locations. The monitors calibrated constantly. That's what they use on a daily basis.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated I have a benzene monitor at my own home through Carnegie Mellon. I live in Jefferson. I have benzene numbers that are beyond limits at times. Benzene is carcinogenic. It is not really good for you. It is coming into Jefferson Borough.

Mr. German stated as long as you can show me that you're calibrating your monitor and doing those same things. If you look from the wind side of it, most of the prevailing winds, 95% of the time, are away from Jefferson Hills, not towards Jefferson.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated on those inversion days, however, I will respectfully agree to disagree.

Mr. German asked what are the measurements? Because for OSHA, it is thirty-two hundred micrograms per meters cubed..

Mrs. Ruscitto stated I will be glad to give them to you when we are done.

Mr. German stated I would like to see them because all the metering at South Allegheny does not even come close to that. For OSHA it is 3,200, you have to be at that level for a period of time. There is no way that you are at that level at your house.

Mrs. Ruscitto asked do you think that US Steel would support a robust inspection for such numbers that we need?

Mr. German responded we would have to talk to our law office. Allegheny County is most stringent county in the nation, other than Orange County, California. Their numbers are already safe.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated what about the fines to US Steel.

Mr. German stated that is not benzene.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated I am talking about all the air that we breathe from the coke works.

Mr. German stated check the eagles that live on plant property. Eagles choose to live with the pristine air and pristine water. Yet, they live on my plant property. They have been there for 13 years.

Mr. Hardin stated we were talking about the Liberty Monitor for benzene that ACHD maintains. There are some other numbers out there. The US Department of Health and Human Services, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has a reference concentration of benzene of 29 micrograms per meters cubed. OSHA also has a benzene standard that is to make sure that our employees are safe. That value is approximately 3,200 micrograms per meters cubed. We are still doing some research into why there's such a large discrepancy there. The other note here on the next slide relates to the various federal regulations that US Steel Clairton Plant is applicable to.

There are seven different NESHAP. NESHAP is a National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants. Benzene is a hazardous air pollutant. Subparts L and V here of Part 61 have a program within those regulations that's called the Leak Detection and Repair Program, where Clairton is required to monitor and maintain equipment where they go out and do this air sampling and testing and make repairs. We are aware of the Environmental Integrity Project and the information that you have at your facility. To our knowledge, it is a two-week sample period at various local residents. To date, as far as we know, none of the data has exceeded 29 micrograms per cubic meters. If that's different, you can just please share that with us. We'd be more than welcome to work with you and review anything, provide data, et cetera.

US Steel is ongoing continuous improvement to the environment. We are currently not out of compliance with any of the federal regulations. We're 100% in compliance with the federal regulations on that previous slide. We are collaboratively working with the EPA now on a review of regulations at the Clairton plant. We do have the environmental management systems that we maintain and get certified annually at our three facilities.

Mrs. Ruscitto asked do you think that the company would agree to discuss fence line monitoring? Not just for us here, but also for the safety of your employees too?

Mr. Hardin stated OSHA is the employee standard.

Mr. Lynch stated thank you for coming in. Last month, when Lisa Marcucci came in with her presentation, she was kind enough to also present this also to our EAC. I was wondering if you guys are open for the same thing. This way we can compare their data with your data.

Mr. Hardin stated yes, we will reach out to our senior staff to arrange that.

Mr. German stated for the record, my name is Don German. My residence is in Jefferson Hills, 3024 Shady Timber Lane. I have been living here for 23 years, and I've been working for US Steel for 33 years.

Mrs. Budd moved to hire Garrett Patterson for the Park Laborer position in the Borough of Jefferson Hills Public Works Department, seconded by Mrs. Ruscitto, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lynch moved to advertise one seat on the Environmental Advisory Council expiring December 31, 2023, seconded by Mrs. Ruscitto, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Steffey called for a motion to award the Borough of Jefferson Hills municipal trash and sewer payment processing and bill collection services contract to \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Drager stated the two bids, the Legal Tax and Jordan Tax Service, were slightly different. The way they bill is a little bit different as well. Legal Tax has a lot more things that they bill for. I did not come out that much higher. But it was a little bit higher.

Mr. Montgomery stated I want everybody to hear what your analysis is because they are so similar. One has a little better service. The other one is less costly. So that is a bit of a quandary when picking a service.

