

**Lansdowne Borough Council
General Meeting**

July 15, 2020

APPROVED MINUTES

The Lansdowne Borough Council General Meeting was held remotely via teleconference on Wednesday, July 15, 2020, 7:00 p.m. Members present: Mr. Hover, Ms. Byrne, Ms. English, Mr. Holt, Ms. James, Mr. Schleigh and Ms. Taylor. Also present: Mayor Campuzano, Borough Manager Totaro, Borough Solicitor Scott, Borough Secretary Henry, Borough Engineer Matson and Police Chief Donegan. Absent: Fire Company representative.

President Hover opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Mayor Campuzano.

Agenda: Ms. Byrne moved to approve the agenda. Ms. English seconded. Mr. Schleigh added a separate report after the Environment Committee report. Ms. English moved to approve the amended motion, seconded by Ms. Byrne. Vote: unanimous.

Minutes: Ms. English moved to approve the June 17, 2020 general meeting minutes of Borough Council. Ms. James seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Announcements and Presentations:

1. The Mayor announced that a representative of the Lansdowne Friends School, Linda Senna, was present to discuss safety measures for the upcoming school year. Ms. Senna, Administrative Assistant to the Head of the Friends School, commented that plans are underway to address the health and safety of staff and students when the school opens in September. There will be directional traffic problems due to changes in the drop off and pick up sites. Specifically, the change is for traffic going onto Stewart from Lansdowne Avenue and exiting at Owen Avenue and changing the two way street to one way for the school year. Ms. Senna noted she had been in contact with Simpson House who indicated they were having the same traffic issues. The change would endure only for the school year, starting on September 10, 2020, Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Multiple staff may be at curbside for temperature checks but traffic congestion will be a problem. There may be different sign in times for arrival so as to spread out the congestion.

Parents and visitors will not be allowed on campus. Chief Donegan expressed concerns with the proposed directions and recommended traffic go east on Owen Avenue to Lansdowne Avenue so cars will face in the right direction and avoid making U-turns.

President Hover asked the Solicitor for the correct advertising and legal procedures to be further discussed under New Business.

2. The Mayor introduced Siddiq Kamar, a Lansdowne resident who is also a representative of the Liberian community in Lansdowne. Mr. Kamar thanked Borough Council leadership from top to bottom for promoting this special day and leading the way for the immigrant community. He added that July 26 is Liberian Independence Day and will be recognized in Philadelphia as well. The borough event will be held that same day starting at 10 a.m. with guest speakers and the Liberian community at borough hall.

Due to the upcoming 2020 census, different tribes will be attending to connect with and find ways to get involved with other immigrant populations in Lansdowne.

The Mayor continued his report as follows:

- Continue social distancing and mask wearing even though we are in the Green Phase of reopening.
- The first floor of borough hall will be open for overnight parking permits. Temperature checks and masks will be provided for those without one. The borough web site will have further overnight parking information starting July 20.
- There will be walk up and drive through Covid-19 testing on August 11, 12 and 13 in the Highland Avenue parking lot.
- Parks will be open but not the basketball, tennis and soccer courts.
- Complaints were received at last week's Public Safety Committee meeting about speeding motorists.
- A group of residents submitted a letter asking for transparency on borough matters and police personnel. The remotely held Mayor's Forum on July 29 will address these and other concerns/requests.
- National Night Out event has been cancelled this year due to pandemic.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Totaro read the Treasurer's Report ended June 30, 2020 as follows:

General Fund: beginning balance - \$793,851; ending balance \$3,542,009.

Sewer Fund: beginning balance - \$1,192,271; ending balance \$1,617,033.

Liquid Fuels Fund: beginning balance - \$789,699; ending balance \$1,033,421

Non-Uniform Pension Fund: beginning balance - \$3,549,495; ending balance \$3,383,742.

Police Pension Fund: beginning balance - \$10,301,696; ending balance \$9,204,288.

President Hover asked for the benefit of the audience what expected expenses would be used for the General Fund. Mr. Totaro indicated a beginning balance of \$793,000 that now has a surplus of about \$2,748,000 for the rest of the year. President Hover asked if a meeting had been held with the Police Pension Fund advisors. Mr. Totaro noted they meet on a quarterly basis and assumptions are made each year that the Fund will recognize a 7.5% increase. Even though \$392,000 was incurred for half the year in support of current retirees, the fund is in very good shape due to the stock market recovering virtually all losses in March and April.

