

The regular meeting of Council was called to order by President Steffey at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Centers, 925 Old Clairton Road. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Councilman Bentz, Vice President Budd, Councilman Lynch, Councilman Montgomery, Councilman Polick, President Steffey, and Mayor McCaffrey answered to roll call. Borough Manager Stinner, Finance Director Haberstock, Solicitor McPeak Cromer, Chief Dziezgowski, Engineer Glister, and Public Works Director Volpe were also present. Councilwoman Mares, and Consulting Engineer Minsterman were absent.

REPORT FROM BOROUGH BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

None

BOROUGH RESIDENT/TAXPAYER COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Karen Bucy, 410 Deer Park West, stated the issue continuing to be addressed is the four blighted properties listed on Agenda Item Number 36. Thank you for placing the motion Number 36 on the February 12th, 2024, voting agenda. This action will accelerate and streamline the legal process of the four blighted properties to be condemned and demolished. Residents living next to and nearby these structures are frustrated by the numerous phone calls, letters, and personal requests to code enforcement officers, borough managers, and JH Council members over a span of many, many years regarding these unsafe structures. Previously, the danger of the rodents, animals, squatters, and opportunities to attract drug usage and crime have been stated. These issues still exist 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. Therefore, we find it very difficult to accept that no additional funds have been placed into line item 01498730, Demolition of Unsafe Structures in the Amended 2024 Budget. In 2022, 2023, and 2024, \$10,000.00 has been recorded in the Demolition line item. Not one additional dollar has been allocated in the 2024 budget for the demolition of unsafe structures. This lack of an increase in funds makes us believe that our concerns have been stymied. The competition for the CDBG grants and Act 152 grants is steep over 133 municipalities in Allegheny County. Jefferson Hills Borough cannot count on receiving these funds, because no grants have been awarded in the last three years. Therefore, the \$10,000 .00 allotment in the budget line item will not cover the cost of demolishing four structures. Our end goal is to have these blighted structures demolished. Public safety is a priority. The removal of these blighted properties is an essential component to JH public safety.

Furthermore, I wanted to address the letter I received from Borough Manager John Stinner on February 10th, 2024. It stated the following: Borough council appreciated your recent participation at the Wednesday, February 7th, 2024, council meeting. Thank you for taking your time to share your concerns regarding the dilapidated house at 1420 Gilmore Drive. However, I must make it perfectly clear that that is my second purchased home at 1420 Gilmore Drive is not dilapidated. It is a well-maintained home, and it is in excellent condition. Therefore, I recommend that you review the list of homes that you have on the Motion Number 36, and see that the properties are listed correctly. Then you should also personally visit the four blighted properties to recognize the gravity of this error. Lastly, I'm requesting that the ratification of the amended 2024 budget, the document be placed on the Borough of Jefferson Hills website, alongside the other budgets from 2013 to 2023. The posting of the budget is essential to promote transparency regarding how residents' taxpayer dollars are spent.

President Steffey stated you were part of the Council when we sent out form letters for residents. Coming up here, I asked Mr. Stinner about it. It is a formulated letter. Obviously, that was quite an oversight.

Mrs. Bucy stated it was quite a mistake.

Solicitor McPeak Cromer stated I want to make sure you realize your concerns are most definitely not being stymied, as you opined. In addition, current Council's taking those blighted properties very seriously. I do not believe any prior Council ever began a legal process prior to receiving the COG funds. It is a lengthy process, and we are being given authority this evening to start that process. It is complicated, it is convoluted. It is title searches, it is complaints, it is a motion for injunctive relief. We have been given the go-ahead, so I know they are taking it very seriously. We will be working with Mark Ries, and we will make sure we either get the property owners or heirs consent; we will have an order of court authorizing demolition. I understand that the grants are competitive, however I do believe we are on the waitlist. If the criteria are significant enough, I am certainly hopeful that some type of grant funds will be received if they are truly so dilapidated as we believe they are. I am hopeful. Council is taking it very seriously.

Mrs. Bucy stated I recognize that fact, because it was not until Wednesday's agenda meeting that I realized that the legal process was not started until after the grants were received.

