

Marietta Borough Council
Minutes of Meeting held December 12, 2023
113 East Market Street, Marietta, PA

President States with Council members Marsh, Dalzell, DeBottis, Wills, Mayor Carroll Baltozer and Solicitor Harter present, called the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Marietta Borough Council to order at 7:00 PM. Absent were Council member Lauver and Vice President Hudson. The meeting opened with a moment of silence followed by the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Raeann Schatz, W. Fairview Avenue – Could not find where the agenda is on the borough website. Secretary Hall stated that it is under Notices. Raeann asked if it could be moved under “Agendas”. Secretary Hall stated that she will look into it.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

President States asked for a motion to approve the November 14th minutes. Council member DeBottis made a motion to accept the November 14th minutes with a second by Council member Marsh. Motion is carried unanimously by voice vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President States stated that Kringle Krawl is next Saturday, December 16th. It's a fund raiser for Pioneer Fire Company. It will be from 8pm – 11pm. You can buy \$10 wrist bands that get you discounts on select cocktails and Victory Beer at participating bars. Last year \$2700 was raised for the fire company. It's a fun event.

REPORTS

Fire Police/EMA – Steve Bailey – Steve was not at the meeting due to an emergency. Steve did turn in his reports. Mayor Carroll Baltozer stated that 2 new members were sworn in for the Special Fire Police.

Pioneer Fire Company — For the month of November they did 13 Fire Calls and 19 QRS Calls for a total of 32 calls. Brandon Smith stated that he just wanted to remind everyone that working smoke detectors saves lives and property. Santa will be coming around on the 22nd in Marietta and the 23rd in Maytown.

Pioneer Fire Company Financial Statement – Jeffery Marsh - The reported balance as of September 30, 2023, was \$14,400.51. Total withdrawals were \$2,097.35. Total deposits were \$5,500.00 from the Borough. Balance as of October 31, 2023, is \$17,803.16. Council member Marsh made the motion to accept the report as presented with a second by Council member Dalzell. Motion is carried unanimously by voice vote.

Sewer –Freddy States – President States gave the report dated November 2023. The sewer fund has a savings account balance of \$187,913.66. Total receipts \$79,300.54. Interest \$10.22. Total receipts and interest are \$79,310.76. Disbursements \$8,999.90. Ending balance of \$258,224.52. Checking account beginning balance \$3,436.98. Total receipts \$0, interest \$0.01. Total receipts and interest are \$0.01. Disbursements \$2,849.00. Ending balance \$587.99. The monthly ending balance breakdown as of November 30, 2023, checking account is \$587.99, money market-savings is \$258,224.52 for a grand total of \$258,812.51. President States motioned to accept the report as presented with a second by Council member DeBottis. Motion is carried unanimously by voice vote.

Schedule B Monthly Municipal Report for the month of November 2023. Single Stream 18760 lbs. LCSWMA, Yard Waste 25860 lbs. Blue Lane – Columbia Borough. 44620 total pounds recycled, 22.31 equivalent tons, 60.89 tons of refuse collected. President States motioned to accept the report as presented with a second by Council member Dalzell. Motion is carried unanimously by voice vote.

Treasurer – Julie Hall – The General Fund Monthly Breakdown dated December 7, 2023, was presented to

council. The total general fund accounts are \$551,506.65.

Secretary – Julie Hall – Council received the profit and loss statements for the months January–November. At the end of November, we show that our income is \$135,512.35 for the month. Council member Dalzell motioned to accept the treasurer/secretary report as presented with a second by Council member DeBottis. Motion is carried unanimously by voice vote.

Zoning – Ron Kistler – no report

Vesta Furnace – Dave Haneman – committee met last Wednesday at the home of Kelly and Rebecca Murphy. The Canal Panel has been installed on the east side of Chickies Creek. The Rivertownes' books that were at Sager and Swisher have been completed and everything balanced. Michael is retiring and Sager and Swisher will be closing. We had a small group for the walking tour that was on November 5th. James Landis, Lenny and Dave conducted the tours. Went through the old Furnace trail and people were very interested. End of year/beginning of new year, board members were up for election. The only change was that Joe was not at the meeting, so he was not nominated. Rick Stiver will once again be 1st President. Del Ellsworth will be treasurer, Adam Mattern will be secretary and President will be Dave for 2024. Kelly Murphy forwarded an email that there is a group that is looking to establish the Columbia Underground Railroad Museum. There was some discussion regarding this considering that the Mifflin House in Wrightsville will also be an underground railroad headquarters, do we need another one so close? The National Heritage Area has been approved by the federal government. A grant writer was hired to look at grants since there will be some money available. Starting in 2024 Lancaster and York will be the 55th National Heritage Area in the United States. 462 Bridge project will not start until 2025. 10-ton limit will still stay in affect due to the condition of the bridge. Scott Mingus will be speaking at the Columbia Crossing on December 13th.

