

**Lansdowne Borough Council  
General Meeting**

**April 15, 2020**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

The Lansdowne Borough Council General Meeting was held remotely via teleconference/video on Wednesday, April 15, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Campuzano led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Mayor asked for a moment of silence for the Lansdowne residents who have been affected by or died from COVID-19.

Council members present: President Hover, Ms. Byrne, Ms. English, Mr. Holt, Ms. James, Mr. Schleigh and Ms. Taylor. Also present: Borough Manager Totaro, Borough Secretary Henry, Borough Solicitor Scott, Chief Donegan and Borough Engineer Matson.

The meeting will be aired at 7:00 p.m. the following Monday on RCN channel 52, Comcast channel 5 and Verizon channel 44.

**Approval of agenda:** Ms. Byrne moved to approve the agenda. Ms. English seconded. Vote: unanimous.

**Approval of Minutes:** Ms. Byrne moved to approve the March 18, 2020 General Meeting minutes. Ms. English seconded. Vote: unanimous.

**Announcements and Presentations:** The Mayor had no announcements or presentations. The Mayor gave his report as follows:

- The Mayor has met every week since the start of the pandemic with the Emergency Committee to go over borough safety, current practices and what will be required in the future. He has also received updates from the County and State to ascertain future safeguards. Social distancing, staying home as much as possible and wearing protective masks in public are all strongly recommended. The Mayor thanked the Police and Fire Chiefs, EMTs and Borough employees led by Mr. Totaro for their efforts during this difficult time. He also thanked the workers at borough stores who provide food and medicine and also thanked other necessary businesses that have stayed open. The Mayor asked for community patience and cooperation, as this crisis is expected to continue for a long time.
- The Mayor noted that the Upper Darby Rotary Club offered to donate money and whatever was needed for Lansdowne residents. The Mayor recommended that they look into the Food Bank and Senior Center needs. He will talk with them next week.
- The Memorial Day Parade is cancelled. The Mayor requested that the flags be put up for the event at the beginning of May in the normal sites.
- The Mayor urged residents **not** to flush disposable wipes down the toilet as they will clog the pipes and sewer systems.
- The Mayor reminded residents to fill out the 2020 census.

**Treasurer's Report** – Mr. Totaro submitted the Treasurer's report ending 3/31/20 as follows:

General Fund: beginning balance - \$793,851; ending balance \$1,577,329.

Sewer Fund: beginning balance - \$1,192,271; ending balance \$1,272,600.

Liquid Fuels Fund: beginning balance - \$789,699; ending balance \$784,848.

Non-Uniform Pension Fund: beginning balance - \$3,549,495; ending balance \$2,946,366.

Police Pension Fund: beginning balance - \$10,301,696; ending balance \$8,146,419.

President Hover expressed concern about losses in the pension funds. Mr. Totaro noted that the Non-Uniform Pension Fund is not a defined benefit but operates the same as a 401-K. This fund had about a 17% decline in holdings of individuals. The Police Pension Fund, however, is not directly owned or held by individuals or retirees. It is the borough's Fund that they invest in to fund current and future retirees. This fund had about a 20% loss. Mr. Totaro felt there was no immediate impact and hopes the market recovers. Mr. Totaro indicated that future and municipal obligations are based off a "two year snapshot". Last year's obligation was \$470,000 while this year's increased to \$720,000. These "snapshots" dictate what will happen in the next two years.

Ms. Byrne asked for clarification on the Liquid Fuels three month total of \$3,388, noting the different amount indicated on her copy of the report. Mr. Totaro explained that this number did not include an amount that came in this week for \$270,000. The Liquid Fuels Fund is also going to take a hit because it is funded by the gas tax and there is a lot less gas being purchased.

Mr. Hover asked what was expected in terms of outstanding revenues and should there be any concern with future revenues. Mr. Totaro reported that this year's concern involves fees and a decline in a lot of day to day activity, such as fines, parking violations, permit fees and real estate transfer taxes. Mr. Totaro commented there are a lot of unknowns at this time but no need for concern at the present time. President Hover and Mayor Campuzano extended gratitude to Mr. Totaro for moving everything remotely.

**Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Scott reported he is waiting for the Governor's signature on a resolution that will remove any ambiguity as to whether tele-meetings are legal or not under the Sunshine Act laws. The Borough code indicates the meetings should be live, but this legislation removes any doubt and creates a waiver or extension of timelines for land developments that may be processing for the duration of the emergency. Mr. Scott will send the advertising requirements for televised meetings to Mr. Totaro.

**Police Chief's Report** – Chief Donegan commented he had been in contact with Jeff Cuff from the School Board and other members of the School District regarding the previously enacted temporary suspension of payment to the school crossing guards. Since school will not be reopening this year, the District indicated the payments should stop.

