

RIDGWAY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
Ridgway Municipal Building
108 Main Street, Ridgway, PA 15853
December 16, 2024

The Ridgway Borough Council meeting was called to order by Steve Caggese at 6:00 p.m. at the Ridgway Municipal Building.

PRESENT: Council members Steve Caggese, Steve Lawrie, Brent Kemmer, Zack Pontious, Chris Matheson, Ron Burkett, and Abbi Peters.

Also in attendance were Borough Manager Mike Handley, Mayor Ray Imhof, Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone, Fire Chief Scott Pontious, Police Chief Ken Hinton, and Recording Secretary Jake Mercer.

Councilman Chris Matheson made a motion to approve the regular council meeting minutes as scheduled on November 18, 2024. Councilman Pontious seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Public Comment

N/A

Finance Department

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to pay the bills. Councilman Kemmer seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Mayor

Mayor Ray Imhof extended a special “thank you” to the town as the Bicentennial year comes to a close. Imhof also thanked the Council, the Ridgway Borough crew, fire, police, and EMS personnel for a job well done this year. He gave a special thank you to Fire Chief Scott Pontious on behalf of the Borough and Council for his hours and hours of work and dedication as fire chief. Imhof announced that he is stepping down and Jeff Yeager will be the new chief of the Ridgway Fire Department.

Police Department

Police Chief Ken Hinton shared with Council that there were 47.5 hours of overtime reimbursed to the Borough of Ridgway from the drug task force. He said that they will be transitioning to a new digital dispatch system. He said they implemented a new policy last month relating to the non-traffic death report and checklist. Hinton said that every municipality is required to report any non-traffic deaths, or any unintended deaths and the police department is now doing that in accordance with the common law. He said that they are working on implementing several new policies.

Fire Department

Councilman Kemmer asked about calls directed to 101 North Mill Avenue. Pontious said that their smoke detectors go off in the apartment but do not trip the main fire panel. When the fire department is called to the area it is usually because they do not call the maintenance person to turn off their alarms.

Environmental Manager

Environmental Manager Josh Quattrone said both plants are running at 100%. Quattrone said in the last month they changed a variable frequency drive and a flow meter at the wastewater plant.

DCED Coordinator

DCED Coordinator Emma Coppolo shared that they had a couple big grants to do at the end of November and the grant season is closing out. She said they had a big request for a vehicle for the Ridgway Fire Department and this was a new apparatus. This apparatus will be able to carry more water and have one person operate it. She said that 5% of the fire department's coverage area does not have hybrids available and they are trying to combat this issue. She said they have two grants out in Johnsonburg for a street sweeper and storm water replacements.

Senior Junction of Ridgway

Judith Manno-Stager and the Board of Directors were present at the meeting. Manno-Stager serves as the president and the chairwoman of the board of directors. Manno-Stager recapped the progress that the Senior Junction has made. This included organizing a board of directors, successfully gaining 501 c3 nonprofit status, install telephones and establish internet and door fobs, restore a restroom with ADA compatibility, cleaning the facility due to donations from the American Legion and other individuals, organizing furniture and having required safety equipment and emergency equipment, and much more.

In February, they received the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) agreement from the state to provide meals three days a week, with Diana Streich serving as program director. The junction now has 130 members and two dozen volunteers have served hot meals to these individuals, and health, wellness, social, and entertainment programs have been established.

Manno-Stager complemented volunteers and the Ridgway Borough and the Ridgway Fire Department for their support. Following her remarks, she presented certificates of appreciation to the Ridgway Fire Department and the Ridgway Borough Council in assisting them to establish the Senior Junction of Ridgway.

Harvest Daze Committee

Community and Economic Development Coordinator Emma Coppolo shared with the Council that this was the first Harvest Daze event they have had. She said this was a collaboration between businesses on Main Street and the event was designed to focus on these businesses. She said that this event had a strong turnout with live music and attendees learned about the variety of businesses in town. Harvest Daze raised over \$1,000 to benefit the Parks Revitalization Committee.

Correspondence/Petitions

Borough Manager Mike Handley said four letters of correspondence were received. There was one from the Tri County Rails to Trails Association and others from the Ridgway Fire Department, House to Home, and Mr. William Seely of Ridgway Township.

Borough Manager

Borough Manager Mike Handley said that there are a few items that require Council action. He said that the Tri County Rails to Trails Association is requesting a property exoneration because they are a non-profit. He said there are two other taxing bodies with the County of Elk and the Ridgway Area School District and said they will have to go through the same process with that.

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to exonerate the taxes of the Dickinson Homestead Spring lot parcel for the Tri County Rails to Trails Association. Councilwoman Peters seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

There was a lengthy discussion about the future of the Gallagher Run Bridge. The Ridgway Fire Department board unanimously voted to remove the bridge and is asking for the Borough's assistance with its removal. Discussions continued about the usage and the physical state of the structure.

