

Lafin Borough Council Mtg.  
September 10, 2024  
6:00 P.M.

**MEETING MINUTES**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG RECITED.**

**Roll Call:**

Present: Marc Malvizzi, President – Joseph Boos, Vice President – Melissa Werner – Carl Yastremski –  
Mayor William Kennedy  
Absent: Drew Malvizzi

Also Present: Solicitor Leonard A. Sanguedolce, Esq. and Charles Boyd, Borough Manager

Mr. Boyd read to meeting attendees the Sunshine Act notification as stated on the council meeting agenda.

**Special Presentations:** None

**Minutes:** August 13, 2024 Meeting

Mr. Marc Malvizzi asked if everyone reviewed the meeting minutes and if anyone had any questions or comments. He asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

Motion to Approve: Melissa Werner

Second: Joseph Boos

Roll Call:

Ayes were unanimous and motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Mr. Marc Malvizzi asked for a motion to accept the report.

Motion to Accept: Joseph Boos

Second: Melissa Werner

Roll Call:

Ayes were unanimous and motion passed.

**List of Bills for Approval:**

Mr. Marc Malvizzi asked if anyone had any questions or comments then asked for a motion to approve the bills.           \$71,768.54 plus payroll \$10,627.48

Motion to Approve: Joseph Boos

Second: Melissa Werner

Roll Call:

Ayes were unanimous and motion passed.

**Correspondences (e-mailed to Council during the month):** No discussions.

## **Reports:**

### **Fire Department Report – Joseph Boos**

The Laflin Volunteer Fire Department had 25 alarms for the month of August with a breakdown of 5 medicals, 8 fire alarms, 5 motor vehicle accidents, 2 gas leaks, 1 working structure fire, 2 reported fires, 1 vehicle fire, and 1 tree down. This brings the total fire calls to 136 year to date.

### **Manager's Report – Charles Boyd**

Mr. Boyd reported on the water damaged to the borough building floor caused by a water line break under the sink in the men's bathroom. He was on vacation at the time and the break was first noticed by Mike Dudeck, DPW early in the morning. It was noted that Mr. Marc Malvizzi contact Servpro and the cleanup and restoration will be covered by the borough insurance company.

A tree limb fell outside the lower playground fence area onto E. Saylor Avenue. Mr. Boyd will have the tree inspected to determine its health.

The Generac generator was ordered at Costar pricing through Cooper Electric along with the required transfer switch at a total of \$23,829.91 as approved last meeting. The installation labor, gas line and concrete work will need to be bid-out.

Mr. Boyd noted the tax anticipation loan (TAN) was on the list of bills approved. After the payment is made the TAN will be repaid in full. The lease payment approved on the list of bills was also the last payment for the compact tractor used for road salt loading.

It was noted that the Laflin Firefighters' Relief Association state audit was completed and distributed to elected officials. The audit came back as satisfactory and without findings.

Williams Gas Company approved a \$20,000 grant to Laflin Borough for the installation labor to erect the new pavilion at the ballfield / walking track area. They requested that the Williams Gas Co. logo or name be added to the pavilion upon completion. Mr. Boyd indicated that this grant approval came to his attention just prior to the council meeting and is good news for the borough. Some discussions continued on the pavilion installation.

Mr. Yastremski asked Mr. Boyd if any progress was made on finalizing the municipal security camera policy since he is concerned about the communications from Mr. Jerome Patelunas and how the lack of a written policy could affect the municipality. Further discussions continued.

Mr. Yastremski asked if the Pittston City Code Enforcement officers is still patrolling the town on a regular basis. Some discussions followed with Mr. Boyd informing councilmembers that Mr. Alan Brezinski, formerly a Luzerne Co. zoning officer, will be replacing one of the assistant code officers and will be taking the lead for Laflin Borough.

### **MS Stormwater Report – Charles Boyd**

The Lower Laflin Stormwater grant project is being finalized with PennDOT and a few minor changes need to be added to the construction plans before they are ready to bid-out.