**Mayor's Report** – The Mayor previously reported his items.

**President's Report** – President Hover thanked the Mayor, residents and Borough Council members for dealing with the "new reality" of COVID-19. He also thanked residents and neighbors for providing home bound recreation or younger children. Additionally, he thanked all who sewed masks, and the emergency responders. The Darby Township EMS team lost a member and the borough will be honoring him and his family for his sacrifice. President Hover thanked the sanitation crew, the police

for patrolling and Borough Council members in helping to maintain the integrity of the borough. A special thanks went to the Mayor and Fire Department for this past weekend's Easter Egg Hunt.

President Hover reported he has been meeting every week with the emergency management team, who reported there has been a slight rise in Lansdowne COVID-19 cases (30) and two deaths.

On April 9, President Hover participated in a phone call with Senator Williams regarding virus concerns and most of it was related to personnel and finance issues with a look toward the future. Senator Williams indicated that at the state level, they are experiencing a similar situation as the borough in terms of tightening the budget and loss in revenues. President Hover will be talking more about these issues with Senator Williams, State Representative Margot Davidson and County Councilwoman Scanlon regarding needed aid.

Also on April 9, President Hover participated in a phone call with other municipal leaders in Eastern Delaware County to address concerns about health care institutions. Since the aid distribution for small businesses is now used up, President Hover will be reaching out to Dr. Monica Taylor, a County Councilwoman, for additional funding resources.

The borough is taking a unified stance with County counselors by signing a Resolution regarding medical load sharing. Mailers should be out this week regarding resources to access census and virus information and how to contact Borough Council members and local officials. President Hover also held an Ad Hoc Committee meeting with Mr. Holt and Mr. Totaro regarding the LEDC agreement. President Hover indicated that choices will have to be made regarding the borough's financial condition and what institutions will still be wanted in Lansdowne.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Public Health and Safety** – Ms. English had no formal report, as everything had previously been discussed.

**Finance & Administration & Codes** – Ms. James reported her Committee met on Monday, 4/13. Several topics were discussed:

- The EIT delays due to the COVID-19 virus and how people working from home during the pandemic will affect Lansdowne's EIT. Ms. James indicated the EIT could not be collected from borough residents unless they had been working from home for 90 days or more.
- Current General Fund balance – already discussed by Mr. Totaro.
- Sewer, Gateway Slope and Reservoir Park projects will start after the crisis passes.
- Pension obligations.
- Budget adjustments – will be addressed by the Economic Development Committee.

President Hover asked Mr. Scott how the EIT will affect the borough in terms of retrieval of funds and the 90 day requirement. Mr. Scott indicated he is not well versed in this and will further investigate. Mr. Totaro commented he received the information from the DCED and there is a lot of ambiguity there as well and as yet they do not have a good answer. Ms. Byrne added that if working a set number of days at home (she was unsure of how many), a person can claim it on their taxes to get a rebate from Philadelphia. However, it is not automatic. Ms. Taylor commented that the EIT had already been taken out by her employer and was not sure about the tax filing process. Would the borough be collecting the EIT later due to the extension, even if she filed on time, or would EIT information not be provided by taxpayers due to lack of clarification on this issue. Mr. Scott noted there is no extension for withholding the EIT and it is remitted quarterly. The extension only applies to the time for filing a tax return and payment of any taxes due.

**Economic Development** – to be discussed further under Old Business.

**Environment** – Ms. English had no formal report as the Committee did not meet.

**Community Relations** – Ms. Byrne no formal report but she did have an Ad Hoc Committee meeting with the Complete Count group. This Committee is looking to move communications with residents to a more virtual platform as opposed to in person. Grants have been received for the two requested banners. The postcards and yard signs requests will be discussed under New Business. The 2020 census is still ongoing and there was a suggestion to have a page dedicated to the census on the borough web site. The LEDC has already created one. Ms. Byrne is still waiting to touch base with the Library about how to secure census information.

**Infrastructure and Public Works** – Mr. Holt had no formal report, as the Committee did not meet.

**Communications** – no items for communications.

### **Old Business:**

**1. LEDC Agreement** – Due to the current pandemic, several of the requested items on the revised agreement have been taken out. Previously planned events cannot take place now. Mr. Totaro noted that the changes related to the temporary sign ordinance and downtown business improvements. It is current unknown how badly the COVID-19 will affect Lansdowne's economic condition. The upcoming Farmers Market events and use of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Club will remain the same. President Hover indicated the proposed \$50,000 amount is now scaled back to \$30,000. Ms. Byrne asked whether this amount will be used to pay their staff or be used as the LEDC thinks best. President Hover noted the LEDC will have to make that budgetary decision but hoped any layoffs could be limited as much as possible. Ms. English commented that LEDC's financials revealed that the borough money to them does not cover all the salaries and never did.

Ms. James asked how the \$30,000 amount was decided. Mr. Totaro commented this amount had been budgeted for several years without an agreement and was a requirement as a match for DCED funding, used in the Main Street and Elm Street Programs. After these programs ended there was a request for \$50,000 to cover the expanding role of the LEDC in working with different organizations. Ms. Taylor asked if a formula was used in the \$30,000 decision or whether the original method of compensation was used. President Hover indicated the original method was used without a formula.

