

**Borough of Steelton
Council Agenda
April 7, 2014**

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

COUNCIL'S CONCERNS:

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

OTHER BUSINESS:

ADJOURNMENT:

**Steelton Borough Council Meeting
April 7, 2014**

In Attendance:

Michael Albert
Denae House
Maria Marcinko
MaryJo Szada
Jeffery Wright
Brian Proctor

Mayor Thomas Acri
Sara Gellatly, Borough Manager
David A. Wion, Solicitor
Ken Klinepeter
John King, Police Chief
Sylvie Brubacher

Absent:

Steve Shaver

CALL TO ORDER

The regular scheduled meeting of Steelton Borough Council was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Council President Jeffery Wright. The pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor Thomas Acri and followed by a moment of silence.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS BETWEEN MEETINGS

President Wright announced that there were no executive sessions held between meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

There were no comments on agenda items.

PRESENTATIONS

No presentations took place.

COMMUNICATIONS

Officer Scott Schaeffer, Approval to seek the possibility for opening a soup kitchen.

President Wright indicated that this was approved for Council's consideration at the Police Committee meeting, and then entertained a motion.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Marcinko to allow Officer Schaeffer to work with Reverend Scott at the Trinity Lutheran Church to open a soup kitchen. It will be staffed by fellow officers and any elected official or Borough employee that would like to help, as well as members of the church congregation.

The motion was seconded by Councilman Proctor to seek approval for opening a soup kitchen.

The motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Friends of Midland, Request for donation

President Wright indicated that this donation has been approved in prior years and that it is a budgeted item for which the Borough has budgeted \$450.00.

A motion was made by Councilman Albert and seconded by Councilwoman Szada to approve a donation of \$450.00 to Friend of Midland. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Borough Manager, Hiring of Mr. James Souder as Parking Enforcement Officer

Ms. Gellatly indicated that this week the Police Committee met to hire the part-time parking enforcement officer who will be responsible for monitoring cars and ensuring that they are not in the way of the street sweeper. The position will pay \$10.00 an hour, for 24 hours a week, for 26 weeks. The individual is James Souder and his employment is effective tomorrow, April 8, 2014.

A motion was made by Councilman Proctor and seconded by Councilwoman Marcinko to hire Mr. James Souder as a parking enforcement officer during the street sweeping season. The motion carried unanimously.

Borough Manager, Approval to accept the Resignation of Police Chief Scott Spangler from the Steelton Police Department

Ms. Gellatly shared that Chief Spangler sent a resignation letter to the Borough dated April 1, 2014. The retirement date would be effective March 25, 2014.

President Wright entertained a motion to accept the resignation of Police Chief Scott Spangler. A motion was made by Councilman Proctor and seconded by Councilman Albert. The motion carried unanimously.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

Charlie Lawson – 401 Columbia Street

Mr. Lawson has been a resident of Steelton for 74 years. Mr. Lawson indicated that he was present in regards to the water department problem. Mr. Lawson indicated that he witnessed, in the past year and a half, that eight of his friends passed away on one block. The individuals that are not deceased are on dialysis. Mr. Lawson indicated a number of individuals currently on dialysis.

Mr. Lawson shared that the only reason he was standing before Council is because he saved

money and was seen at Hershey Medical Center. Mr. Lawson indicated that Hershey medical Center couldn't help him and therefore he went to Baltimore Washington. Mr. Lawson shared that he understands that not everyone can afford this option but insisted that the only thing that saved him was John Hopkins Hospital and undergoing experimental surgery to ensure the absence of parasites.

Mr. Lawson shared that the water killed his dog. Mr. Lawson indicated that his nephew, who is eighteen, is sick as well a number of other individuals who are deceased.

Mr. Lawson shared that parasites infested his intestines and gall bladder and almost killed him. Mr. Lawson indicated that he lost 50lbs and is sick every day.

Mr. Lawson shared that his neighbor has sewage backing up in his basement from other people's houses. When someone came to fix the issue, they put a sewer pipe in the man's front yard and it is sticking straight up. The issue us causing sewage to back up in his basement every time. Mr. Lawson shared that he watched his neighbor transform from a healthy man to someone who must wear diapers.

Mr. Lawson stated that his whole block has been decimated and it ridiculous. Mr. Lawson shared that although he understands not everyone has the time or ability to seek help, there are individuals that can help. Mr. Lawson shared that individuals' doctors don't know to look for bacteria because they assume that the water department has the correct amount of chemicals and the proper equipment to treat the water. Mr. Lawson shared that he was unaware if the water department equipment is up to date.

Mr. Lawson stated that the Borough need individuals with technical knowledge. Mr. Lawson stated that there was no way of telling whether the man that was terminated had any chemical engineering or a background to know how much chlorine needed to be added to the water that's pumped into our house every day.

