

The Borough of Speers Council met on March 2, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Mr. Rice, Mr. McCorkle, Mayor Herd, Mr. Sauer, Mr. Todora, Mrs. Barcelona, Mrs. Spina and Mr. Daylong.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as read; a motion to accept was made by Mr. Daylong and seconded by Mrs. Barcelona; all in favor.

Secretary read the correspondence; Tri-County Borough Meeting (3/17), Thank you note from the Hepple family, Liquid Fuels allotment.

Johnna Pro, Regional Director for DCED, spoke on the digital signs. She clarified the grant guidelines pertaining to obtaining the digital signs for the Borough. She reviewed the parameters that we had to follow to be compliant, which included displaying COVID related messages. The parameters were set into law by President Trump; not the State, not the County and not the Borough. At this time, we have fulfilled the requirements and the signs are now property of the Borough. Council can decide to continue to display COVID messages or remove those messages without fear of penalties. Mr. McCorkle questioned if we can advertise for businesses, and do they have to be non-profit businesses? We will research and ask Penn Dot since the signs are in a Penn Dot right of way. Are we allowed to charge a fee to advertise? Mrs. Barcelona asked what other grants are available? The Borough did receive the 1st allotment of the American Rescue Act; the second payment should be received after May. LSA state and local grants are also available.

POLICE: Reported 19 calls for Speers. Fire Dept. responded to 48 calls in total. Reports available for review.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Streets: Mr. Todora – contacted the ABOC for re-lining sewer lines; their engineer is KLH. He wants maps of all the lines. Mr. Todora forwarded the protocols to Dennis on how the project will go. Dennis recommends to start with re-lining the problems lines, not the entire sewer system in the Borough. Dennis has a quote from Insight Pipe on the 3 problem lines that were discussed at last month's meeting. Most of the lines in the Borough are good and it is not necessary to change or re-line them. Mr. Todora asked about adding an additional catch basin on State St. Dennis asked if there is a grant for that? Dennis was under the

impression that was why he obtained the quote for the re-lining from Insight Pipe for Mrs. Spina to use for applying for a grant? Mrs. Spina stated that Mr. Todora was supposed to do that. There is some confusion on who is doing what for which project. Mr. Todora submitted a summary of the re-lining of the whole Borough. Dennis submitted a quote for 3 lines only. Dennis, Mr. Todora and Mrs. Spina will work together.

Finance: Mr. McCorkle – budget for February complete; Income - \$60,854.97; Expenses - \$45,675.36; YTD (+) 16,256.97.

Borough Improvement: Mr. Daylong – Nothing to report at this time.

Streetlights: Mr. McCorkle reported a streetlight out at the corner of Rebecca and Jane; will get pole number to report to WPP.

Parks: Mr. Sauer is working on a list for teacher input for the park project in Lower Speers.

Transit Authority: Mayor Herd – 2 new buses are coming into service by the end of March. He also presented the local match resolution; will discuss under new business.

Grants: Mrs. Spina – working on funding for the park project; Council needs to help and provide information for the application. Mr. McCorkle is setting up a survey; Mayor Herd sent letters to local businesses for donations; Dennis obtained a quote for fencing. Mrs. Spina stated we have \$25,000 committed so far towards our \$40,000 match. Mrs. Spina stated decisions need to be made quickly because the paperwork needs submitted by March 16th. We will review the results of the letters and survey. Council needs to decide what type of surface is best. The project will need to be put out for bid. What do we want the area used for? Playground, basketball court, dog park? Age group? Mr. Sauer suggests keeping it as a playground. Mrs. Spina stated that we need to make it handicap accessible. Mr. Krider provided a proposed plan/sketch for the area. Should we send Mr. Lunt a letter stating we need written confirmation from him on his park donation? Mr. Lint is concerned and does not recommend accepting a donation from Mr. Lunt due to his complaint at the last Council meeting. He is concerned it will turn into a quid pro quo situation and will be considered buying the Council's influence. Mr. McCorkle and Mayor Herd agree with Mr. Lint. Jody spoke with

Mrs. Galiffa to get a list of businesses in the Borough. She stated she will get as many as she can but most businesses are listed through LST taxes under other owners. Mayor Herd has sent out several letters to businesses.