Solicitor's Report: Mr. Scott had no formal report.

Mayor's Report: The Mayor reported as follows:

- Congratulated Officer Michael Miller on his Class B promotion.
- Complaints have been received about the Ardmere and Stratford Avenue intersection having no lighting and some street lights knocked out in other areas.

Council President's Report: President Hover reported as follows:

- Commended mayoral proclamation for Liberian Independence Day. A representative from the American Legion Post 65 will be at the upcoming event as well.
- Recently participated in a talk show about the Liberian community in Lansdowne that was widely broadcast.

- Virtual code enforcement is proceeding smoothly and the community is encouraged to observe the safety precautions to prevent Covid-19 spread.

Committee Reports:

Public Health and Safety – Ms. Taylor reported as follows:

- Would like to use parking lot 1 to do a drive by celebration ceremony for graduating seniors.
- Speed humps are being requested at other sites along Scottdale Road due to speeding issues.
- Overgrown brush is blocking traffic signage along some Baltimore Avenue areas.
- There was a fatal accident involving a male crossing the train tracks on July 7 due to not yielding to the traffic arms for oncoming trains.
- There are two possible employees for Covid-19 training.
- Masks will be provided to borough hall visitors and a separate temperature check site was requested.
- The Fire House live in program was discussed by Committee.
- Recommendation received for Seek TIC thermal gear for detecting heat in walls for a cost of about \$749.00. Will be used for a variety of facilities such as child care, schools, etc.
- Reviewed Finance Committee request to install credit card payment device for parking tickets and permits in borough hall. Any consensus will be reviewed.
- Ms. Taylor asked the Mayor and Chief Donegan if assistance was needed for senior living facilities during the pandemic. The Mayor will reach out on this issue.
- Other resident concerns have been received regarding increased speeding incidents, more police presence on streets, additional signage for speeding limits and children at play, a police plan in place for any civil unrest and use of force policy for police that is reviewed on a yearly basis.
- No issues so far with mask wearing.
- Discussed why the high school could not be used for Covid-19 testing due to necessity for air conditioning and a separate eating room.

Mr. Schleigh asked if Ms. Taylor's committee would look into having a public safety officer when the high school reopens. He expressed concerns with why mask wearing was not being enforced at the school while other area schools were mandating it. He also felt that a lot of people were not taking the pandemic seriously and the borough needs to be prepared for another resurgence of the virus. Ms. Taylor indicated there is a requirement to wear face masks unless there is a health issue and health issues cannot be questioned. President Hover asked how mask wearing could be mandated and what recourse is available for the borough. Mr. Scott noted that the state has voluntary compliance and imposes weak fines but boroughs and school districts can ask visitors to wear masks unless they have a health issue. Mr. Scott will look further into whether the borough can exert any control over the school district in this regard.

The Mayor asked why the borough was getting involved instead of the school district, indicating there should be pressure to have a health officer at the Penn Wood High School and Ardmore Avenue Elementary school. President Hover directed Mr. Schleigh to provide a draft ordinance to be presented at the next Public Safety Committee meeting concerning a Public Health official enforcing masks in the school.

President Hover asked how the recently passed House Bills 1841 And 1910 will impact the borough. Ms. Taylor commented that H.B. 1910 requires mental health evaluations with focus on PTSD of police officers as a condition for continued employment. District Judges are also required to complete one

course on identification and reporting of suspected child abuse. H.B. 1841 requires a thorough background check prior to employment and any negative information has to be disclosed. Chief Donegan indicated this practice is already in place for Lansdowne and goes above and beyond the state requirements. The Chief had concerns and questions about the PTSD issue and wants to further discuss this in Committee, specifically how to handle an officer who has PTSD due to an event they witnessed.

Finance & Administration & Codes – Ms. James reported that most of her committee items were already discussed under Mr. Totaro’s report. Additional committee items discussed included:

- Reviewed the Earned Income Tax (“EIT”) and how it relates to those working from home.
- Have not been able to find too many grant opportunities re: losses from Covid-19.
- Real estate taxes are on track for projections. All committees need to consider their budgets for next year that will be discussed at the September business meeting of Council.