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to donate Borough labor and equipment to remove the bridge in assisting the fire department. Councilwoman Peters seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Handley brought forth the prospect of having Borough representation on the Ridgway Fire Department board. Both Mayor Imhof and Councilman Pontious volunteered for this representation.

Handley said that they had a request from House to Home requesting an individual parking space for a second time and also a letter from Mr. William Seely.

Handley gave an update on the water service line inventory. He said we have not identified any lead private water laterals in the Borough and have identified only 26 galvanized lines, which makes up about 1% of the Borough's water connections.

Handley provided an update with the Ridgway Township Municipal Authority project involving the sewer flow meter installations. He said that RTMA put out an advertisement for bid to get two open flumes sewer flow meters installed. It was reported to Handley that the RTMA plan to open received bids

publicly at their January 2, 2025 special meeting and proceed with installation as described. Handley said they expect a tentative three-to-six-month installation completion.

Committee Reports

A clearer direction for the plan of the Ridgway Riverfront Master Site Plan was shared by Councilwoman Abbi Peters. In the last Planning, Grants and Recreation Committee meeting, Peters went through a PowerPoint presentation that began with when they acquired the Ridgway Mills property in 2019, the site of where the master site plan is taking place.

Since 2019, the Borough has invested about \$300,000 into the site. The Borough Council approved moving forward with plans as it pertains to the Ridgway Riverfront Master Site Plan, which aims to develop more public recreational spaces and improve public access to the Clarion River.

Herbert, Rowland & Grubic spearheaded the project and presented a design concept to Borough Council in July showing a trail system, an installed pump track to complement the mountain bike trail beginning across from Sandy Beach, a formalized camping area to attract visitors, and there is also a nature play area. In terms of potential economic benefits, there are renovated buildings featured for the possibility of developing retail, event venues, restaurants, and sports to attract various age groups. A soccer field is in the design concept. The renovated buildings, pump track, soccer field, and an indoor space also tie into the social aspect of the project. Additionally, there are 150 to 200 parking spaces to be installed. Lastly, environmental incorporations include reforestation, flood mitigation, building reuse, and meadow plantings. The design concept is not final and is subject to change with the work of each phase taking years to complete and costs associated with each phase.

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to continue forward with the Ridgway Riverfront Master Site Plan. Councilman Pontious seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Old Business

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to sign the School Resource Officer agreement. Councilman Matheson seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve a modification to Resolution 10-2024 (CDBG FY 2022 Modification). Councilman Kemmer seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Matheson made a motion for Resolution 11-2024 the (Municipal Fee Schedule.) Councilman Kemmer seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

New Business

Motions were made to adopt the 2025 budget.

Enterprise Funds

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to approve the refuse budget. Councilman Kemmer seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Pontious made a motion to approve the water budget. Councilman Pontious seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Lawrie made a motion to approve the sewer budget. Councilman Matheson seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Timber Fund

Councilman Kemmer made a motion to approve the timber fund. Councilman Burkett seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Motor License Fund

Councilman Kemmer made a motion to approve the motor license fund. Councilman Matheson seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Ridgway Mills Fund

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the Ridgway Mills Fund. Councilman Lawrie seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Borough Tax Funds

Councilman Kemmer made a motion to approve the equipment depreciation fund. Councilman Burkett seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilwoman Peters made a motion to approve the recreation fund. Councilman Lawrie seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Councilman Burkett: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Pontious made a motion to approve the general fund. Councilman Kemmer seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Pontious made a motion to approve the tax rate. Councilman Kemmer seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Councilman Matheson made a motion to approve the tax resolution 12-2024 (Real Estate/Per Capita). Councilman Lawrie seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye
Councilman Lawrie: Aye
Councilman Burkett: Aye
Councilman Pontious: Aye
Councilman Matheson: Aye
Councilman Kemmer: Aye
Councilwoman Peters: Aye

Public Comment

Borough resident Keith Mader brought up concerns about semi-trucks making deliveries to Dollar General. He said these trucks park in the middle of Main Street and believes this is a safety issue for traffic and pedestrians. President Steve Caggese said that this does cause a safety issue because there is nowhere to park, but Caggese said that deliveries are made early in the morning so these trucks do not have to park in the middle of the road as little as possible.

Borough resident Sara Anderson asked about the status of the old hospital building. Dave Mader asked if Handley had any recent meetings with Penn Highlands and he has not and there are no new updates.

Michelle Bogacki was present on behalf of the Ridgway Chamber of Commerce and thanked the Ridgway Borough Council and the Ridgway Police Department for their support and the work that they do. She also directed where citizens can sign up for Senior Junction membership as well as the OHS website. After there was no further discussion, Caggese adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m. before going into executive session.