

The Borough of Speers Council met on October 5, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Mr. Rice, Mr. McCorkle, Mrs. Spina, Mrs. Barcelona, Mr. Daylong, Mr. Todora, Mr. Sauer and Mayor Herd.

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting was made by Mr. Daylong and seconded by Mr. McCorkle. Mr. Todora opposed the approval stating he did not call Mrs. Galiffa the “trash of the town.”

Secretary read the correspondence: Pension relief allocation \$5,260.87.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Police: September: 89 calls. **EMS:**13 calls for Charleroi. **Fire Dept:** 53 calls total. Reports available.

Streets & Sewers: Mr. Todora – Nothing to report.

Finance: Mr. McCorkle – September budget complete, available for review. Income = \$34,800.45. Expenses = \$43,112.16. YTD (+) 2,908.12.

Borough Improvement: Mr. Daylong – Nothing to report.

Streetlights: Nothing to report.

Parks: Mrs. Barcelona & Mr. Sauer – Nothing to report. Mrs. Spina will speak regarding the grant requirements for the Lower Speers Park.

Transit Authority: Mayor Herd – there seems to be language barriers on the bus routes regarding onboard announcements. They will record messages and looking into getting translators. They will also print out bus service schedules in multiple languages. The Authority is looking into purchasing 12 thirty-foot long natural gas buses.

Mr. Rice read Dennis Carson’s report: September – cut grass, weed whacked, cleaned park for rentals, flushed sewer lines on Lewis Ave, cleaned up basketball court and cut tree off the fence, cleaned around the park bathrooms and garage, moved boulders at the park to keep people from driving in the grass, cold-patch potholes, cut tree up on right of way at the IDC Park, 12 One Calls and 3 Downspout inspections.

Engineer: Not present. Secretary reported that no bids were received by the deadline for the bridge repair project. Mr. Krider will follow up since it is LSA grant money.

Solicitor: Mr. Lint will file 3 liens at the courthouse (35 Carson, 131 Schaffer, 142 Grandview). 165 Arlington was paid in full.

Grants: Mrs. Spina – had a pre-contract call regarding the grant requirements for the Lower Speers Park rehabilitation project. They advised to not move forward until after December 31st when the final approval will be in. Mrs. Spina is waiting for the final agreement contract. She is requesting park committee meetings to start finalizing details. Mrs. Spina asked Mayor Herd if he was able to secure the remaining matching funds. He was not able to receive any additional funding. He reached out to the businesses in the IDC Park and Lower Speers that have not already provided funds. Mrs. Spina suggested reaching out to Dr. DeRienzo and GE. Mayor Herd left messages with several offices and has not heard back. Mrs. Spina stated that one mandatory requirement is that we have to hire a design consultant. She has a list of possible companies. We can check if HMT is qualified to do this.

Mrs. Spina and Mrs. Barcelona attended the Tri-County Borough meeting. Jamie with the Mon Valley Alliance stated that you can apply for multiple LSA grants at the same time. Mrs. Spina has a copy of the grant application. You just have to number the importance of what grants you want. She provided a printout of the 2022 Local Share Account Program that lists the amount other communities received for projects. There is an LSA grant application that is due October 26th that would cover the storm drains/catch basins that Mr. Todora previously reported on. Mrs. Spina can work on catching up on the steps needed to apply for this if Mr. Todora can collect the information needed such as a brief description of the project, community impact, suspected outcome of the project, possible job creation, timeline and schedule, and letters of community support for the project. This information will need to be complete by October 11th. This would include catch basins for Davidson Dr. and Arlington Ave. Mrs. Spina will complete the grant application if others can gather the information that is requested.

Citizens: Mrs. Cisse, Fourth Street BBQ manager, spoke regarding the comments made by Mr. Todora during the last Council meeting. She stated "I'm a mother, a sister, an aunt, a friend to many, most people call me Lulu, but what I am not is a slave. The term Mr. Todora used in reference to employees at Fourth Street BBQ did not at all amuse or impress anyone. I'm an immigrant. I have lived in the United States for 20 years. I have lived many places but I chose to settle here. I am a graduate of Kentucky State University. I have a degree in Chemistry and a minor in Math. I'm well rounded. This is the only place I've come to where somebody in your capacity as an elected official to point out people of color as slaves. I've never seen that anywhere I've gone to. I don't think this Council here shares the same views that you do". She also stated that "From what I heard, most of the people from Council requested that you step down." Mrs. Cisse does not understand how Mr. Todora can say the things he says. Mr. Todora stated "I understand." She feels that Mr. Todora's resignation would benefit the borough.