The next Finance Committee meeting will be held on August 3 and PNC fund advisors will be present either that same day or another day in August.

Economic Development – Mr. Hover reported the following items discussed in his committee:

- TCDI grant and its impact. Will be moving forward with gathering information on this bike plan for Delaware County that is in conjunction with East Lansdowne, Yeadon and Upper Darby.
- CDBG grants – borough is on list to get approval for help re: sanitation and \$400,000 received for the McKinley Avenue tot lot.
- Upcoming Liberia Independence Day.
- Upgrades to the reopened Veterans Park and The Landing. The Walkshed Plan will also be reviewed to provide additional conceptual details on revisions and upgrading so as to apply for another CDBG grant.
- Historic Lansdowne Theater Corporation (“HLTC”). Director Matt Schultz discussed plans at length at last month’s Council meeting. A resolution will be passed for applying for a grant on behalf of the HLTC. Projected opening date is some time in 2022. Code variances and the borough’s position on this support will be further discussed under Mr. Matson’s report.
- Ecuador Independence Day – August 10. President Hover introduced Mr. Wilson as the advocate from the Ecuadorian community in Lansdowne. Mr. Wilson previously lived in East Lansdowne and his group does a variety of Latino park related family events. August 10 will be celebrated all over the world as their independence day. Mr. Wilson asked if Borough Council could consider having sports related and children’s events next year related to this community. President Hover commented he definitely wanted to celebrate it next year.

Environment – Ms. English reported as follows:

- Park and Rec Board met on July 13 to reassess CDC recommendations on a monthly basis. Some items to be opened include play structures and swings. The Landing furniture placement will be evaluated in keeping with the six foot distance requirement. Park bathrooms will not be open so no permits will be processed for the soccer and other fields.
- Online programming for classes or holding smart classes in the parks. Once Borough Council approves the mandated CDC precautions and guidelines for Covid-19, the information will be posted on the borough web site, newsletter and Facebook.

Going forward the Environment Committee meetings will be held the 3rd Monday of each month. Next meeting is August 17.

Lansdowne Boys and Girls Club Report: Mr. Schleigh reported the Club is currently in a holding pattern for soccer fall programs and field use as a precaution against virus related illnesses. The Club house is being cleaned out and listed for sale. Various items will be given away to interested organizations, such as trophies from the 1970's, folding chairs and tables, one pool table, floor tiles, 8' ladder and a basketball backboard. The Club will next meet on July 29, 7:30 p.m.

Community Relations – Miss Byrne reported as follows:

- The Committee met the 1st Tuesday of the month.
- Dr. B. Coates is the new William Penn School District superintendent.
- LBPA did not meet this month but will meet next month.
- The Library is hoping to reopen in early August with contactless drop off and pickup.
- Borough Hall reopening was discussed and all seemed to be well moving into the Green Phase.
- Responses to the census are a bit low around the area of Pepper's Pharmacy and south of Baltimore and Union Avenues. There may be a second postcard mailing to help increase awareness of the importance of filling out the census. A representative will be present on Liberian Independence Day to help provide access to previously unknown census areas. New flyers are being sent to child care facilities, the Y and churches to explain the impact of not filling out the census and the available school lunch programs.
- Had a lengthy discussion about the Arts Board. The 2013 Culture Works study was reviewed regarding the Board's vision and proposed use of the 2020 House during that time. Due to current changing circumstances, the feasibility of using that study or a hybrid of it will be sent to the Economic Development Committee for further review.

The next Community Relations Committee meeting will be held on August 4 at 6:30 p.m.

Infrastructure and Public Works – Mr. Holt reported the next Committee meeting will be held on July 27. The biggest item for discussion is the Delcora sale but no other information has been provided. Borough Engineer Matson added that the main plan is to sell Delcora to Aqua Water in September. Lansdowne, along with 48 other municipalities in Delaware County, must prepare comments regarding the resolution for adopting the sale and if there are objections or concerns with any possible negative impact on Lansdowne. President Hover asked the Solicitor how to proceed. Mr. Scott indicated he has a conflict in that he handles several County issues and recommended waiting for additional County information before proceeding with any steps and then referring it to the Infrastructure Committee for a decision on how to process the DEP review.