Mrs. Budd asked do you think that the one has better service for residents and the staff?

Mr. Drager stated they all do the same stuff. Legal Tax seemed like it was a little bit more elaborate. I worked a little bit more with Legal Tax than I did with Jordan Tax, trying to understand everything that they put forward in the proposal. Legal Tax spent a lot more time with me and kind of held my hand, to learn this process. In the proposal, Jordan's Tax was a little bit more straightforward, a little bit easier to understand. For me, it was a lot easier to pick up the proposal from Jordan Tax and understand it.

Mrs. Budd moved to award the Borough of Jefferson Hills municipal trash and sewer payment processing and bill collection services contract to Legal Tax Services, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Steffey stated this is to replace PAMS.

Mr. Montgomery moved to award the Borough of Jefferson Hills pension investment services contract to PNC Institutional Asset Management, seconded by Mrs. Bucy, and carried unanimously.



Mrs. Bucy moved to advertise Request for Proposal (RFP) for the purpose of designing a new website for the Borough of Jefferson Hills, seconded by Mrs. Budd, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Montgomery moved to approve Amendment to Articles of Agreement with Cargill, Inc. extending the rock salt agreement six months and providing a storage option of \$10.00 per ton after December 31, 2023, seconded by Mr. Lynch.

Mrs. Steffey stated since we just recently added this to the agenda. This is just to move our date back. The way I am reading this, it said the initial term of the contract ended June 30th, 2023. Due to the mild winter, we did not need to purchase as much. This is extending it by six months from July 1st to December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Montgomery stated they are going to allow us to store the salt we never used at no charge till the end of the year. At that point, if we still have salt there, we'll pay \$10 a ton storage.

After discussion, motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Budd moved to renew facility use agreement with the American Red Cross authorizing the Borough Administration Building as an Emergency Rescue Shelter, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Budd moved to adopt Resolution No. 13-2023 authorizing the Borough of Jefferson Hills to enter into the Settlement Agreements with McKesson Corporation, Cardinal Health, Inc., AmerisourceBergen Corporation, Johnson & Johnson, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and Janssen Pharmaceutica, Inc., and Agree to the terms of the Pennsylvania Opioid Misuse and Addiction Abatement Trust, seconded by Mrs. Ruscitto, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lynch moved to adopt Ordinance No. 899 amending the Jefferson Hills Borough Ordinances No. 744 and No. 844 governing Public Parks to provide for uniform hours of operation and lighting requirements, seconded by Mrs. Bucy, and carried unanimously.

Mrs. Budd moved to authorize negotiations to purchase South Hills Dek Hockey for an amount not to exceed \$500,000.00, seconded by Mr. Lynch.

Mrs. Steffey asked Mr. Glister, our Borough engineer there have been some questions from the residents about our parks that we have already here within the Borough. Are there any options to expand any of our existing parks?

Mr. Glister asked to account for a facility like the dek hockey rink?

Mrs. Budd clarified can we purchase or expand within the bounds of what we have?

Mrs. Steffey stated let's say we wanted to add two more pickleball courts, or a couple of basketball courts.

Mr. Glister stated we are fairly limited. We have the master plan for Beedle Park. But that will be years before we ever build that out. A lot of that work requires extensive earthwork. Space that is readily available is fairly limited.

Mrs. Steffey stated Beedle Park requires extensive earthwork. Just as you had said, there would need to be some earthwork done over at the deck hockey facility as well. What if we wanted to put in walking trails or a bike trail?

Mr. Glister stated to create additional usable space, there would be a lot of earthwork necessary over there as well.

Mrs. Steffey stated over the weekend I read some comments from residents that were saying that this is not adding any free recreation to our community. It did get me thinking, I do not see any reason the deck hockey rink could not be open to the public during the day for free, just like the rest of our parks are. That would be adding free recreation if anyone disagrees with me. We heard Ms. Mann speak about volleyball being utilized on the deck hockey courts. This can be a potential third site for our summer recreation camps, which sold out within 29 minutes of opening those up to our youngsters. I think there is a lot of potential for this. But we did not ask that question to Mr. Glister about our existing parks in the past meeting. I wanted to make sure that we definitely brought that to the surface as well.

