

**EPHRATA BOROUGH COUNCIL  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
JANUARY 3, 2023**

The Ephrata Borough Council Work Session was called to order by President Thomas Reinhold at 7:00 PM on January 3, 2023, in the Council Chambers of the Borough Office, 124 South State Street.

In attendance in addition to the President were Vice President Linda Martin and Council Members Timothy Barr, Alan Buohl, Kory Musser, Ricky Ressler and Gregory Zimmerman as well as Mayor Ralph Mowen. Absent was President Pro Tem Victor Richard.

Also in attendance were Interim Borough Manager Nancy Harris, Lieutenant Christopher McKim and Borough Solicitor Isaac P. Wakefield, Esq., Salzmann Hughes.

The following visitors were present within Council Chambers:

Larry Alexander, Ephrata Review  
David Arnold, 941 S. Royal Street, York  
Ray Gehr, 14 Reagan Drive, Ephrata  
Kim Stonebraker, 527 N. Maple Street, Ephrata

A moment of silence was held which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Agenda**

Ms. Harris provided confirmation of the following:

1. The meeting agenda was posted on the Borough's website and at Borough Hall no later than 24 hours in advance of the time of the meeting.
2. The meeting agenda included a listing of each matter of Borough business that will be or may be the subject of deliberation or official action at the meeting.
3. There were no changes made to the meeting agenda after it was posted.
4. The meeting agenda was made available to individuals in attendance at the meeting.

President Reinhold asked if there were any requests to add a matter of Borough business to the meeting agenda. Seeing none, President Reinhold asked for a motion to accept the meeting agenda as posted. Mr. Barr moved and Mr. Zimmerman seconded to approve the meeting agenda as posted. The motion carried unanimously.

**First Opportunity for Citizens to be Heard**

Ray Gehr, 14 Reagan Drive, Ephrata, advised he is currently employed as a crossing guard for the Borough/Ephrata Area School District and advised of various concerns he has including: (1) troublesome personal interactions with the School Resource Officer; (2) the lack of response by the Human Resources Manager regarding various inquiries; (3) as well as noting that two police officers recently were tasked with operating a traffic signal due to the absence of a crossing guard with neither of them knowing how to do so. President Reinhold inquired if Mr. Gehr has discussed his concerns with appropriate personnel; in which, he advised he spoke with both a Lieutenant and the Chief of Police. Lt. Christopher McKim advised an internal investigation was conducted regarding Mr. Gehr's concerns and noted appropriate information pertaining to the outcome of the investigation was communicated to Mr. Gehr by the former Chief of Police.

With no additional citizens in attendance wishing to address Council, President Reinhold moved onto the Discussion of Committee Actions.

### **Discussion of Committee Actions**

#### Public Safety Committee

The Public Safety Committee met on December 19, 2022, at 6:30 PM at Ephrata Borough Hall, 124 South State Street.

#### **Action Items:**

1. Pioneer Ladder Truck Lease Agreement: Mr. Ressler questioned whether the Committee had already addressed the lease; in which, Mr. Buohl stated he thought they had as well and Mr. Richard stated that he wasn't sure they had voted on it. Sgt. Randolph clarified that from previous meeting minutes, the lease agreement had not been voted on because the title had not yet been received. All three Council Members were in favor of moving the agreement forward at the next voting session. Mr. Kiefer questioned the lease agreement section related to changes permitted to the truck. He expressed concern regarding whether minor changes would be prohibited. Sgt. Randolph noted that the lease, Section 6, states that the prohibition applies to major changes. Mayor Mowen clarified that the lease also specifically allows for equipment installation.

Mr. Buohl then provided an overview of the Discussion Items as listed on the Committee Report.