Cindy Caulkett, 1424 High Road, stated thank you for adding these blighted homes to the agenda tonight as Item 36. I happen to live next to the home at 1420 High Road, and started communicating with the Borough and a former councilwoman in early 2022. I have emailed back and forth many times with Mike Glister, and he was always great in getting back to me, which was very much appreciated. I realize that he was trying to get grants to pay for the demolition of this home, but now it is nice that the Borough is looking into taking on the expenses of the demolition. It should not take much as the house is in such a bad state. Broken windows, doors, animals going in and out. Many times, when the house was first abandoned, kids would go in and do partying and drugs and all sorts of things. Once there was a young man who overdosed, and the police had to come and administer Narcan. The elderly woman who owned and lived at 1420 High Road passed away in 2013. Her name is Evelyn Brantner. Evelyn's family never came back to the house or has taken any interest in its upkeep. The house has been abandoned for over 10 years now. I submitted several pictures of the house at the agenda meeting last week via the public comments. The pictures really don't do it justice on how bad it really is. You really have to see it for yourself. Once when we looked at the county property website, we saw the name changed from Evelyn to her daughter. Then a while later, it changed back to Evelyn, which surprised me, because I didn't know that you could do that if somebody was deceased. Also, it seems that the property taxes have not been paid on that piece of property in quite some time. We did manage to look that up. Myself and my neighbors on High Road, Hilltop, and Fern Valley would be appreciative of you making the neighborhood look nice again by removing this home, because we do take pride in living here.

President Steffey stated since we started moving forward with the legal process, it does take quite an amount of time. Not only does the title work take a good amount of time, but then you have to look into the fact whether or not these homes consist of asbestos. If that does, then that is also a lengthy time added onto that for remediation for asbestos, which will include probably putting out bids. So as far as adding more money to the budget for these homes this year, this is probably a process that is going to take a good amount of time, about four to six months. As much as we want to just take our public works crew over there and take it down, unfortunately, this is somebody else's property, whether or not they are

deceased, whether or not there is a next of kin, whether or not there is a will that can be produced. This is not something that the Borough can just take their hands on and move forward with and demolish, as much as we would like to in order to help everybody out and make Jefferson Hills neighborhoods look the way that we would like them to look. I am happy that we decided to take the first step. When things pop up, we can certainly shift some money around. We can look at different budget line items to hopefully accommodate anything that should come up on the horizon and give the okay to move forward with demolishing one or all of these properties, then we will move forward with it. But first things first, and we took the necessary steps within our realm here on the local level to move ahead and start the legal process with these.

Mrs. Caulkett asked can the grass be cut at these properties?

President Steffey responded yes; Mr. Volpe has done some work to the home on Worthington. I do not know which other properties he has definitely had his crew over to. I know with the Worthington house, there were a lot of heavy, heavy trees and brush that was very difficult for the Public Works to get through. I drove past the front the other day; it looks better than it has. That is our Public Works Department. Each individual home has its own significance.

Mr. Bentz asked under Act 135 is there any way we can look into a conservatorship maybe? You can always petition the court and take over the property. You said it has already changed hands, and it is a blighted property. If you can convince a judge to do that, they will give you conservatorship of the property.

Mrs. Caulkett stated my husband and I tried to get the property. We do not want it now.

Mr. Bentz stated so you understand how difficult it is, then. You have attempted to do this.

Solicitor McPeak Cromer stated since obviously there are several of you that are very interested in following with these demolitions, the easiest way for the Borough to be able to demolish it is to have the property owner sign an agreement. Often at many a municipal meeting, someone has said, hey I know Betty Smith, and when she died, she left two daughters, and they live in Carnegie, and these are their names. I am just saying you mentioned there was a daughter, so if you know of anything in regard to those four properties, and you would like to share it. I will get the daughter's name, and we will find out where she is. If for some reason she will sign something, that saves the Borough a ton of money. The easiest way is to get the property owners' heirs to consent. That is what we start with.

AGENDA ITEMS

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

Vice President Budd moved to approve the monthly payroll, seconded by Mr. Polick, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lynch moved to approve minutes of agenda/reorganization meeting January 3, 2024, seconded by Mr. Bentz, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lynch moved to approve minutes of regular meeting January 8, 2024, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Swearing in of John Kaufman of the Borough of Jefferson Hills Civil Service Commission by the Mayor of the Borough of Jefferson Hills

Mayor McCaffrey administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Kaufman.