Mrs. Budd stated we have already spoken tonight to the current survey and comprehensive plan and what is wanted. We can also go back to the 2010 comprehensive plan where I do not see much that was really accomplished from that to begin with. It is just kind of sitting there. For 13 years now we have had people asking for an increase in recreation. Can we really expand and diversify recreation in the parks we currently have without acquiring surrounding real estate or preserving some of the surrounding woods and green spaces, which is also important to people? Does not seem that way to me when you look at them. My family moved here in July of 1984. What has changed in 38 years? There has been much improvement in our public safety and public works. They are the forefront of any community. The schools have been improved and grown. There is an increase in traffic. Summer rec has just blown up crazy. When I was a kid it was two weeks at GBU. It has grown considerably since then. One thing that has not really changed is our recreation facilities. We have the same exact parks. Granted, they have vastly improved since I was a kid, but they have not changed. They are in the same exact places. We do have a very vibrant Rec committee. The programs that you guys are doing are amazing and draw the community in. Thank you for that.

We have a high school hockey team that is constantly in contention for the state championship. I talked to a couple of the players or the players' parents over the weekend. And one of the things I was surprised to find out in shock was that ice time is \$525.00 an hour. Parents are paying up the \$2,500.00 just for ice time for their kids. Not everybody can afford that. There are a lot of kids that want to play hockey, want to be involved in sports. Dek hockey is a more affordable recreation opportunity to get involved in. For TJ Hockey, they had 43 kids try out for 18 spots and have 70 new kids in the Little Jaguar's hockey program. Again, there are a lot of kids that can't do this. They should be afforded the opportunity for dek hockey. The term recreation is often used interchangeably with sports, as I have done. We do have a senior population here that wants a fair share of their own recreation opportunities as well. Since the library has been able to hire a children's librarian, this is going to free up one of our other librarians who has a background in senior services. The idea behind this is to increase senior programming within our Borough in a couple of ways through more recreational-type opportunities and in ways to help

seniors take advantage of programs that are out there and available, including low-income seniors on fixed incomes. I did talk to our librarian about some of the ideas that I talked to a woman over the weekend about. With our librarian's encouragement, she asked anybody that has ideas for programs for seniors specifically to come to the library with those ideas. We are told overwhelmingly that the majority of our Borough wants recreation. The concern of the ways that we can help low-income seniors is absolutely not lost on me, and something I want to investigate and see if anything we can do here in the Borough.

Mrs. Steffey stated if this was to become a purchase of the Borough in the future, it would be susceptible to a grant writing. It has nothing to do with whether or not it would be run as a business by the Borough.

Mrs. Bucy stated this is a very important step and a consideration. The asking amount is \$500,000.00. That does not mean that we would be offering that amount. Recently, I had asked the owner about the hours of operations. He proceeded to tell us. We would have to have somebody there managing this. That is approximately 30 hours per week. We would probably be paying somebody a minimum of \$20.00 an hour to work there. So that's \$24,400.00 a year. His gross was between \$80,000.00 and \$100,000.00. I averaged it to \$90,000.00. Once we pay somebody, we are probably grossing about \$65,000.00. I have toured it. I have also walked above it on Worthington Avenue to look down at the property. There is maintenance that needs to be done. I am not in this as a Borough resident or as someone on Council to necessarily make a windfall of money on this place. We need to break even with sustaining it with how much it costs and what it provides for the Borough. If we made \$33,000.00 in profit per year after you paid somebody, it would be an awful lot of money that we would still make. The asking price was \$500,000.00 and if we offered \$400,000.00, it would be 12 years before we paid it off. I am concerned about that. I have no problem with having a dek hockey place. I graduated high school in 1974. In 1972, Title IX changed, and women finally got a place where we could play basketball with five women and not six women because they thought two of us were going to faint at any time. I am all for sports for kids. We have Lobb's Field, and I would like to see that better utilized. We have a basketball park at Gill Hall, which is frequently used. I see people waiting in line to get to the pickleball courts at Gill Hall. Do we need recreational facilities? Yes.

When I first got on Council, we spent right off the jump \$45,000.00 to repair the GBU. People rent a facility, and they want their kids to play in those playgrounds. Every one of those playgrounds at Lobb's, at Beedle Park, Gill Hall Park, and Andrew Riley need to be upgraded to ADA specifications. Kids need to have a place to play.