**Mayor's Report – No Report Presented**

After Mayor Kennedy announced he had nothing to present as a report, audience member Maureen Grudzinski (formerly Zavislak) interrupted the council meeting to ask if Mayor Kennedy knew who she was. Mayor Kennedy indicated he did but misidentified her as 'Lisa'. Mrs. Grudzinski advised the meeting she was a former mayor of Laflin Borough and then asked why he (Mayor Kennedy) defamed her at the May council meeting. Mayor Kennedy was taken aback and responded to say he did not defame her, or anyone else, at the council meeting in May or at any other time. It was suggested that the audio recording be checked to confirm nothing was said at that meeting. All attendees at the current meeting, that were in attendance at the May council meeting, didn't remember anything said. Maureen Grudzinski again explained how Mayor Kennedy defamed her at the meeting by stating she "did nothing for this town". She indicated it was said in front of everyone at the meeting. Mayor Kennedy said he did not state that and the audio recording can be checked. However, he did apologize if anything that was said was taken the wrong way.

**Library Association Report – Melissa Werner**

The association meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 6:30pm. Barbara Taylor, the author of *Rain Breaks No Bones*, will be at the library on October 1, 2024 to discuss her new book. The book is the author's third and final book in the Scranton trilogy.

**Council President's Report – No Report Presented**

Mr. Marc Malvizzi asked for a motion to accept the reports.

Motion to Accept Reports: Joseph Boos

Second: Melissa Werner

Roll Call:

Ayes were unanimous and motion passed.

**Public Comments Relating to the Agenda:**

Walter Wrazien, 38 Redwood Drive – stated his concern on Resolution #10 of 2024 for a grant application for fire department equipment of air packs. He believes the fire department and Laflin Borough are two separate entities in town and the funding request should be directed elsewhere to other borough needs. The volunteer fire department receives funding from the borough and door-to-door donations for equipment purchases. After some further comments, Mr. Wrazien asked councilmembers to make a motion to remove the item from the agenda and that the equipment be paid from the actual fire department checking account. No council response was given nor was a motion made to remove the item from the agenda.

**Unfinished Business:**

A) Approve Local Share Account (LSA) Grant Resolutions for Grant Submissions –

Resolution #8 of 2024

Paving Haverford Drive & Broadway Street

Resolution #9 of 2024

New Pedestrian Walk Bridge for Creekside Park

Resolution #10 of 2024

LVFD Firefighters' Air Packs

Mr. Marc Malvizzi stated the resolutions and then asked for a motion to approve all three resolutions. Mrs. Werner asked specifically about Resolution #10, and questioned why it is a problem since these are Local Share Account (LSA) grants that the municipality doesn't have to match. Audience attendee Mr. Wrazien interjected to state that the volunteer fire department is already receiving funding and has more than enough money in their own account to pay for fire equipment. He stated that is the reason why residents donate. Mr. Marc Malvizzi responded to say that the fire department does have a balance of approximately \$55,000 but the fire department also has a balloon payment and a regular payment due for the vehicles in November of \$51,000 for the sale of the rescue. The fire department doesn't have a lot of money as stated. Air packs are approximately \$14,000 each and the nine (9) existing packs are almost out-of-date. Mr. Wrazien asked when they were last used and further discussions continued.

Motion to Approve: Melissa Werner

Second: Joseph Boos

Roll Call:

|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Joseph Boos     | <u>Yes</u>    |
| Drew Malvizzi   | <u>Absent</u> |
| Marc Malvizzi   | <u>Yes</u>    |
| Melissa Werner  | <u>Yes</u>    |
| Carl Yastremski | <u>Yes</u>    |

Motion passed.

B) Resolution to Acquire the J. Patelunas Property at the September 26<sup>th</sup> Tax Sale –  
Resolution #11 of 2024      Up to \$25,000

Mr. Marc Malvizzi explained the resolution and the upcoming tax sale. He then asked for a motion to approve bidding up to \$25,000 to acquire the property.