Mr. Kaufman stated I, John Kaufman, do solemnly swear that I will support, obey, and defend the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of this Commonwealth, and that I will discharge the duties of my office with fidelity as Civil Service Commissioner . That I have not paid or contributed, or promised to pay or contribute, either directly or indirectly, any money or other valuable thing to procure my appointment, except for necessary and proper expenses, expressly authorized by law; knowingly receive, directly or indirectly, any money or other valuable thing for the performance or non-performance of any act or duty pertaining to my office, other than compensation allowed by law.

President Steffey stated on behalf of Borough Council, we would like to thank you for your service. We appreciate it.

Vice President Budd moved to end the appointment of Michael Glister as acting Secretary/Borough Manager within the Borough of Jefferson Hills, seconded by Mr. Polick, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Montgomery moved to appoint Mark D'Angelo to one (1) seat on the Borough of Jefferson Hills Zoning Hearing Board for a 5-year term expiring December 31, 2028, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

President Steffey called for a motion to appoint _____ to one (1) seat on the Borough of Jefferson Hills Environmental Advisory Council for a 3-year term expiring December 31, 2026.

President Steffey stated I do not believe we had any applicants for this.

Mr. Lynch moved to table the motion to appoint _____ to one (1) seat on the Borough of Jefferson Hills Environmental Advisory Council for a 3-year term expiring December 31, 2026, seconded by Mr. Polick, and carried unanimously.

Vice President Budd moved to appoint Lisa Albrecht to one (1) seat on the Borough of Jefferson Hills Library Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2025, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Montgomery moved to advertise one seat on the Zoning Hearing Board as an alternate for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2025, seconded by Mr. Bentz, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Polick moved to authorize the preparation and advertisement of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the purpose of designing a new website for the Borough of Jefferson Hills, seconded by Mr. Bentz, and carried unanimously.

Vice President Budd moved to advertise Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Borough of Jefferson Hills Pension Counsel, seconded by Mr. Bentz, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Montgomery moved to authorize the preparation and advertisement of the 2024 paving program bid, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Bentz moved to adopt the 2024 amended Borough of Jefferson Hills Budget with no tax increase, seconded by Vice President Budd, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lynch moved to purchase ClearGov Budgeting Software for a onetime setup fee of \$4,050.00 and a pro-rata subscription fee of \$14,125.00 for the year 2024, annual subscription fee of \$16,950.00 for the year 2025, annual subscription fee of \$17,459.00 for the year 2026, and annual subscription fee of \$17,983.00 for the year 2027, seconded by Mr. Polick, and carried unanimously.

Vice President Budd moved to award HVAC maintenance contract for the Borough Building to McCarl's Services, Inc. in the amount of \$14,800.00 per year or \$3,700.00 quarterly installments, seconded by Mr. Montgomery.

Mr. Bentz asked how long is this for?

Mr. Haberstock responded one year that renews automatically.

After discussion motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Lynch moved to authorize payment of \$3,150.00 pre-show advance to Pyrotecnico Fireworks Inc. for fireworks display for Community Day on June 15, 2024, alternate date June 16, 2024, and final payment of \$3,150.00 totaling \$6,300.00, seconded by Mr. Polick, and carried unanimously.

President Steffey called for a motion to allow Jefferson Hills business owners to request to opt out of trash and recycling.

Mr. Bentz asked are we allowing them to request? They can always request it, or should we just strike the "request" out of there? Is language important?

Solicitor McPeak Cromer responded that my recommendation is you do not allow anyone to opt out. We are not giving anyone the option to opt out of our contract because it makes our lives way too difficult

No motion was made, motion dies.

President Steffey stated for those residents that did send in letters requesting this particular option, make sure we get letters out to them in case they do not see the minutes, or watch the voting meeting.

Vice President Budd moved to adopt Resolution No. 01-2024 adopting Rules of Decorum for public meetings, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

Vice President Budd moved to adopt Resolution No. 02-2024 appointing Melissa Steffey as representative and David Montgomery as alternate to the SHACOG Franchising Authority Board, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lynch moved to adopt Resolution No. 03-2024 appointing Melissa Steffey as representative and David Montgomery as alternate to the SHACOG Joint Rate Review Board, seconded by Mr. Bentz, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Montgomery moved to authorize advertising and sending Unit #231-2011 Ford Fusion SE (VIN #3FAHP0HG0BR144835) to the Perryopolis Auto Auction in February, seconded by Mr. Polick, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Bentz moved to authorize advertising and sending Unit #264-2016 Ford Taurus (VIN #1FAHP2MT3GG117626) to the Perryopolis Auto Auction in February, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

Vice President Budd moved to table the motion to make the loan payments on the new Pierce Aerial Truck purchased from Glick Fire Equipment by Jefferson Hills Fire Rescue (JHFR) upon delivery in 2027 for a 10-year loan with annual payments of approximately \$350,000.00 per year, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Vice President Budd stated I think we have other financing options to investigate. I think a couple of days to review this for such a potentially big decision is not enough time. There is a lot more to look into with consideration for this, including what some of their other plans are in the future, compared to what some of the other Borough plans are, and kind of go from there to make a better sound decision.

