

BOROUGH OF NORTH WALES  
 300 SCHOOL STREET  
 NORTH WALES, PA

MEETING: December 13, 2016 7:07 PM, EST

CALL TO ORDER made by President McDonald.

ROLL CALL:	Salvatore Amato	Present
	James Cherry	Present
	John Davis	Present
	Michael McDonald	Present
	Sally Neiderhiser	Present
	Daniel O'Connell	Present
	James Sando	Present
	Paula Scott	Present
	Mark Tarlecki	Present
	Mayor Gregory D'Angelo	Present

Also in attendance were Gregory Gifford, Borough solicitor and Chief Fantry.

President McDonald led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Solicitor Gifford announced that Council had an executive session at the end of last week's meeting and they did not reconvene. He said Council went into executive session tonight to discuss the real estate purchase of St. Luke's UCC, 125 N. Main Street. He said Council reviewed the agreement of sale, the due diligence period and discussed the inspection report of the church. He said the church agreed to reduce the purchase price from \$350,000.00 to \$338,900.00 so that all repairs can be made to the church, including the roof, gutters, and downspouts.

### **Public Comment**

Andrew Berenson, 439 Washington Avenue, asked if Council would decide tonight about the committee spots that expire at the end of this year. Manager Hart replied that they will be a January agenda item and the boards will stay status quo until Council meets in January. Mr. Berenson asked if the county has access to 112, a system to call if you get stopped by an unmarked car to prove it is a legitimate unmarked car. Chief Fantry replied he does not think so but he will check. He gave some tips on what to do if you don't feel comfortable or you are not sure it is a police officer. He said be sure to acknowledge the officer's presence and drive slowly to a location where you feel more secure. Mr. Berenson requested that this information be placed in the next newsletter.

**Consideration: Approval of October 11, 2016 Minutes**

Mayor D'Angelo wanted an amendment to the minutes regarding his comment on voting. He said it may not have been heard properly. It should read "sometimes choices maybe considered bad and worse; you should vote for the bad or you could end up with worse".

Member Scott made a motion to approve the minutes of October 11, 2016 as amended. Member Amato seconded the motion. Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no.

**Consideration: Disbursements - \$57,177.73**

Manager Hart gave a brief overview of the bills to include: Voyager Fleet, gasoline; Verizon, phone; Home Depot, for repairs in the basement; McMahon & Associates, Safe Routes to School; Cardmember Services, credit card; Eagle Point, ammo; JP Electrical, street lights;

Member Scott made a motion to pay the bills in the amount of \$57,177.73. Member Amato seconded the motion. Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no.

Manager Hart said late last week I received an escrow release request for 912 E. Prospect Avenue in the amount of \$45,771.53. She said the Borough is withholding an additional \$10,000.00 for storm water management. Manager Hart is asking Council to approve escrow release #1 for 912 E. Prospect Avenue in the amount of \$35,771.53 for Mr. Caracausa.

Member Tarlecki made a motion to approve the escrow release in the amount of \$35,771.53. Member Scott seconded the motion. Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no.

**Consideration: Adoption of 2017 Final Budget**

Manager Hart showed a slide presentation recapping the amount expected to be collected from various sources. She said the primary sources of our operating fund comes from EIT and Real Estate tax. She said Council should focus on ensuring that we have good home values, that real estate assessed values are not reduced, and not allow homes to become dilapidated; and entice people that are gainfully employed to the Borough. She said the higher the price a home sells for the more transfer tax we receive.

Manager Hart explained the expenses pertaining to each department, i.e. administration includes the wages of the administration and building; the police department includes police salaries, uniforms, vehicle maintenance; and public works includes salaries, supplies and maintenance of vehicles. She said health insurance, liability insurance and worker's compensation is for all departments. She said every business person knows that benefits are very expensive and these expenses are a large part of our operating budget.

Manager Hart said as you know the water authority purchased the sewer authority from the Borough for \$3,000,000.00. She said Council put the money into a Reserve Fund. She said we

try to stagger the investments and take the interest to fund the Capital Improvement and Capital Equipment funds. She said our goal is to keep the initial \$3,000,000.00 in tact.

Manager Hart also spoke about the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Andrew Berenson, 439 Washington Avenue, asked if the Borough is in good shape, average shape or bad shape. Manager Hart said we have a little over \$3,000,000.00 in reserve and our operating budget will leave us about \$185,000.00 left each year; so, we should not have to dip into that. She said we will be out of debt in 2017, however, we do want to borrow money for the comprehensive plan, capital improvements and infrastructure. She said Debt Service is built into our taxes so we should be able to borrow a decent amount. We do not want to borrow too much, because you always want to stay on the conservative side. She said there has been a drop in the Earned Income Tax but that was to be expected, in the preliminary stages we looked at a ½ mil increase, but with the addition of another police officer we decided to go with a 1 mil increase in taxes.