Mr. Lawson shared that the doctors indicated that he has a disease and his life expectancy may be two years. Mr. Lawson stated that it is a shame that something like this is allowed to just kill the public like this. Mr. Lawson shared his frustration that he read in the newspaper yesterday that the Mayor indicated that the issue would not be addressed at this meeting.

Mr. Lawson shared the situation at the Mayor's residence is not like the one the individuals on his block are facing. Mr. Lawson shared that their street is uneven and because of the truck traffic, the Borough allows an individual to erect a commercial garage in the middle of residential homes. Mr. Lawson shared that this wouldn't be permitted elsewhere. Mr. Lawson indicated that Council knows the true story and the public officials have lied to Steelton residents about the drinking water.

Kristen Tate 704 N. Front Street

Ms. Tate shared that she owns a business at 23 South Front Street.

Ms. Tate shared her dissatisfaction that the water issue was not placed on the agenda.

Ms. Tate shared that she has two sons who live with her. Further, Ms. Tate's 15 year old has only ever drank water from 9 months old and thereafter. Ms. Tate shared that she stopped attending Borough Council meetings because she feels they are unproductive. Ms. Tate believed that Council doesn't care because if they did this issue would be on the agenda. Ms. Tate indicated that some individuals representing the Borough do not reside in Steelton, such as the Borough Manager. Ms. Tate ensured that she wasn't attempting to attack anybody personally or individually but that the issues facing the residents are a shame.

Ms. Tate indicated that she has complained to her landlord about the stench from her drain. Ms. Tate shared that she stands over a shampoo sink every day of the week. Some days, Ms. Tate shared that she stands for 18 to 24 hours and that the stench is terrible.

Ms. Tate shared that she discussed the issue with Councilwoman House over the past year. Initially, Ms. Tate thought the smell was because of the product she was using on individuals' hair. Ms. Tate thought it may have been a certain product she was using so she changed products. Now, Ms. Tate indicated that she wonders if it is the water. Ms. Tate shared her concern of not knowing what the water actually has done.

Ms. Tate shared that she suffers from eczema, as well as her sons. Ms. Tate shared that she also has asthma. Ms. Tate shared that she had the worst outbreak of eczema she ever experienced that resulted in her appearing as if she had two black eyes. Ms. Tate shared that she wonders if the issue is the water.

Ms. Tate shared her concern about using the water to bathe. Ms. Tate shared her concern for the previous gentleman who spoke who indicated that he has a parasite inside of him. Therefore, Ms. Tate wondered if the water has the ability to affect an individual's internal system then the water must be the reason for her skin condition.

Ms. Tate shared that the public deserves more from the Council and the Borough. The issue should have been on the agenda. Ms. Tate indicated that Councilwoman Szada, as a doctor, may have studied similar issues and may have provided a letter or boil water advisory to residents, but no. At this time, Dr. Szada said she will respond once the public comment period is finished.

Ms. Tate again asserted that she wasn't attacking or accusing anyone but the fact of the matter is that a boil water advisory was not issued. Ms. Tate shared that rather than addressing the press, the Borough Manager should have alerted residents of the Borough.

Ms. Tate shared that this issue and the actions that should have been taken are common sense. Further, Ms. Tate indicated that the residents are owed something. Ms. Tate encouraged Council members to take action and care about the residents of Steelton.

Jerome Davis – 102 N 2nd Street Apt B

Mr. Davis shared that he moved to the Borough from South Carolina in 2010. Mr. Davis shared that when reviewing places in Pennsylvania to reside, he liked what he saw in Steelton: nice,

quiet, and peaceful.

Mr. Davis shared his belief that he thought he voted for every individual of Council.

Mr. Davis shared that he has a parasite in his body. Mr. Davis shared that he has a recorded message from his physician from today and that he has been treated by the physician in Hershey since last year. Mr. Davis shared that he suffers from issues in his neck and knees and now he travels back and forth to the doctor to find learn what is wrong in his intestine because he is bent over in pain all the time.

Mr. Davis shared that Dr. Szada was his physician at one-time and he no longer utilizes her as his physician. Mr. Davis shared his frustration that Dr. Szada didn't act when there was a problem with the water. Further, Mr. Davis shared that no member of Council acted. Mr. Davis said that the issue should have been shared with residents sooner. Mr. Davis questioned how much money the Borough was being fined. Mr. Davis also questioned what was going happen to the residents that have to go to the hospital every day, burn gas to go the doctors, or catch buses to go to doctors, because of something the residents weren't aware of, caused by the water of Steelton.

Markis Millberry – 100 South 4th Street (Felton Lofts)

Mr. Millberry indicated that he had questions about the water.

Mr. Millberry asked who made the decisions not to notify the residents of Steelton on November 20, 2013, about the violations that DEP discovered.

