

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OF THE FREEBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Approved December 17, 2024

November 19, 2024

The council of Freeburg Borough, Snyder County, Pennsylvania, held its regular monthly meeting on this date in the meeting room of the Freeburg Community Building. Members of the council present were: Tabbetha VanHorn-Price, Chairperson, presiding; Angela Weaver, Erica Stephenson and John Wiegler.

Others present were: Attorney Robert Cravitz, Richard “Bud” Bickhart, Mayor; Josh Owens, PESI; Trent Hoffman, Rob Heddens, Sierra Zeigler, Tom Gingrich, John Reichenbach, Jason Martin, Kathy Smith and Wanda Kantz.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

On a motion by Angela Weaver and seconded by John Wiegler the minutes of October 16, 2024 meeting minutes were approved by the Borough Council.

On a motion by John Wiegler the November 2024 bills presented were approved for payment, seconded by Erica Stephenson, the motion was approved by the Borough Council members.
Wanda Kantz will pay the approved bills.

PUBLIC CONCERNS –

CAT COLONIES – There have been several concerns raised regarding cat colonies within the borough. Some of the areas of concern are 200 West Market Street, New Market and the South Street areas. Several neighbors have been making complaints regarding the cat colonies. After discussion the borough council has decided to issue public nuisance letters to the residents that are feeding the colonies putting them on notice that if they are feeding the cat, then the cats are considered their pets and are responsible for the control and care of the cats. A notice will be posted on Facebook, the upcoming newsletter and the borough website asking for volunteers interested in forming a committee to investigate possible solutions to this issue.

REPORTS FROM FREEBURG FIRE CO. –

Possible Merger Options – The Freeburg Fire Company is in need of volunteer fire fighters, they are at critically low number of active fire fighters, currently there are only 6 experienced active fire fighters in the company. If there is no increase in volunteers, the fire company will need to look into possible merger options with other local fire companies. One thing that may affect all residents is the possibility of an increase in your homeowner’s insurance due to a lack of a fire company in Freeburg. The borough will be working to help promote this issue with in the borough to residents. Notice of the issues will be posted in the next newsletter and Facebook to help share the news that volunteers are critically needed.

PESI REPORT – The November 2024 report from PESI regarding the Waste Water System was reviewed. Average Gallons Per Day (GPD): 35,000 Maximum GPD: 58,000

WWTP Corrective Action Plan Response– Josh Owens submitted the CAP response to DEP, it was accepted by DEP on December 9, 2022. A CAP update was submitted April 28, 2023. Ordinance education and remediation survey was included on June 30, 2023, with the 2nd quarter 2023 water & sewer bills. Service line inspections have been completed to identify possible connections issues.

Pump #2 – There are issues with Pump#2, this pump needs to be repaired or replaced, Joshua Owens is working on prices for both options for the next meeting.

Cross-Connection on Market Street – During smoke testing a cross-connection issue was discovered on Market Street. Ways to further test this issue are to do dye test during a heavy rain event and/or lateral camera testing of the lines. Dye testing was approved at the August 15, 2023 meeting. Josh Owens will look into dye testing for this issue.

Service Line Inspections –Service line inspections have been completed; 3 unit were unable to be inspected. Now, remediation inspections will be done to follow-up on issues that needed to be repaired. The next course of action is to send a letter giving 90 days for repairs to be completed, and inspections will be enforced with possible expenses. ***Angela Weaver made a motion to have Josh Ownes draft the remediation letter and send out to residences needing repairs with a 90-day notice, Erica Stephenson seconded and the Borough Council member unanimously approved the motion.*** Josh Owens will draft the remediation letter, and Wanda Kantz will mail out to residents.

Future Waste Water Treatment Plant Project – The WWTP area has been surveyed to help facilitate planning for future WWTP projects. The Borough secretary and Josh Owens met with a grant specialist at Senator Schlagle-Culver’s office to discuss funding option for lining the borough’s sewer pipes. The specialist suggested setting up a meeting with Senator Thompson in State College to request a congressional appropriation for this project. Wanda Kantz and Josh Owens are working on completing the appropriations request form. Also, the borough secretary is working on a County CDBG survey of the borough residents. The results of this survey will be shared with the community in a future borough newsletter.

Local Share Account Grant Request – Wanda Kantz has been working on a Local Share Account (LSA) grant request application for almost \$500,000 for lining of the sewer lines on Market Street. ***Tabbetha VanHorn Price made a motion to authorize Wanda Kantz to submit the Sewer Lining Project LSA grant request, Angela Weaver seconded and the Borough Council members unanimously approved the motion.*** Wanda Kantz will submit the LSA grant request by November 30, 2024.

Authorizing Signatures for LSA Grant Request – Wanda Kantz stated that there needs to be two authorized signers for the LSA Grant, she recommends Tabbetha VanHorn Price, Council President and herself, borough secretary as authorized signers. ***Erica Stephenson made a motion to authorize Tabbetha Van Horn Price and Wanda Kantz as authorized***

signers for the LSA grant request, Angela Weaver seconded and the Borough Council members approved the motion with Tabbetha Vanhorn Price abstaining from the vote.