On May 18th, Andrew Kuzma sent out a notice to all the members of the board that he was having a grant writing specialist come from Harrisburg to teach us how to write grants. I see down there at Lobb's three pickleball courts going in on our tally sheet of cost. We put in a 50% down payment. That was \$9,000.00. Three of those pickleball courts plus redoing Gill Hall is going to be close to \$20,000.00. How much would cost to build on property we already own. Lobb's Field is totally underused. What we need to do is to see what we have and then capitalize on those facts. I do totally agree that if you want to have dek hockey, then dek hockey can be an option. We are not in the business of making money on it. It would be an extra park. I want to see what's best for this community. Every senior citizen recognizes that if you have an investment in your parks, you have an investment in the cost of your home, and you will have a return on the investment. However, I am seeking a solution that might not be as expensive because the bottom line is we do have a budget. We do have reserve money. But, we also have accidents such as landslides. We are a democratic society, and the majority will rule. We do not take these decisions lightly.

We investigate this. We do our homework. We try to figure out what is not only best in the long run but the short run.

Mr. Reynolds stated we discussed on Wednesday the financial path that we are on. It seems impending that there is going to be a tax hike. Is it the most responsible use of the money that we have? I would say probably not. I grew up in a family where you prioritized things. If you needed something and it was a necessity, then yes, you got it. If you did not have the money and it was not a necessity, then you learned to do without. It is a little bit misleading when we sit here and say everybody in the Borough wants increase in their recreation. At what cost. If you ask people, "Do you want a recreation center?" "Sure, we'll take one." "Are you willing to raise your taxes to pay for it?" It changes a lot of people's answers. Do you want a car? Yeah, I'll take a free car. But if I have to pay for it, no, I don't need it right now. It is a path where again it is more irresponsible spending. We have so many issues in our current parks that need to be addressed and need to be resolved. I don't think taking something else on is the route that we need to go.

Mrs. Bucy stated to the Rec Board that sign that you have out there tells the story. When my son was growing up, and he's 26 years old now, we went to an Easter egg hunt and that was it. I see the diversification that you are trying to achieve in that posting of all those events. You are addressing a very rounded scope for all ages and their interests in making Jefferson Hills a better community for us.

After discussion the vote was not unanimous, and a roll call vote was taken per Borough Code, which requires that the minutes show the actual votes by name, below are the votes of each Council Member.

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Mrs. Bucy      | NO  |
| Mrs. Budd      | YES |
| Mr. Lynch      | YES |
| Mr. Montgomery | NO  |
| Mr. Reynolds   | NO  |
| Mrs. Ruscitto  | NO  |
| Mrs. Steffey   | YES |

Three members voted yes, and four members voted no, motion failed.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated I would like to explain my no. The reason I am voting no is because I feel that the process was rushed. I do not have a problem with purchasing the facility and providing recreational opportunities for the people. I would like to get a geotechnical study done.

Mrs. Steffey stated that is part of the contingencies of the offer.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated I think that we should have those things before we make an offer.

Mr. Allan stated those are the things that are done during the due diligence process. However, there are times when you can create opportunities for yourself. You can ask and take the time before you issued an offer. It can work either way.

Mrs. Steffey stated when those due diligence inspections come back, if they are not satisfactory, they will have to go in front of Council. Then we can terminate the agreement.

Mrs. Bucy stated we have not yet addressed what we wanted to offer for the facility.

Mrs. Steffey stated we can only do that in executive session. Why would we put it out into the public when we have competing offers?

Mrs. Budd stated finances for real estate transactions can be discussed in executive session.

Mrs. Steffey stated that is why this is saying up to \$500,000.00.

Solicitor Gabriel stated as a point of clarification, that authorization could be changed. It says authorized an amount not to exceed \$500,000.00. That could also be amended.

Mrs. Bucy stated I would like to see how much it would cost to have a deck hockey place where we already own property.

Mrs. Steffey stated it is well over the price we would pay for this.

Mr. Reynolds stated I am a resident in the Floreffe area. That basketball court was paved maybe 20 years ago. We have never even painted lines on it. The Borough never even put nets on the basketball hoops. That is why people don't use it. We have never given them anything to use down there. There are so many other places. At the GBU all we would have to do is move the playground. Instead of having it directly in the middle, we could slide it forward, and put more pickleball courts there. There are so many other options. How much other space is flat down at Lobb's? A lot. There are a lot of other opportunities.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated the estimate that we have for a new facility, did that include the purchase of property too?