Mr. Millberry asked when the Borough Manager was appointed to the position of Water Authority Secretary and if Ms. Gellatly is qualified for that position.

Mr. Millberry asked if other employees were questioned about their knowledge of the false reporting.

Mr. Millberry asked how the Borough can more effectively communicate with the residents of Steelton if this issue occurs again in the future.

Meghan Culpepper – 237 North Harrisburg Street

Ms. Culpepper indicated that she was bringing her 3 year old daughter to testify before Council along with her because she wants Council to look at her in the face.

Ms. Culpepper thanked the Borough Council of Steelton, the Mayor and all elected officials present for providing the opportunity to speak in reference to the latest news regarding the DEP fines, in reference to contaminated water.

Ms. Culpepper shared that she brought her 3 year old daughter to the meeting to show Council what the residents of Steelton look like. Ms. Culpepper apologized for uneasiness with regards to what she has listened to at the meeting.

Ms. Culpepper shared that there are pregnant woman, young children, elderly, and youth that have been contaminated by the water. Ms. Culpepper shared that she believed Council has forgotten what the people they serve in the Borough look like.

Ms. Culpepper shared that she noticed the murky water almost 5 months ago when her daughter was brushing her teeth. At the time, Ms. Culpepper indicated that she didn't want to tell her daughter not to use the water to rinse her mouth out, but after hearing what has been going on she wishes she would have.

Ms. Culpepper shared that she grew up and attended school in the Borough and currently is raising her daughter here. Ms. Culpepper shared that she never would have thought that the Borough would allow residents to drink contaminated water. Ms. Culpepper said that this is a major health and safety violation and people could have died.

Ms. Culpepper said that this issue has made her reflect on illegal dumping that is taking place in the Borough. Ms. Culpepper shared that she currently lives on Harrisburg Street, but has to park on Lincoln Street because residents are not allowed to park in front of their homes.

Ms. Culpepper stated that she finds chip bags, fast food containers, and empty plastic bottles, and on several different occasions, empty condom wrappers. Ms. Culpepper shared that further down the street at 120 Lincoln Street, she has found old bathtubs, numerous bags of trash, old broken televisions, as well as other items that can affect the environment and water.

Ms. Culpepper shared that she has taken pictures of the trash where the illegal dumping has occurred and that she noticed it almost 2 years ago. It is still there. Ms. Culpepper was not surprised the water was contaminated after witnessing this.

Ms. Culpepper stated that the borough isn't doing enough to keep Steelton clean.

Ms. Culpepper shared that this was the first Council meeting she attended and admitted to not actively engaging in her civil duties.

Ms. Culpepper indicated that she will be moving in the near future but that her mother will still live in the Borough. Ms. Culpepper stated that the ongoing neglect of serious environmental issues this is concerning and shared her hope that Council, the Mayor, and other employees of the Borough of Steelton will go back and remember her daughter's face when making their decisions about the Borough.

Ms. Culpepper restated that she is in possession of the pictures of illegal dumping and that anyone is welcome to look at them, and she is happy to share them. Ms. Culpepper shared that the Borough needs to be cleaned. Ms. Culpepper said that the public cares, not the officials.

Candice Ann Kinter – 380 South 7th Street

Ms. Kinter questioned the educational background of the operator, how many years he held the position, and how many hours did he spend there a week. Ms. Kinter questioned what the water

plant operator had to gain by falsifying records.

Ms. Kinter indicated she received the DEP letter and the reasons for the investigation. Ms. Kinter questioned if the operator hadn't been caught if the issue would have persisted. Ms. Kinter questioned the cost of the chemical and when Council was aware of the falsification. Ms. Kinter questioned when Council planned on informing the public and how often the water treated now. Ms. Kinter asked if the treatment is done by sampling, permanently installed analyzer equipment or both. Ms. Kinter asked how many hours the treatment plant is manned and if samples were obtained from different locations in the Borough for testing.

Ms. Kinter shared that some residents have concerns about possible damage to their plumbing, water softeners, and pipes. Ms. Kinter questioned if Council ever heard of Giardia or if anyone cared to look into this. Ms. Kinter shared the seriousness of the issue and asked why wasn't the public informed immediately. Ms. Kinter shared that Council lost an opportunity to inform residents that that this is a 'black eye for the Mayor and Council.'

Ms. Kinter questioned how many other issues are being falsified and thanked Council.

Valerie Beasley – 187 South 2nd Street

Ms. Beasley asked if the Borough is going to help the residents check or get a health test to see if they have any illnesses. Ms. Beasley indicated that the residents are paying for it with their own health.

Brenda Hicks – 522 Lincoln Street

Ms. Hicks shared her concerns are related to the water issue. Ms. Hicks shared that she has been ill with intestinal issues since last year. Ms. Hicks visited the emergency room and they checked her gall bladder, spleen, and other bodily organs. Ms. Hicks shared that she is certain that you have to specifically ask to be tested for this particular parasite for doctors to be aware of it.