Additional Sewer Lining Project – Wanda Kantz commented that the council should consider continuing on lining the sewer pipes in problems areas, at least 2-3 block to get started. Estimated cost to line one block is \$20,000. ***Tabbetha VanHorn Price made a motion to approved lining of 3 block of sewer lines in problems areas, Erica Stephenson seconded and the Borough Council member unanimously approved the motion.*** Wanda Kantz and Josh Owens will coordinate this project.

MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY REPORT –

PA Small Water & Sewer Grant #2 – The FMA received \$80,000 from the PA Small Water & Sewer Grant program for upgrades and improvement at the water treatment plant.

Property Ownership Transfer Resolution - The FMA has reviewed a Property Ownership Transfer Resolution which would require property owners selling their property to have a new water meter installed before the property ownership can be transferred. This Resolution will take effect January 1, 2025.

Lead & Copper Service Line Inspection– Lead & copper service line inspections have been completed; report has been filed.

Leaks – A leak has been detected at 200 West Market Street and has been repaired.

FMA LSA Grant – The FMA is submitting a LSA grant request for \$1,000.000. to replace water lines on Market Street.

Borough Status Report –

- Completed
 - Insurance cards have been updated in all vehicles
 - All Vehicle inspection have been completed
 - Snow Plows and Spreader have been installed
 - Solar Speed Sign Post has been installed
 - Skid Steer has been services
- To Be Completed in Nov/Dec
 - Solar Speed Sign to be installed
 - Front Street and New Market Street signs and brackets to be installed
 - Exterior Door on Community Center Basement to be replaced

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE – *Catherine Dent, Chair; Angela Weaver and Tabbetha VanHorn Price.*

2024 Wage Review Worksheet – The 2024 wage review worksheet was presented for review. The Adm. & Fin. Committee will make recommendations at the Dec 2025 meeting.

2025 Budget – The 2025 Budget draft was presented for review. *Erica Stephenson made a motion to advertise the 2025 budget, Angela Weaver seconded and the Borough Council members unanimously approved the motion. Attorney Cravitz office will advertise the 2025 borough budget.*

2025 Tax Rate – The 2024 tax rate is currently 11 mills; a 1 mill increase will generate \$4,532.00 in additional borough tax income. This issue will be discussed at the December 2024 meeting.

ORDINANCES & PLANNING – *Tabbetha VanHorn Price, Chair, Erica Stephenson and John Wiegler*

CDBG Survey – The CDBG survey forms have been sent out to selected residents in the borough, so far, we have received 44 completed surveys, we need a total of 55 survey. Follow-up phone calls have been made to the residents. Sierra Zeigler will continue to be working on this project.

2024 CK-COG Maintaince Code – The 2024 CK-COG Maintaince Code was presented for review to the borough council. This code will be approved at the December 2024 meeting.

Community Patrol Course of Action Plan – Sierra Zeigler presented a Freeburg Borough Community Patrol Course of Action Plan for the council to review. This plan will be review and revised, and approved at a future borough council meeting.

200 West Market Street – The Borough office has received complaints regarding this property having two unregistered and inoperable trailers and an unregistered boat. A property maintenance letter will be sent to the property owner regarding these issues.

205 East New Market Street – This property was up for sheriff sale on November 8, 2024, the property was returned to the bank. So, it will continue to be listed as a foreclosure property.

1 West Front Street – Concerns regarding this property have been raised because of the current conditions, hoarding and infestation. Wanda Kantz will contract CK COG regarding this property for an inspection.

12 East Front Street – This property has been an issue for several months and the Borough Council would like Wanda Kantz to contract CK-COG about the status of this property in the CK COG patrol system regarding the high weeds and grass.

111 West Market Street Garage – This property issue will also be discussed with CK COG at the upcoming meeting, for options to address the problems with the building permit issued. Possibly additional legal action may have to be taken by the Borough.

Stray Cat Issues – There are stray cat colonies within the borough and residents have expressed concerns regarding this issue. Angela Weaver knows someone who traps cats, gets them vetted and then offers them for adoption. Possible organizations to help with this issue are Alley Cat Allies and SUN Pets. Also, Wanda Kantz and Sierra Ziegler will check into possible grants for remediation options.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – *Erica Stephenson, Chair, Catherine Dent and Weston Hoffman*

Borough Website – The web address is www.freeburgborough.com. The website domain has been renewed for 5 years, until January 12, 2030.

Community Communication – The Hyper-Reach System has been set-up and is in operation. Posters and flyers have been posted to share information on this system with the community.

Christmas in Freeburg – December 13, 2024

PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES AND SAFETY – *Weston Hoffman, Chair, Angela Weaver and Regina Moyer*

October/November Rental Income - \$2,721.00

Community Center Upcoming Event –

- Christmas in Freeburg – December 13th

Basement Door – The community center basement door is deteriorated beyond repair. A new door will cost an estimated \$600. Erica Stephenson made a motion to repair the community center basement door at a cost of \$600, Weston Hoffman seconded, the Borough Council unanimously approved the motion (Oct 16, 2024). Trent Hoffman and Wayne Enders will coordinate the replacement project for December 2024

Security Camera System – Security cameras have been installed and are in operation.