Mr. Alan Duncan, President of the NAACP, attended the meeting because he received quite a few calls of complaints. He wanted to come to the meeting himself to ask about it and pray that it wouldn't continue. Mr. Duncan has a copy of the previous meeting minutes and stated the meeting must have been so bad that several Council members asked for Mr. Todora's resignation. Mr. Duncan said "I don't know if you meant it as a racial slur, but it came out that way, I guess. Anyone can feel as they choose to, but to put it out in public is spreading it." Mr. Duncan works with Dr. Zelich at the Charleroi School District as well. "We are in this thing together. The racial comments should not be made at a Council meeting or out there publicly for people to hear."

Gentleman did not give his name – spoke on the bridge work being done and the detour to the toll road. He wondered why the borough did not ask Penn Dot to allow the vehicles to not be charged a fee? He also commented that Speers needs another access road in and out of the area, if the road is blocked, we are trapped. He repeated Mr. Duncan's words "We are all Americans." He also said need to pray for each other and ask for forgiveness. Mr. Rice stated the previous access road off the Lillian Ave was closed by the state 20 years ago due to safety reasons. He then brought up the back hillside from the park. Mr. Daylong commented part of the hillside behind the park is private property. The gentleman also requested that the "Council meetings start with prayer, without god, things won't work."

Stan Wysochanski -227 Grandview Way – hasn't gone to church in 52 years.

John McDonough – Grandview Way – thanked Council for keeping up on the code violations for property maintenance. He is proud to be a resident here.

No Tax Collector's Report

Old Business: Mr. Daylong – questioned the status of the fence project at the basketball court; Dennis and Tim fixed the fence.

New Business: Mr. McCorkle – suggested plans for Halloween: October 29th - Parade line-up at the church at 4:30, continue down Jane Ave to State St to the Borough Building where donated treat bags and prizes (3 categories) will be handed out with Trick or Treat to follow 6p.m. – 8p.m. Fire Dept will drive around the Borough during Trick or Treat. The information will be posted on the website, Facebook page and digital sign.

Mr. McCorkle would like to donate 4 trees (1 Red Bud, 3 Oak) to be planted at the park. One Red Bud tree would be in memory of Ralph and Lorraine Rice. Mr. Rice would like one Oak Tree be in honor of William Klamorick.

Mr. McCorkle spoke on rental inspections: get a list of addresses and confirm that inspections are being done by HMT. Mrs. Barcelona - this will include rent-to-own properties as well.

Mayor Herd thanked the residents and visitors who attended the meeting and spoke on their concerns. He reminded Council members to be respectful with comments on social media. He would like to see more speed limit signs posted throughout the Borough. Mayor Herd would like to see a stop sign installed at the corner of State & Elizabeth. He suggested Council start working on next year's budget. He would like everyone to start thinking of ideas for Christmas events in the Borough. He suggested getting design plans/ideas for the Lower Speers Park. Plans were already completed and submitted as part of the requirements for applying for the grant.