Ms. Hicks shared that this incident affects the residents' confidence in the Borough. Ms. Hicks shared that Borough officials knew about it in November and DEP, not Borough officials notified residents in April. Ms. Hicks indicated that she didn't jump to any conclusions but that she had questions so she called the borough office to speak to someone. Ms. Hicks informed Council that she was addressed rather rudely when she called the Borough Office. Ms. Hicks shared that although the individual informed her there was no health risk, she was treated improperly and the answers she received were very disingenuous.

Ms. Hicks indicated she had one other question with regards to a recent rally on Lincoln Street. She indicated that the street was shut down. Ms. Hicks shared that she had to go to work that Saturday and began to move her car and it caused an issue with groups of residents who told her she could not move her car. Ms. Hicks shared that she couldn't get to work and an appointment as a result. Ms. Hicks shared that she was informed that the police put out the barricades and that Council approved the rally. Ms. Hicks questioned if there is any process by which Council can let the tenants or residents of the community know about upcoming rallies or parades.

Emanuel Powell Jr. – 321 Lebanon Street

Mr. Powell indicated that there is no communication in the Borough and that the residents aren't aware of what is going on. Ms. Powell shared that he regularly attends Council meetings and that they typically last 20 minutes. Mr. Powell asked how Council can take care of business in 20 minutes.

Mr. Powell shared his frustration that Council didn't make residents aware of the water issue for three months. Mr. Powell said that although Council is terminating the individual at the water plant, he should not have been hired in the first place. Mr. Powell shared his belief that everyone on Council and every employee should be terminated because each individual knew about the issue.

William Jones – 230 Jefferson Street

Mr. Jones asked what Council was going to do to address the problem that we have with communication. Mr. Jones shared that this is an ongoing problem and he wants to know what Council is going to do to bring transparency to the community. Mr. Jones questioned how Council can address the issue in a better way to notify the community in the event of an emergency and if there is a plan of action in place.

Kristen Tate 704 North Front Street

Ms. Tate indicated that the reason she stopped coming to Council meetings is because Council doesn't do anything and that they are rude and very disrespectful. Ms. Tate shared that she believed Mr. Powell knows that because one meeting he got up and questioned how Council could speak to her and her father, while a pastor was also present, in the way they did. Ms. Tate shared that Council is very disrespectful and rude. Ms. Tate indicated that one meeting, she arrived and the police were standing at the door.

Council Concerns

President Jeffrey Wright

President Jeffrey Wright indicated that Council does not control the Water Authority. Council did not know until February of 2014 about the water issues. Mr. Wright indicated that Council does oversee the Sewage Department. Further, the Water Authority and the sewage department are two separate entities. Mr. Wright shared that it was late February when he was notified that the water was still being tested by DEP. At that time, there was not a final ruling. Mr. Wright indicated that DEP did not give the Borough adequate time. Because the water authority is a separate entity, it has its own governing body, and their own attorney. Mr. Wright addressed Mr. Lawson's question, and stated that the Mayor doesn't have a vote on Borough Council.

Councilwoman Mary Jo Szada

Councilwoman Mary Jo Szada asked for the respect of the community and Council's response

on this issue. Dr. Szada indicated that she had no problem with residents sharing their concerns, which are warranted.

Dr. Szada shared that, according to DEP, there are certain acceptable levels of the protozoa giardia in water. Protoza giardia cannot be completely eradicated. There are certain acceptable levels just like there are certain acceptable levels of bacteria, chemicals and other sorts of elements in the water supply. If you want to completely eliminate their presence, then that issue would need to be addressed with the state.

Dr. Szada discussed Giardia and read directly from Wikipedia. Dr. Szada shared that symptoms of giardia include vomiting, explosive projectile vomiting, stomach cramps, gas, cramping, bloody urine. Dr. Szada indicated that they are usually self-limiting symptoms. Dr. Szada shared that, in most cases, it does not need to be treated. However, if a person has a concern that they have this disease or if they have the intestinal parasite, it can be easily detected by doing a stool sample. A stool sample is taken to a doctor's office and it is sent to the hospital. Giardia is treated easily with an antibiotic.

Dr. Szada shared that she lives in the Borough as does her family. They cook, drink, and bathe with the water, and no one has gotten sick. Dr. Szada indicated that an individual Mr. Lawson stated was one of his neighbors who died, was one of her patients. Further, this individual did not die of any intestinal parasites and his kidney disease was not caused by an intestinal parasite. Dr. Szada said that the reasons behind his death are private.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion made by Mr. Albert for the adjournment of the Borough Council meeting which seconded by Dr Szada. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Respectively Submitted:

Sara Gellatly
Borough Secretary

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