

ROCKLEDGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
OF
November 12, 2007

The Rockledge Borough Council met at 7:30 p.m. on November 12, 2007 at the Rockledge Borough Hall. After the prayer and Pledge of Allegiance, the roll was called as follows: Mr. Denelsbeck, Mrs. Walz, Mr. Beady, Mr. Kelleher, Mr. Caffrey, Mrs. Kehoe and Mayor Praediger.

Mayor Praediger presented Boy Scout Troop 226 with a plaque honoring them for their heroic and courageous actions in assisting an injured hiker on October 20, 2007 while camping in Berks County.

Representative George Kenny also presented Boy Scout Troop 226 with citations from the Pennsylvania House just saying thank you for a job well done. The troop has been invited to the House floor to be given a formal citation from the entire House of Representatives.

Motion was made to accept the October 8, and October 29, 2007 minutes. All were in favor.

Law & Planning: Mr. Beady made a motion to accept the monthly building inspector's report. All were in favor.

Finance: Mrs. Walz made a motion to accept the monthly bills and tax collector's report. All were in favor.

Mr. Caffrey advised the cost from changing building inspectors to the end of this year is roughly -\$800.00. Mr. Denelsbeck asked about the adjusted permit fees? Mr. Hartey and Mr. Beady will meet next week to discuss.

Mr. Denelsbeck discussed the 2008 budget. The fund balance is \$44,000 which is less than the recommended 3% and this is on assumption that the trash collection fee will not change. We think the trash fees are going to change pretty much, so we did not adjust the budget for that. We need to adopt a preliminary budget tonight. We are looking at cutting something else to increase the surplus, or raising the taxes. Mr. Kelleher asked how much are we looking at, Mr. Denelsbeck advised about \$25,000, which is about a .2 mill increase. The \$25,000 is assuming that the trash is going up a little bit. Assumes about a 5% increase. We have adjusted all the income numbers, and we have adjusted all the expense numbers. We have cut salaries. We went from \$32,000 to \$28,000 for the streets crew. The Sewage Treatment bill is a fixed bill. Mr. Denelsbeck left some alternatives. 1st we are carrying an extra police officer, which costs about \$90,000, salary and benefits. 2nd, we can increase the taxes .2 mill, which is about \$40.00 a house. There is nothing else to cut. Mr. Beady stated he wants to keep the police officer. Per Joe Bresnan, the trash fee ordinance can be established after the start of the new year. So if the trash is astronomically out of control, that is a separate ordinance, that is not a taxing ordinance, so if we get wacked on the 26th of November, we can adjust the trash fee ordinance. Mr. Denelsbeck's recommendation is a .2 mill increase. We are at the point that each year it is going to cost a little bit more and a little bit more. We are retiring some debt with the county, so that is better. The \$40.00 a year is on a house assessed at \$140,000. The last time taxes were raised was two years ago.

Mr. Denelsbeck made a motion to adopt the preliminary budget as amended. All were in favor. We will do the proper advertising and we need do the PAX Ordinance sets the rate at 4.35.

Public Service: Mrs. Kehoe had nothing to report at this time.

Public Safety: Mr. Caffrey made a motion to accept the Police, Fire Marshal, Second Alarmers Report (August and September) and Fire Company Reports. All were in favor.

Streets, Lights, and Sewers: Mr. Kelleher made a motion to accept the Streets Opening Report. All were in favor.

The Gator should be here next week. Leaf collection has been light.

Recreation: Mrs. Walz had nothing at this time.

Property: Mr. Beady had nothing at this time.

Personnel: Mr. Denelsbeck has had a preliminary discussion with a number of people about the reduction of council people from 7 to 5, and it's something that he doesn't know that we have to do as a body; he thinks he can do it as a resident? Per Joe Bresnan the petition can be presented even without council's involvement. This is why Mr. Denelsbeck

has brought this up. It is not because he doesn't like any of the other council members. It is becoming very difficult to find 4 people to serve here or 5 people to serve here, let alone 7. It is much more difficult to find people to serve. He has to strong arm them, make them personal promises and all sorts of things that he has done for some of you to get you to run, and the other party in this town doesn't seem to put anybody up either. Mr. Caffrey is not running in two years. This has been the deal from the beginning. Mr. Caffrey will have served 21 years at the end of his term. In four years, for those of us who just ran he doesn't know if everyone will run again. So what happens, as explained to him, in the next election, two years, the 3 incumbents, or whoever would run, would only run for 2 seats and then for two years we would have 6 and then when it is the next turn it would be 4 of us assuming would run for 3 seats. Mr. Denelsbeck is going to personally circulate the petition unless someone vehemently is opposed to this. Mr. Kelleher and Mrs. Walz are both opposed to this. We should just wait until this happens. Mrs. Kehoe asked, what if someone bails and we cannot fill the seat? Mr. Bresnan advised that you would have to go to court and have somebody named. Anybody could go to court and say that there is a vacancy and I want that seat. And it is not about control. Mr. Kelleher stated if anybody can go to court and say I want that seat, then they can also run for the position when it is available, why would you go to court when all you have to do is come in and say put me on the ballot. Mr. Bresnan advised it takes time. There has to be a hearing and 5% of the population needs to sign the petition. Mayor Praediger asked if there is a timing issue for the petition. Mr. Denelsbeck advised him that it has to be done before the next election. This is something that will have to be dealt with within a year and a half? Yes per Mr. Denelsbeck. Mr. Kelleher stated to wait until then. Mr. Denelsbeck is tired of begging people to run for council. He is tired of strong arming people to stay 2 and 3 extra years. The problem is it is very hard to fill these seats.

Mr. Kelleher asked why we don't put out some literature saying that we need some council people. Mr. Denelsbeck stated in the last two newsletters he has put in if you are interested in serving on Borough Council or serving on the School Board to let him know, and he received 1 call. When there was a vacancy he called the 1 phone call he received back and they were not interested. Mr. Kelleher asked what is the next step, let Abington absorb Rockledge? Mr. Denelsbeck stated yes that is the next step. At some point monetarily your going to get to that point, where it is going to be cheaper for the people of Rockledge to be part of the township than it is to be Rockledge. That is a very real possibility. 4.35 mills is kind of high around here. Mr. Caffrey made a statement that new people to the Borough might not be used to "Volunteering" and it might scare them.

The tax rate in Abington is less, but it costs more to do business there. Mr. Denelsbeck is not asking for a vote on this. He needs to think about this more. He may be back at this next month, or just do it himself.

Public Comment:

Mr. Goldberg: He sees this discussion as a catch 22 situation. Right now we have 100% of the responsibility spread out over 7 people and what you are asking is that this 100% would be spread out over 5 people. This might make it even more difficult to attract new members. Mr. Denelsbeck advised that the workload from pre 1993 to now for a council person is different, because there is a manager. The work council used to do as individuals and the work we do now is tremendously different, so he doesn't know it is more. A lot of it would fall on the manager. There is an X factor of a staff that didn't exist.

Mr. Kirby: You want to go from 7 to 5 when you say it is already too much work. Mr. Denelsbeck corrected Mr. Kirby. He did not say it was too much work, he said he can't find anyone to do it. He said it is much less work now then it used to be.

Mr. Naudauscher: Taxes are going up because of the trash fees. If the trash fees are not high, what happens with the taxes? The taxes are still being increased.

Mr. Denelsbeck made a motion to adjourn. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Hines
Administrative Assistant