

The special meeting of Council was called to order by President Steffey at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Center, 925 Old Clairton Road. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Vice President Budd, Councilman Lynch, and, President Steffey answered to roll call. Finance Officer Drager, Solicitor McPeak Cromer, and Engineer/Acting Borough Manager Glister were also present. Council Members Bucy, Montgomery, Reynolds, and Ruscitto were absent. Also absent were Borough Manager Stinner, Chief Dziezowski, Consulting Engineer Minsterman, and Public Works Director Volpe.

#### CITIZEN/TAXPAYER COMMENTS

None

#### AGENDA ITEM

Motion to appoint \_\_\_\_\_ to the position of Finance Director inside the Borough of Jefferson Hills

Mrs. Steffey stated the reason for this special meeting was for two very important topics. Number one was to hire a new finance director in a timely fashion in order to be trained alongside Mr. Drager for at least two weeks, before Mr. Drager leaves for his new place of employment. We are sad that we are losing him. Three years ago, when we hired Mr. Drager, although he had significant finance experience, we found that there are a lot of details, and a lot of items that needed to be transferred over to Mr. Drager as the new hire from the previous finance director. Unfortunately, we did not have the luxury of time on our hands. Mr. Drager only spent one day working with our previous finance director. To me, that lacks a significant amount of time that would help with transitioning the new finance director over into their new position. Therefore, three years ago, Council at that time voted to spend an additional \$15,000.00 of taxpayer money in order to have the firm Maher Duessel come in to train Mr. Drager properly. This leads to my second reason for this meeting this evening. It was also to help save the taxpayers money. Although it did cost us \$128.00 to advertise for this special meeting, we moved this meeting up in the hopes that we would have hired somebody and to have them spend an ample amount of time with Mr. Drager so that we could not have to spend another \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00 in training costs for the new hire as well. Unfortunately, we do not have a quorum in order to move forward with a vote this evening. Councilwoman Bucy and Councilwoman Ruscitto both had given me plenty of notice that they would not be able to be in attendance this evening. We still felt that we would have a quorum here with myself, Councilman Lynch, Vice President Budd, possibly Councilman Reynolds, and Councilman Montgomery. We have not heard anything from Councilman Reynolds. He did not attend any of the interviews for any of the candidates. All I can say is I do hope that there is nothing wrong with him or his family. We just had no communication with him. Three or four hours earlier today, I was notified by

Councilman Montgomery that unfortunately he would not be able to attend the meeting this evening because he was instructed by his employer to attend an event in order to listen to constituents' arguments and concerns over in Elizabeth Township. I explained to Mr. Montgomery that I felt that he took an oath here in order to prioritize and solely represent the residents of Jefferson Hills Borough instead of Elizabeth Township. Unfortunately, you can see he is not here this evening. I believe that says a lot.

We are going to move this vote to our agenda meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. We are able to vote in an agenda meeting as well. I do apologize to all of the candidates who did attend this meeting, and to interview with us all last week and last night. I also apologize to the residents because when it comes to a position in Borough staff, somebody should be able to be trained properly, which was our sole purpose for trying to move this meeting up.

Mrs. Budd stated this meeting was scheduled in the best interest of the Borough and not to suit some personal agenda. There is a limited window for the new person coming in to learn the job of finance director, and regardless of experience elsewhere, there are matters specific to this Borough they need to learn and become proficient at. Our outgoing finance director graciously offered, with Council's approval, to stay and help train the new hire. Our outgoing finance director was afforded little to no training upon his hiring and does not want the new person to be treated the same way. By waiting until the voting meeting, the new hire was going to be stripped of weeks of valuable training time. I am sorry about this new employee losing this valuable training time to learn the finances of the Borough. The finances that are comprised of hard-earned taxpayer money. The person that is the steward of this money has an extreme responsibility to the people of this community, the same level of responsibility we Council members have towards the community and to the staff of this Borough. Not having a quorum this evening does not hurt me or anyone up here. It does hurt the new staff member, and the residents. The residents that are often the subject of such a claim of care by some members of Council. This also has been a waste of time and money that some people claim to be such custodians of. Councilwoman Bucy and Ruscitto did have legitimate excuses for not being here tonight.

Mr. Lynch stated except for those who were transparent and able to give us accountable time, this does not include you. However, for those who have not, and if this absence appears to be deliberate without any justifiable cause, I think it should raise concerns about their commitment to their responsibilities within the Council and to our community. Outside of Council, I run the largest bus garage in Western Pennsylvania. I know firsthand what it is like to go a month without having an accountant and a clerk. It is a lot more critical than you may think it might be. Things can get overlooked. Bills cannot get paid. We do not have anybody making sure that the numbers are adding up. For myself, this was during the COVID pandemic. There was some justifiable reason for it happening. Once everybody was able to come back to work, it took us months to get our budget straightened out and get us back on track to where we need to be. You cannot even go a day without having some sort of finance director or accountant. Especially when you are handling millions of dollars. In the future I would expect to see some

more transparency, collaboration, and accountability, which are the fundamental principles in any decision-making process, especially when it comes to selecting key personnel like a finance director. I have missed meetings here and there because I do have other commitments such as the military. I have always been communicative towards our Council President, our Council Vice President, and our Borough Manager to let them know where I am going to be at. If anything comes up they know where everybody is at and can plan accordingly. Whenever I am away, I do not expect people to wait around for me. Business must go on. That is why I entrust every member of Council to do the right thing. I hope you can realize that from now on.

Mrs. Steffey stated in closing, I would like to also state that both Councilwoman Bucy and Councilwoman Ruscitto did share their top candidates with myself and Solicitor Cromer. All of us did take that into consideration when we were ready, willing, and able to vote for our new hire. I would also like to point out that we have four staff members here that also stayed after their workdays in order to facilitate this special meeting. We are also paying our solicitor to be here, so that is indeed also money that has been put towards this special meeting, let alone us Council members who are sitting up here. I personally am missing my son's first middle school football game in order to be here because I took an oath to be here and to make choices for what is best for the Borough and the residents of Jefferson Hills, alongside of Vice President Budd, Councilman Lynch, Councilwoman Ruscitto, and Councilwoman Bucy. We will move forward with the vote at agenda meeting, Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully, we will have a quorum then. I would also like to apologize to the residents of Jefferson Hills

#### ADJOURNMENT

President Steffey adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m. on a motion by Mrs. Budd, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

Michael Glister, PE  
Acting Secretary/Borough Manager