Communications:

1. Thank you letter to the Mayor from Tom Chenowith for the recent food drive donations. Borough Council has decided not to hold another food drive in August due to pandemic complications.
2. Letter from the County Planning Commission regarding housing in Delaware County and how changing demographics will affect infrastructure planning. Borough Council will review.
3. Letter from Lansdowne residents to the Public Safety Committee regarding re-imagining community safety in Lansdowne with a focus on transparency in policy, around arsenal and around budgeting. President Hover will forward the letter and signature page of the open letter submitted to the Borough to the Borough Secretary for appending as an amendment to the minutes.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. DCED grant for HLTC- this was discussed in depth at the last Borough Council and Committee meetings. There was a consensus to apply for the grant that would commit the borough with a resolution for a proposed budget of \$300,000. If awarded, the borough would oversee construction with the project going through a private contractor deployed for blight situations. Mr. Totaro is gathering the information for application and if awarded, he and Mr. Scott will work through the grant agreement between the State and Lansdowne. A separate indemnity agreement would also be created that imposes any obligations of the borough onto the HLTC.

2. HLTC zoning application – This was discussed at length at the last Borough Council meeting by HLTC Director Matt Schultz. Borough Engineer Matson disclosed there are a series of waivers being requested regarding code conformity as part of this application. These waivers address items such as: (1) extending the rear of property; (2) setback requirements; (3) change in size of building; (4) building height; (5) appearance of walls and windows for front façade; (6) ground floor windows; (7) landscaping; (8) lighting on south side; (9) off street parking and brokering with borough of Highland Avenue lot; (10) minimum required parking spaces; and (11) bicycle spaces.

Mr. Matson commented he had no problems with proposed waivers from a technical point of view but recommended storm water mitigation and management as being crucial as well as handling spillover parking. After further discussion, there arrived a consensus to have Mr. Matson attend the July 23, 2020 Zoning Hearing Board meeting in support of the variances conditioned upon a storm water plan approved by him. Mayor Campuzano will also attend the meeting.

3. Landing/Veterans Park – President Hover noted there are some maintenance issues to be addressed at the Park/Landing. While The Landing was first set up as a temporary space and pilot project, it has been a success and organizations will be contacted for ideas on traffic flow and the two adjoining parks.

4. Liberian Independence Day Celebration – previously discussed. The community is invited to the July 26th event. President Hover extended a special thanks to Councilwoman James for being instrumental in making the event happen. There is also the intent to fly the Liberian flag next to the American flag on borough green.

5. Fire House Live in Facility – Ms. Taylor reported the Fire Company’s proposal calls for changing the meeting/banquet room into dormitory living for volunteer firefighters who attend colleges in the Philadelphia area. There has been a decline in volunteers and students who would participate are already volunteers in their own local community but need to attend schools for the firefighter requirements. Students would be housed in five temporary rooms. Other places are being investigated as well but the Fire Company wants to be prepared by fall. The Mayor noted it will be a temporary renovation paid for by the Fire Company. There was a consensus to support the proposal.

Mr. Schleigh asked whether there would be any insurance or code requirement implications now that residential units are being put into borough buildings. Mr. Totaro answered that the Fire Company has its own general liability policy and occupancy and activity would fall under their coverage. A building permit has been submitted and will be subject to the normal code review. Mr. Schleigh asked if the coverage refers to liability only or includes casualty property and the borough should be protected.

Solicitor Scott suggested having the borough's insurance broker look into the coverage. The Mayor asked if the building permit fee would be waived in this case. Solicitor Scott noted they are a public service entity and the waiver should be added as an agenda item.

NEW BUSINESS;

1. Public Safety Forum – President Hover referred to residents' letter re: imagining public safety letter. It was decided by borough officials to hold a public forum to address any concerns, questions, etc. The forum will be held remotely via Zoom on July 29, 7-9 p.m. Chief Donegan will have the information on the police Facebook page.