Mayor's Report – Rebecca Carroll Baltozer – over 1300 people attended the candlelight tour. MRA raised over \$22,000.00. Mayor Carroll Baltozer stated that she feels it's important for the residents of Marietta to realize that the money raised for the event goes to the Old Towne Hall and Union Meeting House, which are actually Borough buildings. If it wasn't for MRA raising money to take care of those buildings, it would be our tax dollars that would be taking care of those buildings. Mayor Carroll Baltozer thanked everyone for working together in 2023 and looks forward to doing good things in 2024.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Administrative – President States

President States stated that we had a short meeting last month. Discussed applying for grants in 2024. Our main focuses will be continuing Front Street and another phase of War Memorial Park.

We also discussed some of the new council members coming on and possible committees that they would chair or be on this next year. Obviously, we would want to get to know everyone and see where their skill sets are.

We talked about Norfolk Southern trying to get us close down any crossings that we would be willing to give up. They wanted Gay Street and Bank Street. We stated that Gay Street is off the table. It's the center of town. They offered \$60,000.00 for Bank Street crossing. There was a formal complaint concerning the Bank Street crossing and this is why we are having the discussion. We had our engineer come out and give us an estimate on what it would cost to pave the area and he gave us an estimate of around \$60,000.00. President States stated that if we are willing to give up one of our crossings, it needs to be for something big. President States asked them for all the land they own from Bank Street to Robert Mowrer Drive Parking lot for \$1.00 so we can continue the trail there, which is what we wanted from the beginning. We also had our engineer give us an estimate of what it would cost to do that part of the trail, and it came in just under \$200,000.00. We told Norfolk Southern it would take \$100,000.00 so that we could use that for a 50/50 match to apply for a grant to continue that trail. We have not heard back as of yet.

President States asked for a motion to approve the 2024 Budget and tax rate, which did not change or go up. Council member Dalzell made a motion to approve the 2024 Budget and tax rate with a second from Council member DeBottis. Motion carries unanimously by voice vote.

President States asked for a motion to move the unused compensated absences to the assigned fund balance. Unused compensated absences are sick time, personal and vacation time, etc. Council member Dalzell made a motion to move the unused compensated absences to the assigned fund balance with a second from Council member DeBottis. Motion carries unanimously by voice vote.

President States asked for a motion to approve Resolution 13-2023 Fee Schedule. Nothing changed this year. We did look through it and there are some dated numbers that we should probably take a look at this year. Council member DeBottis made a motion to approve Resolution 13-2023 Fee Schedule with a second from Council member Dalzell. Motion carries unanimously by voice vote.

President States asked for a motion to approve White, Rudy as the new Borough auditor. Secretary Hall stated that we put out a RFP to the top 4 that other municipalities have and we did not hear back from anyone except for White, Rudy. Council member Dalzell made a motion to approve White, Rudy as the new Borough Auditor with a second from Council member DeBottis. Motion carries unanimously by voice vote.

Planning/Zoning/Environmental – Bill Dalzell – no meeting

Public Outreach – Vice President Hudson – no meeting

Public Safety – Miles Lauver – no meeting

Public Works – Jeff Marsh – the new scoreboard has been installed and hooked up to the electricity. Still cleaning leaves throughout the borough. Hopefully that will be done within the next two weeks. All the equipment has been prepared for snow removal.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

JOINT SEWER AUTHORITY – Jeffery Marsh – screw press pilot testing is still ongoing. A wet well pump has been replaced at the plant. The dispute with Kline has been resolved and check sent out. Still working on our 2024 budget and hopefully will be approved at the December meeting.