Motion to Approve: Joseph Boos

Second: Melissa Werner

Roll Call:

|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Joseph Boos     | <u>Yes</u>    |
| Drew Malvizzi   | <u>Absent</u> |
| Marc Malvizzi   | <u>Yes</u>    |
| Melissa Werner  | <u>Yes</u>    |
| Carl Yastremski | <u>Yes</u>    |

Motion passed.

C) Approve Resolution for Plan Submission for the Green Light-Go Traffic Signal Project –  
Resolution #12 of 2024      Rt.315 & Laflin Road PennDOT Approval

Mr. Marc Malvizzi asked for a motion to approve the resolution after a brief explanation and mentioning it was a state grant that will fund the project with a small match from the municipal state liquid fuel funds.

Motion to Approve: Joseph Boos

Second: Melissa Werner

Roll Call:

Joseph Boos Yes

Drew Malvizzi Absent

Marc Malvizzi Yes

Melissa Werner Yes

Carl Yastremski Yes

Motion passed

### **New Business:**

A) 2025 Minimum Municipal Obligations (MMOs) for Pension Plan Funding –

Laflin Borough Police Pension Plan \$0

Laflin Borough Non-Uniform Pension Plan \$12,121 (state aid estimate \$5,828)

Mr. Marc Malvizzi asked for a motion to approve the pension MMOs.

Motion to Approve: Melissa Werner

Second: Joseph Boos

Roll Call:

Ayes were unanimous and motion passed.

B) New Laflin Borough Quality of Life Ordinance Discussion –

Dumpster/POD Storage Regulations - Noise Regulations - High Grass Regulations - etc.

Mr. Marc Malvizzi reviewed the reasoning behind discussing a new ordinance for quality-of-life issues after seeing a similar ordinance that was recently passed by Hanover Township. He noted that all councilmembers should have received a copy of that ordinance and he wanted to start a discussion for ideas on passing a similar ordinance for Laflin Borough. He asked everyone to review and get back to Mr. Boyd with any ideas. He stated the key to this type of ordinance is to take and strengthen and to make it easier to enforce certain issues like noise, high grass, and a new issue of PODS (portable on-demand storage containers). The Hanover Township ordinance makes it a requirement to obtain a permit for PODS and has a time limit for regulation of use. Further discussions continued with the hopes that an ordinance could be in place by January.

No voting or deliberation was done on this issue.

C) Luzerne Co. East Saylor Ave. Bridge Dedication Request to Laflin Borough –

Formerly Market Street over Gardner Creek

Mr. Marc Malvizzi advised the meeting that a prepared deed and resolution were received from Luzerne Co. to take over a county owned bridge over Gardner Creek on East Saylor Avenue. This was an unsolicited proposal from the county. Mayor Kennedy received a call a few weeks back from

Vincent Zerblas, the new county bridge department supervisor, stating the intentions from the county to give the bridge to the municipality. The dedication deed and resolutions were then forwarded to the borough.

After some additional discussions, Mr. Marc Malvizzi asked for a motion to reject taking the bridge over from Luzerne County.

Motion to Reject the Offer: Melissa Werner

Second: Joseph Boos.

Roll Call:

Ayes were unanimous and motion passed.

### **Council Comments / For the Good of the Order:**

Mr. Marc Malvizzi announced the next scheduled meeting is set for October 8, 2024 at 6pm and then asked for public comments.

### **General Public Comments:**

Joseph Niemiec, Concord Drive – stated that funds were taken out of the budget in January (2024) for Inkerman Road flooding issues and transferred over to the fire department. With recent flooding issues from a few weeks ago and the upcoming winter freeze – thaw season coming upon us; he would like to see the Inkerman Road issue resolved. Mr. Marc Malvizzi responded to say no and added that only \$3,000 was moved because he didn't feel that was needed there for just silt removal. After the last rain storm, Mr. Malvizzi stated that he met with Mr. Boyd and a contractor to discuss if more silt should be removed or do anything else. The contractor said that if anything further is done with grading, the pole barn building could get flooded since the water has no place to go. Mr. Malvizzi also stated that every flood situation can't be stopped and only one event happened with 3" or 4" of water on the roadway since the road was done. The road was closed 5 times a year with a foot and a half of water and cars were being stuck before the road was fixed to its current condition. So, \$300,000 was spent on Inkerman Road in the last two years and this is the best that can be done. Mr. Marc Malvizzi continued on discussing the issue with questions from the audience on deepening the retention area and why the road wasn't raised. Mr. Malvizzi responded to all concerns.