2. Stewart Avenue – Previously discussed under the Mayor's presentation by Linda Senna. President Hover asked about advertising timelines. Ms. English commented there is a process that involves contacting neighbors and this was not being done for this issue. A discussion followed about timelines for advertising and when to post, posting signage before enactment of ordinance and if there was time for due diligence. The Mayor commented this issue was no different than what occurred with the Ardmore Avenue School traffic direction. After further discussion, it was decided to advertise the ordinance tonight provided residents are given notice and a chance for discussion at the next Community Relations Committee meeting.

Visitors Comments: Ms. Byrne moved to Suspend Roberts Rules of Order to hear public comment. Ms. Taylor seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Visitors:

1. Sara Berkowitz – Berkley Ave. Ms. Berkowitz commented she worked on the reimaging safety letter and wanted to give some background. A small group of residents realized after the George Floyd incident that little was known about Lansdowne police operations and provided their list of questions for clarity. The petition was signed by 101 residents, with 22 outside supporters. Ms. Berkowitz thanked Borough Council for acknowledging the letter and deciding to hold the upcoming Safety forum on July 29.

2. Jennifer Plumb – resident, West Greenwood Ave. Ms. Plumb commented she was also part of the reimaging safety group and thanked Borough Council for their quick response, noting that Lansdowne could be poised to be a leader among other communities in this initiative.

3. Nathaniel Miller – Schappet Terrace. Mr. Miller commented he recently moved to Lansdowne a few months ago and while not part of the letter signers, reiterated it was an important community issue and Lansdowne has the unique position to take the initiative on this with a positive dialogue.

4. Bill Horton – 30 Linden Avenue. Mr. Horton thanked the Fire Company and police department for all their help during this "troubling time".

Ms. Byrne moved to Reinstate Roberts Rules of Order. Ms. James seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Action Items:

1. Ms. James moved to pay bills for the period. Ms. English seconded. Vote: unanimous.
2. Ms. English moved to accept a letter of Resignation from Ellen Miller from the Parks and Recreation Board. Ms. Byrne seconded. **Discussion:** President Hover recognized her service and accepted resignation with regrets. Vote: unanimous.
3. President Hover moved to adopt Resolution 2020-15 regarding a grant application to the Commonwealth Financing Agency to remediate blight in the Borough. Ms. Byrne seconded. Mr. Schleigh pointed out some date mistakes in the document. President Hover amended his motion to make the necessary corrections, seconded by Ms. Byrne. Vote: unanimous.
4. Ms. English moved to procure a thermo scanner for the Codes department and Fire Marshall. **Discussion:** Ms. Taylor noted the SEEK TIC scanner is a hand held thermal imaging camera used to detect heat in walls and will be used in inspecting a variety of public buildings. Ms. Byrne seconded. Vote: unanimous.
5. Ms. Taylor moved to establish and fill two Covid-19 screener staff positions. Ms. English seconded. Vote: unanimous.
6. Mr. Hover moved to adopt Resolution 2020-16 recognizing Ecuadorian Independence Day. Ms. Byrne seconded. Vote: unanimous.
7. Ms. Taylor moved to hold a teleconference Public Safety Forum on July 29, 7-9 p.m. Mr. Hover seconded. Vote: unanimous.
8. Ms. Taylor moved to promote Officer Michael Miller to Class B status. Ms. Byrne seconded. **Discussion:** Ms. James asked what constitutes Class B status. Chief Donegan answered "18 months of service". Vote: unanimous.
9. Ms. Byrne moved to advertise ordinance for Stewart Avenue traffic pattern change starting September 10, 2020 with traffic to move East on Stewart Avenue during the school year, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Ms. Taylor seconded. Vote: passed with one abstention from Mr. Hover who stated his "son attends the Lansdowne Friends School".
10. Ms. English moved to waive the fee for the Fire Company and their permitting process. Ms. Byrne seconded. Vote: unanimous.
11. Mr. Hover moved to raise the Liberian flag on borough green on July 26, 2020. Ms. Taylor seconded. Vote: unanimous.
12. Mr. Hover moved to allow Covid-19 testing on August 11, 12 and 13 in the Highland Avenue parking lot. Ms. Byrne seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Executive Session - Mr. Hover moved to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:57 p.m. to discuss personnel issues. Ms. Byrne seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Public Session: No motions were made upon reconvening to Public Session.

Adjourn: Ms. James moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Byrne. The meeting adjourned at 10:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Ann Henry
Borough Secretary