Mr. Todora stated he wants the Council meetings recorded and posted to the website; not Skype or Zoom. He wants "old-fashioned, doesn't matter who is here, doesn't matter if it's a room full of Democrats or a room full of Republicans, just you believe in what you believe in and you should be able to say it out loud. It should be recorded and we should all be in it. I am recording right now. I don't want to put the camera in just a couple people's faces, that feels rude so I'm not going to do that anymore. I really think that if you believe in the things that you say, you would not mind being recorded. There is a couple things that will get me to leave and that is one third of it. I think that we should have a camera in here, just at least one posted showing us on Council and what honest person would have a problem with that. That's what I have to say." Mayor Herd stated we can look at doing everything online during the council meetings and post it on the website but he is not sure how to do that. Mr. Todora recommended Youtube and Facebook. Mayor Herd suggested Zoom. Mr. Todora - "just like Skype went out of style, how long till Zoom does. We just need a consistent area that people can go to and review Council. How isn't that not fair?" Mrs. Spina – "What do you mean by that is one of things that will get you to leave? I don't understand your motive." Mr. Todora – "I'll resign. I won't run again for Council if a couple things have..... transparency is basically the only thing. And there is a couple things, that if we get that, then I'm good." Mrs. Spina – "We are transparent." Mr. Todora – "I mean like with a camera recording us, you know, stuff like that." Mrs. Barcelona – "Jody already records every meeting." Mr. Todora wants it video recorded. Mr. Todora wants to vote on it. He never requested for it to be added to the agenda, so it cannot be acted on. Mr. Rice stated that "We cannot add cameras in the social hall. We are just in here temporarily." Mr. Todora – "cameras weigh less than these tables and they are in here, so we can do it. We have the technology. There is no reason not to. There is not a good reason at all." As Mr.

McCorkle stated at the last meeting, "Mr. Todora, I think you would need to have everything in line and then bring it to the table and make sure he requests that it be added to the agenda. You are using taxpayer's dollars to pay for a camera. If have to also look at the camera, what it would sit on, which platform would it be recorded on, and have to pay the monthly subscription or go through Facebook live and upload it through You tube or use Zoom or Skype. Do the research, add it to the agenda, and bring it back to Council." Mr. Todora agreed.

Mrs. Spina – "I would like to address the community as well. I want to thank all of you for coming and I'm sorry that anybody in this room was made to feel inferior to anybody and that is not the views of our whole Council. You are welcome here any time."

Mr. Alan Duncan – "One of the reasons I'm here, which I spoke about, being on camera, whatever is going on at Council meetings, we in a matter of speaking, everyone needs to be careful of what is said, the camera and mic applies to everyone. Mr. Todora – "you would have preferred to have seen me on camera, correct sir?" Mr. Duncan – "I wouldn't prefer to see that at all." Mr. Todora – "you would have preferred to have seen how I was behaving not hear about it? Because I am a public official. You have every right not to vote for me or like me but don't you want to see what is going on?" Mr. Duncan – "that's why I'm here." Mr. Todora – "what about if there is another Council happening right now that you need to see, you can't be in two places at once. You would want to see." Mr. Duncan – "If there was another complaint from another Council, there would be another member there. There are more members than Councils around here." Mr. Todora – "what if you wanted to show it on a clip or something? Wouldn't that help your cause? Just to make me more honest?" Mr. Duncan – "No, that would just spread it more like I said earlier. I am not out to do that." Mr. Todora – "I'm sorry that you guys feel like that. You're seeing the tip of the iceberg with all this. I'm probably the only person, well except you guys, but I'm probably the only person in this room who consistently hangs out with Black people." Mr. Rice – "what does this have to do with it?" Mr. Todora – "They are acting like.... she said that I'm doing something wrong and there is something hateful. It's not hateful. It's this millionaire over here who is taking advantage of a whole bunch of other people who are here on cycle. They are not even living here. He is treating them - I hope my sons don't have a boss like that guy. He is treating them like crap. He is treating them horribly. I hate that man. He's a bad person. I will always stand by that. Mr. Rice stopped further comment from Mr. Todora. Mrs. Cisse – "I work for that man. I work for Dave Barbe. He is a wonderful person if you know him. I am one of the managers there. I have worked there for 3 years. All the employees come through my department." Mr. Todora – "And they all go back to Haiti too, they are all on cycles." Another employee stated "I work there too and I am an American and it is embarrassing to see the arguing and bickering over something stupid like this in front of the foreigners that come here with unity; they are just trying to feed their families." Mr. Duncan – "I hope your children never use that word." Mrs. Cisse asked Mr. Todora if he has ever been to the plant? Mr. Todora – "No, his level of secrecy..... Mr. Rice interrupted and stopped further comment due to legalities. Mr. Todora – "What's the problem? What am I doing that is illegal?" Council President has the right to stop discussions during the meeting.

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

A motion to adjourn them meeting at 8:28 p.m. was made by Mr. McCorkle and seconded by Mrs. Barcelona.