Shade Tree Committee – Bill Dalzell – The committee met on December 7th. Council member Dalzell stated that on November 24th there was a tree planting event held on the River Trail. Over 187 trees were planted by 25 volunteers who's ages ranged from 5 – 70. Very good turnout. There is a growing list of volunteers who want to be involved. We are in need of another member who can consistently attend meetings. We will be working with the Beatification committee to see how we can help with the Cherry Blossom Trees. There is a workshop on invasive species if the Borough is interested in sending anyone from the Shade Tree Committee. There is a fee of \$150.00 per person.

MESA – Vice President Hudson – nothing has changed.

War Memorial Park – President Freddy States – President States stated that the only thing that changed is the scoreboard was installed. Ann Yost is in touch with the contractor for the tennis/pickleball courts to see where we are in getting the project finished. Locks will be put on to make sure the courts are secured.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

President States stated that this is the last meeting for Council members Dalzell, Marsh and Wills. President States would like to thank each of them for their service. You are very much appreciated.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Raeann Schatz, W. Fairview Avenue – The reason she asked about the agenda is that in the paper

yesterday, under municipal briefs, Conoy had a blurb in there about MESA and that they were waiting for Marietta because Marietta was having a meeting with Life Lion in December. Is this true? President States stated that it is true, however, here is the conundrum. We went past our 55 days, which was our window of time to get out of MESA. Life Lion is not able to offer us any guarantees of anything until they have their December meeting. President States talked to Conoy, and they are hoping that they can postpone being involved in MESA at this point. President States stated that if you are involved with MESA at this point, there is no out without a buyout. Solicitor Harter stated that is correct. They are beyond their objection window. You can certainly listen to what Life Lion has to tell you, but you are beyond with window to voluntarily withdrawal from MESA without a buyout. RaeAnn stated that she thought you could pull out at any time. Solicitor Harter explained that you can, but there is a buyout. You have to pay a certain amount decreasing per year over so many years. President States stated that he talked to Scott from Life Lion and he just can't do anything right now with any guarantee. So, if we were to upset the apple cart with MESA right now, we could end up with nothing. The only way we would jump and go with Life Lion is if we would have an actual unit here. Life Lion stated that they could possibly place a unit here that could service Conoy and us, but they would need until at least March to make that decision. We cannot do that. It wouldn't be safe for our residents. We are pretty much locked into MESA at this point. RaeAnn asked if we know what their buyout would be and are the fees set. Solicitor Harter stated that the fees are set, however, at this point we do not know what the buyout would be yet. The board has not met yet to take that approval.

Linda Ross – Fairview Avenue – asked for clarification of the closing of Bank Street crossing. Why did Norfolk Southern want to pay us for Bank Street crossing? What's in it for them? President States stated that Norfolk would get that crossing. They would close it down and we don't get control of what degree that would be. It's also a break for them insurance wise. They could as simply put up signs stating railroad crossing only, no trespassing. Or they could put up fencing or ballards. Because of the complaint, being an unsafe service, they were willing to pay. However, \$60,000.00 is not worth a crossing. Soliitor Harter stated that Marietta Borough is responsible either way for paving it since there was a complaint. If we don't take their offer, we would just have to pay for that out of municipal funds. Linda stated that she was talking to Ernie Lehman and he has some ideas of ways that could be a lot safer without paving. President States asked if she would forward that to him.

Steve Shireman – W. Walnut Street – proud lifetime member of the Pioneer Fire Company. Someone made a comment about the \$85.00 per resident or family being hard to swallow. Steve stated that when he was fire chief, he is the one that actually got the ball in motion to get the fire tax involved. Not sure how much the community is involved with the economics of the fire company. It is 100% volunteer fire company. We spend countless hours of training, of fundraising. There were times when we would spend 15 hours a day to make \$200.00 for chicken bbq. And that doesn't count the \$500.00 in diesel fuel spent trying to make that \$200.00. The fire tax is the greatest thing we did. Is it enough, Steve doesn't think it is. He feels it should be more. Even if we went with Life Lion down the road, he thinks we should make that fire tax part of MESA and still charge that fee. Not sure if everyone knows this, but the fire company only gets 17% return on that annual fund drive that is sent out. The fire company does not discriminate. When the fire sound goes off, they go to that call. You would think the fire company would have 100% from their community, but it just doesn't happen.

Presidents States made a motion to adjourn the meeting, with a second from Council member Dalzell. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

BOROUGH SEAL

Respectfully submitted,

Julie A. Hall
Secretary/Treasurer