Mr. Yastremski asked if the borough engineer, who originally designed the project, can reinspect the situation to give his opinion on anything that could be done now or in the future. If something could be done then grants can be applied for to further correct the problem. Mr. Marc Malvizzi asked Mr. Boyd to make the arrangements to meet Don Totino, Pennoni Associates, Inc.

Stanley Grebeck, Laurelwood Drive – He has been a resident of the borough for 54 years and has seen a lot of things happen since 1970. There was nothing in the borough at the time but it was a beautiful development and area. He noted the people up here are fantastic and great.

He has a concern however, with the veterans' memorial down in lower Laflin. It has been there for quite some time. He presented a history of the memorial since the ground was dedicated in 1942 by the good people of lower Laflin. He believes it was a wartime thing where some sons were lost from the Second World War. There was a rededication in 1970 or 1971 where an honor roll was replaced by a memorial stone. There isn't any lighting at the current location so nothing can be seen at night. He read the stone wording and continued speaking on the memorial.

Later on in 2012, a plaque was added and Mr. Grebeck read the wording. It was dedicated and placed there by Sean Thomas, Troop 43 Boys Scouts of American as an Eagle Scout project. Mr. Grebeck believes this memorial has been overlooked big time since 1942 to present. Mr. Grebeck continued speaking about the lack of lights and visibility of the current memorial.

Mr. Grebeck believes the memorial should be moved and rededicated to the Laflin Borough Municipal Building grounds. He emotionally suggested that the monument be brought from the dark and put in the light; in front of the borough building in the center of Laflin. He continued to speak on the veterans' preferences and the way thing should be done and how the community should vote on keeping the memorial in lower Laflin or brought up to the borough building grounds.

Mr. Grebeck also would like to see the veterans' honor roll restored and added back to the memorial site. He spoke on the current list of names of veterans that is read each year at the Memorial Day Ceremony but believe that isn't enough. It is a good thing that the names are read and keep but there needs to be more done. The memorial needs more honor and more glory then where it is at now with an honor roll added to include all the names of Laflin veterans. Mr. Grebeck continued speaking on the veterans' names and then introduced Robert Watkins to say a few words.

He doesn't expect this to happen next year but, maybe, in three years something could come about. It is going to take time and money with the right people doing the right things. Everything is possible!

Further discussions continued.

Robert Watkins, Oakwood Drive – spoke in agreement with Mr. Stanley Grebeck that a new memorial monument with an honor roll should be established at the borough building site. He said the veterans may be gone but shouldn't be forgotten.

Michael Grebeck, Fairfield Drive – also spoke to support, his father, Mr. Stanley Grebeck. He believes the monument probably can't be moved but he believes we could add an honor roll or add something to the borough building site. Further discussions continued.

Joseph McCabe, Pinewood Drive – he hopes that every line item of the proposed Quality of Life ordinance is properly defined and is tailored to Laflin Borough. He quickly reviewed the draft template and sees items not related to our town. He doesn't want to see councilmembers carelessly

approve or clone the draft copy without a thorough review. He stated that Laflin Borough doesn't have after hour solicitors for code enforcement and asked councilmembers to not put something in that is nonsense that can't be enforced. He does believe we need to strength the rules because there are properties out there that are not being taken care of properly. He sees high grass and, especially, people that don't clean up their leaves all winterlong. He sees many people that only hire someone in the spring to cleanup their leaves but they blow around all fall and winter. Mr. Marc Malvizzi responded to say the public will have the opportunity to review and make suggestions prior to any ordinance being finalized and adopted.

Mr. McCabe had a few questions regarding the discussion last month on the potential of Jenkins Township providing police services to Laflin Borough. He stated there was a lot of 'virtue signaling' that took place in last month's discussions. Glen Gubitose only had 18% of the vote the last time he ran for office in 2017 but he spoke about the silent majority wanting local police coverage. So, if references were made about Glen and the silent majority, remember he only had 18% of the vote.