Mr. Berenson asked if the Borough approved a part-time or full time administrative position. Manager Hart responded they approved a full time Assistant Manager.

Mr. Berenson also wanted to know the rationale for the Borough buying the church and what is it going to do with the property and cemetery. Manager Hart said the church had a for sale sign and it was brought to our attention that the list price was \$350,000.00. She said the building is assessed for \$940,000.00, over 13,000 square feet, it has 28 parking spots that can be used for municipal and shared parking, it is in the middle of our town, and it is a historic building. She said the long-term possibility is it may be used for some type of cultural or art center; for the immediate short term (the next 3 to 5 years) the church will rent. Manager Hart also reported another tenant will be in the original side and a potential tenant in the back of the church. She said those three rents will cover the overhead and we still have about 9,000 square feet of professional space which we expect to be able to market while the church is still a tenant. She said when the church decides not to be a tenant, we are hoping that the Comprehensive Plan will be done, and if the town envisions that to be used for performing arts it would be the church part.

Manager Hart said we have investments and taxes, but we don't have real estate as part of our portfolio. She said we're adding that and paying 1/3 of the assessed value for that type of property; considering the location and historical importance we felt it was something we could not pass up.

Mr. Berenson asked Member O'Connell why he was opposed to the purchase of the church and his reasoning for wanting to put on it the primary ballot. He also asked what would be the effect of putting that on the ballot after the fact and would that ballot referendum cost the Borough any money.

Member O'Connell replied it would be done by petition and it would not cost the Borough, however, he is not 100% sure of the process.

Solicitor Gifford said there are certain legal hurdles someone would have to go through. He said then the request would have to go through the county to be put on the ballot and depending on whether there are legal challenges the county would endure the expense.

Member Amato made a motion to adopt the final 2017 budget. Member Sando seconded the motion. Motion passed 8 yes, 1 no.

**Consideration: Adoption of Ordinance #805, 2017 Tax Millage**

President McDonald read Section 1 of Ordinance #805, 2017 Tax Millage. The following is a brief synopsis of the tax rate: 4.056 for General Borough purposes; .201 for Street Lighting; .226 for Debt Service; .254 for Special Road Fund (Highway Improvement); .132 for the Library; and .132 for fire protection purposes. He said the total tax is 5.001 mills on each dollar of assessed valuation.

Andrew Berenson asked what percentage of the tax millage was for the purchase of the church. President McDonald replied zero.

Member Sando made a motion to adopt Ordinance #805. Member Neiderhiser seconded the motion. Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no.

**Consideration: Authorization to Advertise 2017 Meeting Schedule(s)**

Manager Hart said she knows this was discussed at the last meeting and she is requesting that Borough Council adhere to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday so we do not have to advertise a meeting change as it is costly.

Member Tarlecki made a motion to advertise the 2017 meeting schedule as presented. Member Scott seconded the motion. Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no.

Manager Hart said she has not heard from anyone on the boards and commissions about changing their meeting schedule. She said we will also be advertising meeting dates for the boards and commissions.

Member Scott made a motion to advertise the meeting schedule for the boards and commissions as presented. Member Tarlecki seconded the motion. Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no.

**Old Business/Committee & Board Reports/Zoning Applications**

OLD BUSINESS – Manager Hart said zoning met this month for 401 and 402 E. Walnut Street. She said 401, known as Artisans Alley, applied for a use variance to allow a tattoo parlor on the

second floor. She said it was approved with the condition that it comply with all applicable state and/or federal laws.

Manager Hart said 402 E. Walnut Street is a residential application requesting several variances for non-conforming lot and set back issues, which were approved; no height or use variances were approved. She said there is an accessory structure that will be demolished and the original home will remain with conditions for the parking; and the covert that runs between the properties is not to be disturbed.

**Solicitor / Mayor / Council / Manager**

Solicitor Gifford wished everyone a happy holiday and reminded Council about the employee luncheon.

Mayor D'Angelo also wished everyone a happy holiday season. He said tips on being safe over the holidays would be placed on the website soon.

Chief Fantry and Members Sando, Davis, Tarlecki, Neiderhiser, and Scott wished everyone a happy holiday season.

President McDonald wished everyone Happy Holidays and he thanked everyone for coming out.

Manager Hart thanked everyone involved with Soldier's Christmas and those who donated items for the military families. She also thanked the North Wales Community Project Alliance for the Tree Lighting activities and the firehouse for the use of their facility. She reminded everyone the house decorating judging is on December 18. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday. She thanked public works for everything they have done and will have to do.

Member Scott made a motion to adjourn. Member Neiderhiser seconded the motion. Motion passed 9 yes, 0 no.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Christine A. Hart  
Borough Manager