Mr. Glister stated no. That was a very rough estimate because some of the items are specific to dek hockey, and I do not have cost estimates for a basis for my estimate.

Mrs. Budd stated what I want to do is clarify this is to authorize negotiations to purchase. It is not to purchase it at this point.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated this can be revisited.

Mrs. Steffey stated not if he accepts another offer, though. That is why it was put on the agenda.

Mr. Montgomery moved to authorize sending 2013 Ford Explorer, #257 Code Vehicle, (VIN#1FM5K8AR7DGC35189) to the Perryopolis Auto Auction in May. Explorer #257 will be replaced by a retired police vehicle, seconded by Mr. Lynch. The vote was not unanimous, and a roll call vote was taken per Borough Code, which requires that the minutes show the actual votes by name, below are the votes of each Council Member.

Mrs. Bucy                      YES

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Mrs. Budd      | YES |
| Mr. Lynch      | YES |
| Mr. Montgomery | YES |
| Mr. Reynolds   | NO  |
| Mrs. Ruscitto  | YES |
| Mrs. Steffey   | YES |

Six members voted yes, and one member voted no, motion carried.

BOROUGH RESIDENT/TAXPAYER COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Joy Mann, 2621 Ridge Road, stated this is in regard to the preliminary budget that Councilman Reynolds insisted on posting on the website, even though Mr. Stinner recommended against it. It was posted on social media anyhow by another resident who then turned to fearmongering with statements like, "At this rate our Borough will be bankrupt in two to five years' time." That's right off of social media. I wanted to know if someone on Council, I know Mr. Stinner keeps trying to clarify it, or perhaps Mr. Drager can provide clarification to the residents that this is not the case and that our Borough is not going bankrupt. Additionally, I would like to note that according to the Allegheny County website, the median property in 2022 in Jefferson Hills was assessed at \$123,700.00 and with our Borough millage tax rates, that equates to \$700.14 annually in taxes. Our school taxes at that assessed value costs an average resident \$2,817.02. It is not the Borough taxes that are taxing people out of their homes. Borough Council has not raised our taxes for many years. If they have no choice but to raise taxes due to inflation, I imagine that they would look at everything. They will do the best for the Borough and not just start raising taxes.

Mr. Stinner stated the worksheet that was posted online was an internal budgetary document that we use to show how far apart we are at this point in the year as to what our wants and needs are. Through the next seven months, we will work to narrow that to as little as possible. I have asked Mr. Drager to bring the criteria for what our AA bond rating actually means and what our fiscal health actually looks like.

Mr. Drager stated every other year, we get reviewed by S&P and Moody's. The most recent one coming up is Piper Sandler. They basically do an interview. They review our DCED report. They review our financial audit. Similar to your personal credit score, they do your bond rating, which is basically your creditworthiness. Obviously, the timeliness of the bills paid, and delinquent bills are reviewed. Ours has been exceptional over the past few years. Currently, we are at AA Plus, which the only one better is AAA plus. I will have another meeting with Moody's over the next month. We will get re-interviewed, show them the audit, review the DCED report, and go from there and then see where our bond rating is. We have made our payments. Our debt has actually been lowered well over a million dollars over the past two years. In our most recent audit, we were about 98% funded for the net pension liability. We are in good shape.

The purpose of the budget worksheet that I put together was just to show the upcoming two budget years. As everyone knows, economic factors are not very good. We are spending a lot more on gas. We are spending a lot more on many other things. For instance, paving. We spent \$420,000.00 in 2020. We are up to \$650,000.00 this year in the budget. Many of these costs, when we bid these things out, have skyrocketed. Police cars and Public Works trucks are up in some cases 20% to 25% of what they were

when I first started here. We are fighting a lot of different obstacles. We put these things in the budget. We try to put them into the community, whether it's the parks, the roads, or whatever it may be. The worksheet was mainly so that everybody would be aware of some of the obstacles that were coming upon in the future budgets.