Carpet Tiles for Council Meeting Room – Trent Hoffman has ordered the carpet tiles and they will be installed the end of November 2024.

Playground Repairs – Trent Hoffman and Regina Moyer are working on grant funding for playground repairs.

Recreation Areas Rehabilitation and Expansion – Josh Owens and Wanda Kantz are working on a master plan for a grant application to DCNR for this project. We will need an engineered master plan and letters of support for this project. The Borough will need to hire a landscape architect to develop a master plan for this project. Josh Owens has a meeting planned with a DCNR Representatives and a landscape architect on October 23rd, to help create a master plan. Regina Moyer and Angela Weaver attended this meeting also. DCNR grant applications open in January 2025. Estimated cost of a landscape engineered plan is \$39,000. The DCNR Grant requires a 50% match in funds from the Borough for this grant application. Part of the DCNR grant process is getting community input for the project through a Public Outreach Meeting. After discussion, it was decided to ask the community for their input on the project at the Christmas in Freeburg event. This will help the Borough Council gauge if the community is even interested in this project.

East Front Street Bridge Project Design – R K Webster has submitted a proposal to complete a bridge design for the Front Street bridge project. This design will look into

concrete culvert and steel bridge options. R K Webster's proposal was for \$39,900.00. Angela Weaver made a motion to approve R K Webster's proposal for the Front Street bridge design, Tabbetha VanHorn Price seconded, the Borough Council members unanimously approved the motion (April 16, 2024). R.K. Webster has begun working on the East Front Street bridge project.

Solar Speed Sign –The solar speed sign has arrived. A Penn DOT Installation Resolution (2024-2) was approved so we can install the solar speed sign. Catherine Dent made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-2, Angela Weaver seconded and the borough council members unanimously approved the resolution on July 11, 2024. The signed documents have been sent to Penn DOT for review and have been approved. Borough workers will be installing the solar speed sign in Dec 2024.

2024 County Liquid Fuels –New Market Street signs with East and West designation will be the 2024 County Liquid project. Angela Weaver made a motion to approve the New Market Street sign project, Catherine Dent seconded, the Borough Council Members unanimously approved the project (April 16, 2024). Wanda Kantz has submitted the project to Snyder County for the borough 2024 project. Project has been approved and signs have been ordered, received and will be installed December 2024.

CORRESPONDENCE – None

NEW BUSINESS –

Rents for Community Center Business – John Reichenbach, FMA member; commented that the sewer and water both pay \$150.00/month rent for use the borough office, but the Community Center is not billed for water and sewer usage. This seems to be contradictory. Also, businesses are only paying minimal rent rates and no utilities. This issue will be review and discussed at the December 2024 meeting.

Storm Drain Repair Quotes – The Borough Council has received a quote from North Country Limited for 3 different storm drain repair projects. The council members will review the quote and discuss these projects at a future borough council meeting.

2025 Meeting Date- The 2025 Borough Council meeting date were presented for review. *Erica Stephenson made a motion to advertise the 2025 Freeburg Borough Council meeting dates, Angela Weaver seconded and the Borough Council members unanimously approved the motion.* Wanda Kantz will advertise the 2025 borough council meeting dates.

COUNCIL, MAYOR, SOLICITOR, EMPLOYEE CONCERNS –

Mayor Bickhart – The Mayor commented about getting the solar speed sign installed as soon as possible. Also, he suggested the borough look into the state surplus supply sales for another possible solar speed sign for the other end of town.

The next meeting of the Borough Council will be Tuesday, December 17, 2024 at 7 pm.

A motion was made by Erica Stephenson, seconded by John Wiegler to adjourn. Motion carried. The Borough Council meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Wanda Kantz, Secretary

COMMITTEE ISSUES TO BE WORKED ON

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE – *Catherine Dent, Chair; Angela Weaver and Tabbetha VanHorn Price.*

- **2024 Wage Review for Employees**
- **2025 Budget**
- **2025 Tax Rates**
- **Possible summer internship program for 2025**

ORDINANCES & PLANNING – *Tabbetha VanHorn Price, Chair, Erica Stephenson and John Wiegler*

- **CDBG Survey – Still need 11 responses, of the total 55 completed surveys needed.**
- **CK-COG Maintenance Code – Needs to be approved**
- **Property Maintenance Patrols – Working on Action Plan**
- **Stray Cat Colonies**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – *Erica Stephenson, Chair, Catherine Dent and Weston Hoffman*

- **Community Events**
- **Community Engagement**

PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES AND SAFETY – *Weston Hoffman, Chair, Angela Weaver and Regina Moyer*

- **Community Center Issues**
 - **Basement Door Replacement**
 - **Painting of gym – quote of \$6,250.00**
 - **Roof Leaks & downspout issues**
 - **Review Rent Rates**
- **Bridge repairs**
- **Recreation Rehab and Expansion Plan - at Ball Fields/Master Plan/DCNR Grant**
- **Solar Sign signs – waiting for installation**
- **Storm Drain Projects**
- **Handicap Ramp for Borough Office Entrance – Tabled**