Mr. Montgomery asked where this money was going to come from.

Mr. Haberstock stated they were asking us to pay from it from general fund.

Mr. Montgomery stated I do not see it in the budget.

Vice President Budd stated payments would not start until 2025.

President Steffey stated it was not on the budget because this just came about.

Mr. Haberstock stated it would not have been on this year's budget anyway.

Mr. Lynch moved to ratify the cancellation of the order for a 2024 Peterbilt truck chassis for \$130,060.00 from Hunter Truck Sales and Service under COSTARS State Contract #025-101, seconded by Mr. Bentz, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lynch moved to ratify the cancellation of the order for a 2022 Peterbilt truck chassis and upfit for \$143,667.00 from Hunter Truck Sales and Service under COSTARS State Contract #025-019, seconded by Vice President Budd, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lynch moved to purchase two 2025 International HV-507 Dump Truck Chassis from Hill International for \$240,495.46 under COSTARS Contract No. 025-E22-519, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Polick moved to purchase a stainless-steel dump bed, snowplow & salt spreader, and hydraulic system from U. S. Municipal Supply for \$68,786.00 under COSTARS Contract No. 025-019, seconded by Mr. Polick, and carried unanimously.

Vice President Budd moved to purchase a 2024 Towmaster T-30 Trailer for \$45,480.00 from Cleveland Brothers CAT under COSTARS Contract No. 4400027914, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Polick moved to approve Quote No. 60206 from David Davis Communications for additional access controls at Beedle Park Concession Stand in the amount of \$7,427.80, seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Montgomery moved to authorize solicitor to begin the process of obtaining legal clearances for the demolitions of 1420 High Road, 102 Arch Street, 613 Cochran Mill Road, and 1412 Worthington Avenue, seconded by Mr. Polick, and carried unanimously.

Vice President Budd moved to approve the Work Authorization dated February 2, 2024, from Gateway Engineers, Inc. to provide the Borough with general Operations and Maintenance support for all 2024 Operation and Maintenance Projects in the amount not to exceed \$10,000.00, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Montgomery moved to approve the Work Authorization dated February 1, 2024, from Gateway Engineers, Inc. for General 2024 GIS assistance in the amount not to exceed \$8,000.00, seconded by Vice President Budd, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Lynch moved to approve the Work Authorization dated February 1, 2024, from Gateway Engineers, Inc. to assist the Borough with contract development and construction administration and inspection services for the 2024 Paving Program in the amount not to exceed \$5,000.00, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Bentz moved to approve the proposal from McLean Architects, LLC dated February 1, 2024, to continue to assist the Borough with preparing conceptual plans and cost estimates for renovations and additions to the Borough building in the amount not to exceed \$16,500.00, seconded by Mr. Polick, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Montgomery moved to adopt Ordinance No. 905 accepting the Parcel B Mill School stormwater detention pond as a public facility of the Borough of Jefferson Hills, seconded by Mr. Bents, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Bentz moved to adopt Resolution 05-2024 granting final plan approval to the 2nd Revision to the Deer Hollow Plan Phase 1 designated as S-8-2023, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, and carried unanimously.

Vice President Budd moved to advertise the Public Hearing for Conditional Use Application No. CU-1-2024 for 310 Old Clairton Road, 661-M-398, on March 6, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., seconded by Mr. Lynch, and carried unanimously.

BOROUGH RESIDENT/TAXPAYER COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

REPORTS

Fire Chief

The JHFR written report is on file in the administrative office.

EMS

The SEREMS written report is on file in the administrative office.

Chief Pascoe stated for 2023, it was our busiest year here in the Borough since I've been here. We responded at or about 2,000 responses last year. Sixty-three percent of them were considered emergency responses. So obviously, our residents are using this system for what it's set up for. Our average response time, borough-wide, was 8.2 minutes on those priority calls, which supersedes our goal which is 10 minutes amongst all of the communities that we serve.