Mayor Herd: thanked Dennis and Tim for all their hard work during the storms. He is pleased to see the bridge project in the IDC Park is starting to gain momentum. He is also encouraged with the fundraising for the park projects. We definitely need new equipment quickly. Mr. Todora presented some options to Mrs. Spina. Mr. Krider suggested looking at Cross Creek Park for ideas; contact Jeff Donahue with Washington County Parks Dept for specs. Mayor Herd also stated that the pavilion floors at the Speers Park need done ASAP. He thanked Mr. Rice for the work he does on a daily basis. Mayor Herd spoke on the new business in Speers; Ekernally Yours Popcorn and wishes them all the best. He commented that Speers is a business-friendly community and would like it to stay that way. He wants Council to have community involvement. Mayor Herd thanked Mrs. Spina on digital sign and the work she completed to obtain the grant for the sign. Mr. Sauer also thanked Mrs. Spina as well.

Mayor Herd spoke on a comment that was made on social media relating to a local business in a negative way. He reminded Council to be respectful and judicious on what is posted; you represent Speers Borough now. Mr. Todora stated he thinks that Mr. Barbe is an awful person and does not agree with his business tactics and that we should not do business with him. Mr. Todora does not agree with him employing immigrants and making our town look bad. He thinks Mr. Barbe owes the residents of Speers and Charleroi an apology for all the foot traffic caused by the immigrants. Mr. Todora feels that it is our (Council) job to say something about it. Mayor Herd appreciates Mr. Todora's thoughts and feelings but Mr. Barbe has a right to hire whomever he chooses. He is just asking that Council be very judicious in their choice of words. Mr. Todora apologized to Council and Mayor Herd but he feels deeply about this and is not backing down. Mr. Todora asked Council how they feel about the situation? Mr. McCorkle stated that Council will support any business in the Borough regardless where the workers come from. They deserve the opportunities just like everyone else. Mr. McCorkle can understand Mr. Todora's passion on the matter but feels that the way he is handling it is putting a bad light and image on Council and it will not be tolerated; this needs handled the right way and not on social media with negative

remarks. Council is doing a great job and providing a great service to the community and Mr. McCorkle will not let anyone interfere with that. Any step backward will not be tolerated. Mr. Todora respects what Mr. McCorkle has to say. Mr. Lint stated that we are all immigrants in some way. Mr. Todora stated they are not good immigrants and do not respect the culture. Mr. Todora does not feel that the business is helping the community because the workers are sending money back home to their country. The immigrants are all over the valley, not just Speers. Mr. McCorkle stated that actions and words have consequences that can shed a bad light on Council and he does not want to see that happen. Mr. Todora does not think it looks terrible. He thinks it looks terrible to wear a mask when it is not necessary. Mr. McCorkle chooses to wear a mask, as do other Council members and citizens. It is a choice. These are other political issues that are not appropriate to be brought into a Council meeting. The immigrant situation will not be changed by Council. Mr. Rice stated the business is legal and the workers are legal and being paid. They spend money here as well. What does it matter if they choose to send money back home to their country? It is not for Council to dictate or control where they spend their paycheck. They are legal immigrants. Mr. Todora stated the Democratic way of thinking (mandates, vaccines, immigrants) is not working. He wants people to get together and have their voices heard that they are not wanted here. Mr. Lint stated that Council cannot legally act to kick them out, keep them from working here or living here.

Dennis Carson's report: plow street, salt streets, truck maintenance, wash vehicles, had spreader repaired, obtained bid on garage doors, obtained sewer line bid, obtained fence bid, cold-patch potholes, ordered salt, cleaned catch basins, cleaned park, 10 One Calls and 1 downspout inspection.

ENGINEER: Mr. Krider – presented an email from Ben Brown with MVA regarding LSA (county) grant for bridge repairs; available for review. Application submission for the LSA (state) grant is due by March 15th. The fee is \$100. A signed resolution will also need to be included with the application. Mr. Krider is applying for \$110,000. There is confusion with the LSA grants. Speers Borough was under the impression we were already approved for \$88,000 last year. Mrs. Spina questioned who decides on the totals for the state grant? Mr. Krider does not know how it works, he can only guess. Mrs. Barcelona questioned why the cost increased so much for the bridge repairs? Is it because there has been such a long

delay in getting the money? Mr. Krider felt that the first estimated cost was wrong so he had the inspection re-done. Mr. McCorkle is questioning where the \$110,000 total come from? Mr. Krider's explanation is not very clear. Refer to the email for totals. Mrs. Spina asked if we can apply for up to \$1 million dollars, why are we limiting ourselves? We have to prove what we are using the money for, and it can be used for only one project. Mrs. Barcelona is asking for clarification on the totals that Mr. Krider is applying for. Supposedly, Speers was already allotted \$88,000, but we never received that in writing. Mr. McCorkle stated that it makes sense to apply for the grant. A motion to approve Mr. Krider moving forward with applying for the LSA (state) grant including a \$100 application fee was made by Mrs. Barcelona and seconded by Mr. Sauer; all in favor. Mr. Krider will submit the \$100 check. If we do not get approved for the grant, do we have a contingency plan? Mayor Herd stated that we need the money/funding as soon as possible. We cannot put the bridge repairs off any longer.