#### Personnel Committee

Vice President Martin advised that the Personnel Committee did not meet in December 2022; however, they do have the following items to bring forward for vote by Borough Council at their January Voting Session:

#### Action Items:

1. Ratification of the following Ephrata Borough Council documents:
  - a. By-Laws
  - b. Code of Ethics/Conflicts of Interest Guidelines
  - c. Rules of Order
  - d. Borough Council Meeting Guidelines
  - e. Committee Meeting Guidelines
  - f. Budget Night Policy
  - g. Telecommunication Policy
  - h. Whistleblower Policy
  - i. Guidelines for Employee Evaluations
  - j. Performance Management Process
  - k. Performance Evaluation/Borough Manager
  - l. Performance Evaluation/Chief of Police

### **Committee Recommendations**

#### Personnel Committee

Vice President Martin moved and Mr. Ressler seconded that Borough Council appoint Lieutenant Christopher McKim as Interim Chief of Police effective January 3, 2023. Motion carried

unanimously via roll call vote.

### **Second Opportunity for Citizens to be Heard**

With no one else in attendance coming forward, President Reinhold turned to the discussion/announcements portion of the meeting.

### **Discussion/Announcements**

Mr. Musser advised he received feedback regarding the “awesome” New Year’s event put on by Mainspring of Ephrata.

Mr. Barr commented he has not been shy regarding his health; further stating, “... I need a kidney ... it is better having a living donor than it is to wait five to six years for a cadaver donor.”

Mr. Gehr advised he wanted to add to his earlier comments advising that he recently was unable to report to work due to being ill and was told by bus drivers that there was not a replacement at his post to assist the children in crossing the street. At this time, President Reinhold advised that while Mr. Gehr missed the second opportunity for citizens to be heard, he will gladly speak with him following the meeting regarding his concerns.

Lt. McKim stated he is humbled by Council’s comments and is looking forward to serving in his new role as Interim Chief of Police.

Ms. Harris advised she received a copy of “... the most adorable letter” written by a child thanking our employees for putting up the Christmas lights downtown. Ms. Harris further advised she has requested QNTM to post a copy of the letter on the Borough’s Facebook page as well as inform the public that Council decided to keep the lights up until February.

Ms. Harris, in referencing the Management Report provided in the Voting Session meeting packet, advised she has put together a “new” format which she is hoping can be standardized for managers to use as a template for their respective reports. Ms. Harris encouraged Council to provide their feedback.

Vice President Martin advised on today’s WGAL morning news, they showed a live shot of Ephrata’s downtown. Vice President Martin advised the news anchor reported, “... how beautiful the trees look at that hour.”

Vice President Martin, in referencing QNTM’s branding project scope, advised it looks to her that they still have a lot of work to do and inquired if there are any additional meetings scheduled. Ms. Harris advised she needs to have a discussion with Mr. Musser regarding how the new logo will be revealed to the public, as well as she is continuing to have ongoing discussions with QNTM.

Mayor Mowen advised he arrived at approximately 11:00 PM to Mainspring’s New Year’s Eve event and showed a picture to Council from his phone as to what was raised at midnight – a carved ice sculpture of a train engine and the year 2023. Mayor Mowen commented, “... I think the whole thing went off beautifully ... the music was good ... the food was good ... the beer garden did well.” Mayor Mowen further advised he heard no negative comments and the fireworks were really great. Mayor

Mowen stated, "... I think Mainspring is to be commended greatly for putting that all together ... I think they did a fantastic job ... and I look forward to next year."

Mayor Mowen commented that in years' past, individuals who served on Boards and Commissions received a token of appreciation for their service; however, this year, they only received a letter thanking them. President Reinhold requested to have this matter added to an upcoming Budget and Finance Committee's meeting agenda for further discussion.

President Reinhold advised he also attended the New Year's Eve event along with his family arriving at approximately 11:00 PM. President Reinhold further advised upon his initial arrival, attendance was rather sparse but noted that as Midnight approached and the weather started to cooperate, more people began to arrive. President Reinhold commented that he believed the event went very well and that the fireworks were fantastic.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Barr moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 PM.

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Nancy E. Harris  
Interim Secretary

SJF