Mrs. Bucy stated the JH Council has a responsibility to examine these Borough finances. Councilman Montgomery, President Steffey, and I sit on the Finance Committee. I specifically asked Mr. Drager to give us a two-year forecast. During COVID, we received a great deal of money from the CARES Act, that we used for a variety of sources that we are not going to get again. Then, it was made to our knowledge that Allegheny County is reassessing homes that were bought in 2022 and 2023. We may have to give them a refund on their taxes. This is still in court. We have to anticipate that. Also, inflation has increased the cost in the daily operations of our facilities and the services that we offer to the community. In order to work together to make this Borough a better place, we have to have a realistic picture of what our finances are. That was the whole goal of the worksheet. That may change. It is a forecast. It is a prediction based on the best knowledge that we have at that time.

## REPORTS

Fire Chief

Not Present

EMS

Not Present

Engineer

Nothing Further

Consulting Engineer

Not Present

Finance Officer/Treasurer

Nothing Further

Public Works Director

Nothing Further

Police Chief

Chief Dziezgowski stated I wanted to report to Council on unfinished business from Wednesday's agenda meeting. A resident came and was complaining about 3038 Walton Road. Before the weekend hit,

we had it resolved to a satisfactory standard. We should not have any other issues. It was great teamwork by Borough Staff to get that resolved.

Mayor

Mayor McCaffrey stated Monday, May 29th is our Memorial Day Service. It will begin at 10:00 a.m. at Floreffe Fire Hall. We will then parade down to Lobb's Cemetery for a small service, then back to Floreffe Fire Hall for the hotdogs.

Manager

Nothing Further

Solicitor

Solicitor Gabriel noted for the record Council and the Mayor did meet an executive session to discuss a personnel matter prior to the voting meeting.

#### GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr. Lynch stated when we were discussing budgeting and the purchase of the dek hockey facility earlier, one of the things that I have noticed, we do not have anything extravagant, like a Tanger Outlet or a restaurant that just says “wow”. Hopefully, someday, we can change that. The fact is when we talk about finances and what the future holds, we are trying to figure out ways to gain revenue to alleviate the burden from our residents. For some reason, we just accepted this mentality and are not able to think outside the box. I look at this as thinking outside the box. It is time to do something different. I observe what the Steering Committee has done. I see what the Rec Board has done. I see them breaking their backs for this community on their own time. Nobody said they had to do it. They do it because they love this community, and they want to see it grow. I trust these men and women, their plan, and how it would benefit our community. I ask everybody else, what are you afraid of? I am not afraid to think outside the box. They are not afraid to think outside the box. I think this is about the timid versus the bold or the same obsolete ideas versus new ideas. You can always count me in for the latter.

Mrs. Budd stated the only comment I wanted to make is regarding the unfortunate, irresponsible, and unsubstantiated fearmongering that happened regarding this speculative financial outlook of the budget. I would like to encourage Council Members and Staff to disseminate tax information to Borough residents in a more responsive and interactive fashion. When doing so, listen to your Borough Staff and what they have to say about it because they are the ones making it. The other Council Members that are on the Finance Committee are the ones working on it with Borough Staff. To spread it out there against the advice you are given is very irresponsible.

Mrs. Ruscitto stated please know that I do appreciate and acknowledge your hard work and your dedication to the Borough. That is not what my no vote was. It is not a no vote against you by any means. This was a very difficult decision for me. I do not want to rush into anything. I want to make the right decision, a sound decision. Hopefully, the facility is not sold. We can discuss this again in the future. It is



a difficult job sitting up here making these decisions, especially when your good friends are doing such hard work to improve the Borough.

I just wanted to wish my own mother a Happy Mother's Day this coming weekend and all the other moms out there. Please enjoy your day. Hopefully, it is a restful and peaceful day for all of you.

Mrs. Bucy stated I want to extend a Happy Mother's Day greeting to all our Jefferson Hills mothers on Sunday, May 14th.

The next distribution for the Cloverleaf Ecumenical Food Pantry will be held on Tuesday, May 23rd, due to the St. Elizabeth Spring Fest. It is one week out of order.

There is an example of the new voting districts and street names, which we will be posting with the help of the Public Works at each of the nine voting polls for Tuesday, May 16th, the primary election day. I am anticipating that everybody will receive a second notice from the county stating where their polling place will be. The Borough of Jefferson Hills website has an interactive voting app posted for anyone who wishes to verify their personal voting poll. It is [pollingplaceinformationpa.gov](http://pollingplaceinformationpa.gov).