Mr. McCabe spoke about the three children in the Oakwood Drive fire back in 2017. He believes that was murder and not an arson crime. He believes nobody should be virtue signaling about that event. Mr. Marc Malvizzi responded to say he wasn't virtue signaling and was at the scene and very upset about the outcome of the fire. He also reiterated that the Jenkins Township Police Services proposal was not solicited and will not be in the 2025 operating budget. Further discussions continued.

Elizabeth Szumski, Cedarwood Drive – asked if anyone reported to the borough about stolen property since she recently had two statues stolen from her yard. She asked if anything similar may have taken place in town. Some discussions followed and it was noted that nothing else was reported and a report should be made to the state police through 911. Also, a report should be made to Mr. Boyd so he can watch for any patterns in town.

Maureen Grudzinski, Haverford Drive – asked if it was said, at the last council meeting, that the Pennsylvania State Police won't provide monthly police reports to Laflin Borough as was done in the past. Mr. Boyd responded to say that a few years back the state police started referring us to their crime data website for information and stated they wouldn't give us the monthly reports since it was available online. Mrs. Grudzinski said that wasn't true since she recently spoke to PSP Trooper Bill Evans, who is a good friend of hers, and he recently said he would be more than happy to provide the reports. When Maureen Grudzinski was Mayor of Laflin (Mayor Zavislak), she dealt with PSP Trooper Deanna Piekanski (who retired in 2023) but now Trooper Evans is the liaison. She spoke to Trooper Bill Evans and he will be happy to give us any of the information except for the exact address. Mrs. Grudzinski said that Trooper Evans, and others, are very upset and angry that that statement about not providing reports was said. PSP wants to come to a council meeting and address the situation.

Mr. Marc Malvizzi asked Mr. Boyd to contact the state police tomorrow to clarify their position.



Joseph Niemiec, Concord Drive – he has a concern with the upcoming budget preparations and the conflict of interest of having three firefighters on Laflin Borough Council. His question is what happens when the fire department submits a budget to Laflin Borough Council and there isn't transparency. He asked, how will the budget be handled with LVFD members on the board if a conflict of interest happens?

Mr. Marc Malvizzi responded to say that there isn't a conflict of interest and then asked Solicitor Leonard Sanguedolce, Esq. to respond on his opinion. He stated that no conflict of interest exists in this situation since the councilmembers that are also volunteer firefighters will not personally gain from voting for a fire department interest. This isn't even a grey area and firefighters can be councilmembers and vote on issues related to the fire department as long as they don't personally gain from it. Much discussion continued.

Noelle Kovaleski, Manchester Drive – interjected to state that the councilmembers in question ran to get elected by stating they are volunteer firefighters and the public voted them in at the last election. Obviously, the borough residents don't have a problem with three councilmembers being volunteer firefighters.

Dorothy Tarasek, Cedarwood Drive – she asked for clarification on a text message that she recently received concerning the Jenkins Township Police Services. She would like to see this issue talked about in the future since she supports having a local police department.

Mrs. Tarasek asked if retired state police troopers could be used to help patrol the borough for increased protection. She noted the town has a lot of retired troopers. Some discussions took place with the former crime watch group being talked about for reinstatement.

She would also like to see a Christmas tree erected and displayed with holiday lights for the upcoming Christmas season in front of the borough building. Some discussions continued on holiday decorations.

Kevin Collins, Fairfield Drive – asked if the borough pays anything for Pennsylvania State Police coverage in town. Mr. Marc Malvizzi respond to say no.

He believes the proposal from Jenkins Township sounds very reasonable at \$75,000. He was under the assumption that local police coverage, or using another police department, would be hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Some discussions followed.

**Executive Session:** No executive session held.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn at 6:58pm.

Motion: Joseph Boos

Second: Melissa Werner

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Boyd', written in a cursive style.

Charles Boyd, Borough Manager  
Laflin Borough

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