Mr. Schleigh asked if there would be any alternatives available to the Farmers Market to give them a base of operation, such as pick up orders at the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Club. President Hover noted that the Farmers Market has a separate agreement with the LEDC and would have to confer with them on how to generate revenues.

**2. Senior Community Services** – Mr. Totaro presented their annual request for funds for the Family Circle Senior Center behind FitzMercy Hospital. The borough has given \$2,000-\$2,300 in the past. The Mayor commented that the Center should be supported as it is a vital part of the community and provides numerous beneficial programs for seniors. President Hover and other members of Council agreed to donate \$2,300.

**3. Committee Meetings** – President Hover indicated that for the foreseeable future, Council meetings will be handled remotely and he is seeking clarification of the Sunshine Act requirements. He requested that all Committee Chairs contact Committee members to come up with meeting times so that it can be publicized on the borough web site. President Hover would like that information provided by the end of this week.

**4. Census Counts: Banner** – Ms. Byrne commented that proofs of the proposed signage had previously been sent to Council members. There are two versions of the lawn sign that convey helping Lansdowne get the funding it deserves and that it is not too late to complete the census applications. The Census Counts Committee would like 50 signs for all 11 parks. Both versions will be used to hone in the message and will also be placed at high traffic areas, but the main focus is the parks. President Hover noted the expense comes out of the Census Counts Committee and the general consensus was to move forward with ordering the signs.

**5. Census Counts: Postcard and yard signs** - Ms. Byrne reported the goal is to mail out the postcards to every resident. The cards show the top 10 reasons for doing the census, where does the money go, how does it affect residents and simplifies facts that may heretofore been unknown. The back side provides an estimate of how much money is received for each person. Ms. Byrne indicated that grant money would cover the “direct mailing” costs. Mr. Schleigh asked if there was a way to gauge how many residents have or have not answered the census. President Hover mentioned that while Lansdowne does not have a separate count, the Delaware County count shows 52% have responded.

#### **New Business:**

**1. 2020 Revenues and Expenses** - Mr. Totaro indicated there will be a probable downside with much uncertainty for the near future. All revenues will be significantly lower than what was budgeted for this year and will provide an indication of what will happen next year. Mr. Totaro cautioned that he will do his best to control expenses but it would be helpful if the Committees could provide any savings ideas. Mr. Totaro noted the \$300,000 EIT was a guesstimate but now a quarterly amount cannot be provided due to the spike in unemployment.

President Hover indicated that the Finance Committee had also discussed what to do in the future and will freeze as many events as possible along with the Committee budgets. Ms. James asked if the non-essentials would automatically be frozen or will there be a discussion. President Hover commented the idea is to seriously look at the non-essentials and while some will remain, the focus will be on personnel decisions and which non-essentials can be eliminated. Ms. Byrne commented that any cuts to the Lansdowne Arts Board (“LAB”) micro grant program should be done sooner rather than later. After further discussion it was decided to suspend funding.

**2. E-newsletter** – Mr. Totaro commented that the first draft looks “great” and feels the revolving circulation aspect will be very good. Content gathering will be more streamlined and the hope is to include it in the social media policy. DandeLions, the public relations firm handling the newsletter, has sent four different distribution lists to borough groups regarding content. President Hover asked that everyone involved on these lists look to their liaison person so that any relevant information can be added to the content. He also mentioned that the mailer going out will provide residents the opportunity to sign up for this item and the social media page.

**Visitor Comment:** Ms. James moved to suspend Roberts Rules of Order to hear visitor comment. Ms. Byrne seconded. Vote: unanimous.

**Visitors:** there was no visitor comment.

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

**Action Items:**

1. Ms. James moves to pay the bills for the period. Ms. English seconded. Vote: unanimous.
2. Mr. Hover moved to adopt Resolution 2020-111 regarding medical load sharing in the Philadelphia Metro Area. Ms. Byrne seconded. Vote: unanimous
3. Ms. James moved to remit \$2,300 to Senior Community Services. Ms. Byrne seconded. Vote: unanimous.
4. Ms. James moved to suspend funding for the LAB micro grant program. Ms. English seconded. Vote: unanimous.

**Executive Session** – Ms. Byrne moved to adjourn to Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. to discuss personnel issues. Ms. English seconded. Vote: unanimous.

**Public Session** – Upon reconvening to Public Session, the following motion was made:

**Ms. Taylor moved to lay off borough school crossing guards. Ms. English seconded. Mr. Totaro asked to include effective dates. Ms. Taylor moved to amend the motion to include “effective April 13, 2020 with payroll ended 4/10/2020”. Ms. English seconded. Vote: unanimous.**

**Adjourn** – Ms. Byrne moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. English seconded. Vote: unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Ann Henry  
Borough Secretary