Memorial Day weekend, May 27th through the 29th, is fast approaching. Enjoy the holiday weekend with your family and friends safely. However, when you are setting off fireworks in a residential area, they are to be legal. Please always practice safety first. I would like for you to be considerate of your neighbors and your neighbor's pets. Pets seem to have a great deal of anxious behavior as a result of those fireworks. Most importantly, we as Americans pay homage and respect for those deceased soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice, their lives for our freedoms on that day. Monday, May 29th, there will be a Memorial Day Service that will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Floreffe Volunteer Fire Company and then proceed to Lobb's Cemetery. Memorial Day was established in 1868 to show our respect for the fallen soldiers. These deceased soldiers showed their true patriotism and dignity for all individuals, not only Americans but all people all over the world. I invite you to please come to our Memorial Day Service.

I would like all of us to take a lot of pride in our community of Jefferson Hills by please trying not to litter the roadways. We spend a great deal of time cleaning those roads up. I have had numerous people assist me in this process. Public Works is very diligent about coming up and picking up the bags.

Please enjoy Mother's Day and Memorial Day with your families.

Mr. Montgomery stated last Wednesday, I brought up the possibility of getting a Port of Pittsburgh grant. I got some information today to explain what it is. It is a microgrant. It is for riverfront development. It is only \$10,000.00 max. The paperwork is due May 26th.

Mr. Stinner asked do we have projects for this grant.

Mr. Montgomery stated this could be to redevelop industrial sites. I understand that you need to demolish what is there, like Elrama Power Station.

Mr. Stinner asked does it have to be remediated. It becomes a brownfield.

Mr. Montgomery stated they call it the Senator Jim Ferlo Memorial Grant. It is for river frontage. The biggest problem is the old plant there. I would like a feasibility study done.

Mrs. Steffey stated I would like to thank our First Responders that attended a parade to celebrate Brayden Hopchak a couple of weekends ago and bring awareness to World Down Syndrome Day. We also have a few neighboring municipalities that joined in, as well as Mayor McCaffrey.

It is sad to me that the vote turned out the way that it did for the dek hockey arena. I thought that it had a lot of potential. Also listening to the survey results of our residents, that think recreation needs to be expanded. It is easy for some Council Members to sit up here and say, "Well, our other parks need this, this, and this." I agree completely. Everything that we have accomplished the past few years is because somebody actually opened up their mouth and said, "Hey, why don't we do this?" That is exactly what I did when Mr. Drager was given this opportunity about the dek hockey. I would like to remind my fellow Council Members anytime I ask for pre-agenda items, I would really appreciate it if I just did not hear crickets, and nobody says anything. If we want upgrades to our parks, then please speak up so we can put it on the agenda.

Mrs. Bucy stated I would like to put it on the agenda for next month about the playgrounds.

Mr. Stinner asked do we have anything budgeted or planned?

Mrs. Steffey stated what we have planned is also what we're doing at Lobb's. That was budgeted. That was planned. No, we did not have this budgeted because it's a real estate transaction. Things do not sit and wait for us to get every single detail planned. That is why we explained the transaction procedure. I am saddened that all of the smaller residents left here disappointed, as well as many residents that were online over the weekend with social media. The only way that I could think that we could possibly return the favor is if we have room in the budget, there needs to be upgrades to our parks. There needs to be movement. There need to be additions. It is number one on the comprehensive plan. That is what we paid the comprehensive plan for, big money for that. I am sorry for the Rec Board as well. Thank you for your time. Thank you for everything that you do. Your recommendations did not go unnoticed as well as the residents that had a lot to say over the weekend.

## ADJOURNMENT

President Steffey adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m. on a motion by Mrs. Budd, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

*Executive Session: Personnel, Lawfully Privileged/Confidential, Public Safety Preparedness, Litigation 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, 328 WAL 2021, Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County Appeal No. 871 CD 2020, SA-19-000748; PICCO Superfund site- potential litigation involving WESA and Ashland; Potential acquisition of real estate; threatened litigation from WESA, Patrick Lucas v. Jefferson Hills Borough, GD 22-004622; JHFR-162 CD 2023, 30 MN 2023; Nat. Casualty Co.-2:23-CV-429; AG v. GHVFC-No. 6007 of 2022*