Engineer

The engineering written report is on file in the administrative office.

Mr. Glister stated we received an email from the Turnpike Commission at the end of last week. They are letting us know that the next phase of the Mon/Fayette Expressway is going to start the week of February 19th, that is next week. Most of this work is outside of the limits of Jefferson Hills, but nonetheless, they asked us to share it.

Mr. Montgomery stated that there is a meeting at the Holiday Inn in West Mifflin if you are interested.

Consulting Engineer

The Gateway written report is on file in the administrative office.

Finance Officer/Treasurer

Mr. Haberstock had nothing further to add to the written report on file in the administrative office.

Public Works Director

Mr. Volpe had nothing further to add to the to the written report on file in the administrative office.

Police Chief

Chief Dziezgowski had nothing further to add to the written report on file in the administrative office.

Mayor

Mayor McCaffrey apologized for leaving before the meeting was over last week. I just want to thank Mike Glister for everything he did, and to welcome back Mr. Stinner. We have certainly missed you.

Manager

Mr. Stinner had nothing further to add.

Solicitor

Solicitor McPeak Cromer had nothing further to add to the written report.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Mr. Montgomery stated we had a former councilman named Ed Barrickman. He served from 1981 to 1985. He passed away on January 29th. He was a superintendent of Dick Corporation, a life member for the West Elizabeth and Elrama volunteer fire companies. I always like to remember people that have served the community, even if it's that long ago.

Vice President Budd stated everyone is invited to attend the Friends of the Jefferson Hills Library meeting on Thursday, February 15th at 7:00 p.m. They are a non-profit organization that supports Jefferson Hills' library through fund-raising and volunteer activities, including the Books and Boutique sale. Last year, the donations from the Friends allowed the library to purchase a new book drop, expand its Lucky Day collection, and host programs for the community of all ages. Anyone who checks out materials from the library from February 12th through March 28th will be entered into a free Winter Reading raffle. The lucky winner will receive a 40-ounce Stanley tumbler and a Target gift card. Baby story time is every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.; toddler story time is every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. and they have bilingual story time every other Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. There is a tween gaming club that meets every Tuesday. Stop in any time from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. to play board games, Nintendo Switch, and Roblox. Light snacks are provided. Local author Chris Whitlatch will share stories from his new true crime book, Notorious Pittsburgh, on Tuesday, February 20th at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room. Library will be holding a babysitter certification class on March 9th from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The cost is \$25.00. Finally, local adventurers Chip Sargent and Rob Hunt on Tuesday, March 19th at 6:00 p.m. will be here to tell about their experience on climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in the summer of 2022. Again, follow the library on Facebook and Instagram, and sign up for email newsletter for the most up-to-date information about what is happening at the library.

I also wanted to take a moment to congratulate Jackie Girman on her successful event Saturday for Geo Mack. One of the things I noticed while there were all the kids that were involved. I thought what a wonderful example she and all the adults there are setting for the youth in our community. Congratulations to her for a successful event, and thank you for doing that for our community.

Mr. Lynch stated to support what Vice-President Budd said, with the Geo Mack care bag, a huge shoutout to Jackie Girman again. I want to thank everybody who took the time to come out to Floreffe

this past Saturday to help put all the bags together. It went by pretty quick. The kids down there were running circles around us all adults. That was overall a pretty good time. All bags are loaded up, and they are on their way to the local veterans' organizations throughout the area. Again, I cannot thank you enough, seeing this community rally around our troops.

We still have a spot open on the EAC. I encourage every resident out there who wants to get involved, this is a good place to start. We are actually having our next meeting this Thursday, 6:30 p.m., here at the borough building. You also have the option to join virtually if you just want to check it out to get a feel for it. We strongly encourage you. We have a lot of things coming up this year. Good people. A lot of intellect. That is why I love being on it.

Mr. Bentz stated I wanted to thank our first responders. I was going to thank the police, and obviously our fire department, but also EMS was here today. They just kind of added in today and brought home all the things that you guys do for us. My eyes have been opened to all the stuff they really do. I was really enlightened by all the stuff that you guys do, and I just want to say that I appreciate it. I am here to support you guys and move forward.

ADJOURNMENT

President Steffey adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Lynch, seconded by Vice President Budd, and carried unanimously.

John P. Stinner
Secretary/Borough Manager