SOLICITOR: Mr. Lint – spoke with Dennis Paluso, solicitor for the ABOC regarding the agreement for property maintenance across from Exxon since our digital sign is on their property; Mr. Paluso will speak with the Board and will get back to us.

Mayor Herd questioned the liability of the Borough on the playground equipment. The Borough already has insurance on the playgrounds.

Dennis asked who is liable for the digital sign if it is damaged during the construction project? Penn Dot or ABOC? He spoke with ABOC and they will send a letter with a response.

CITIZENS: Mr. Rost – asked what the follow up on the resident using his home as a delivery drop off for his business; secretary will follow up with the zoning officer. He also asked if it was clarified with Mr. Hepple for code enforcement. Mr. Hepple is on an as needed basis only. The office will contact him when needed.

TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORT: Deposit of \$32,647.86.

OLD BUSINESS: Dennis submitted a bid at the previous meeting for a new garage door with motor for the salt shed; the bid total was \$5,950. The estimate was below the threshold for the bidding process. A motion to accept was made by Mr. Sauer and seconded by Mr. Daylong; all in favor.

Mrs. Spina made a motion to continue displaying (2) COVID related messages on the digital signs and was seconded by Mr. Sauer. Vote passed 6-1; Mr. Todora was opposed. Mr. Todora is tired of people being afraid and need to move on. Council and residents attending the meeting are wearing masks out of respect for those who are compromised from being exposed. Mr. McCorkle spoke regarding paving the streets and alleyways in the Borough; how do we want to use Liquid Fuels? One lump sum or a few projects a year? Some of the roads at the IDC Park will be repaved after the bridge project that is starting in April.

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Daylong pointed out a conflicting fee on the handicap parking spot application. Secretary will update the application to reflect the correct fee that is stated in the ordinances (\$50 per year). Dennis presented a price for a new Kubota mower from Murphy's for \$16,084.24; this includes a discount through Co-stars and they will also pay \$1,000 for the old mower. Mr. Lint stated that we need to obtain 3 phone quotes. He suggested putting together a list of specs and not limiting just to the Kubota brand. A motion was made, that allows Dennis to obtain 3 phone bids with the amount less than \$21,500 and to award the bid with the lowest amount, by Mr. McCorkle and seconded by Mrs. Barcelona; all in favor. Secretary will check with Civic Club if they are planning any Easter activities. **Update** – Civic Club will hold an Easter Egg Hunt at Speers Park on April 9th at 1 p.m. with a rain date of April 16th. Mayor Herd presented the match commitment resolution for the Transit Authority. The amount will be \$782 for the 2022/2023 year. A motion to accept was made by Mr. McCorkle and seconded by Mr. Daylong. Mr. Sauer spoke on recycling in the Borough. He is willing to look into the costs involved. He will contact BIG's Sanitation and Mrs. Galiffa for information on billing and service. He will possibly send out letters to residents or create a survey. Mr. Todora asked if there is any information on a new development possibly being built along the backside of Charles Street? Nothing has been submitted by the property owner. Mr. Todora asked if Council can compromise and lessen the COVID messages on the digital sign. He suggested only 1 message. How long do we have to continue like this? He stated people don't want this in their face anymore. There are enough reminders out there already. Mrs. Barcelona does sympathize with Mr. Todora's feelings but recommends we stay at the 2 messages displayed on the signs as was voted on. Mr. McCorkle stated to re-visit the topic next month. It will be added to the

agenda to discuss. Mr. Todora wants to post on the Speers Borough page asking if the residents want the messages off the digital signs. Council requested that he not do that. Mr. Rice stated this was already voted on at this meeting and we can discuss at the next meeting. Mr. McCorkle stated he can post his question on his personal page but not on the Borough page. Mr. Todora feels that he knows what the residents want. Mr. Rice stated that there were several comments posted supporting the messages on the digital signs. Mayor Herd stated everyone has a right to speak about what's on their mind but to show respect for other's opinions. Mrs. Barcelona wishes for everyone to work together and not become known as a problem Council. Mrs. Spina asked if a storm drain/catch basin on Arlington Ave can be fixed? Dennis stated the catch basin is actually in the sidewalk not on the road. He will look into options.

A motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. McCorkle and seconded by Mr. Todora; all in favor.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. was made by Mr. McCorkle and seconded by Mr. Todora.