

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK SESSION AND
AGENDA MEETING
November 10, 2020
6:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

MAYOR'S STATEMENT AS TO COMPLIANCE WITH P.L. 1975

Adequate Notice of this Meeting has been provided according to the Open Public Meetings Act, Assembly Bill 1030. Notice of this Meeting was included in the Annual Meeting Notice sent to the New Jersey Herald and the Daily Record on January 8, 2020 and was placed on the Official Bulletin Board in the Municipal Building.

Furthermore, notice of the change in the meeting location was sent to the New Jersey Herald and Daily Record on July 22, 2020 and was placed on the official website of the Borough of Stanhope.

Furthermore, notice of the change in meeting time was sent to the New Jersey Herald and Daily Record on November 2, 2020 and was placed on the official website of the Borough of Stanhope.

In the event the Mayor and Council have not addressed all items on this Agenda by 10:00 PM and they are of the opinion that they cannot complete the Agenda in a reasonable time period, the Mayor and Council may exercise their option to continue this meeting at an agreed to date, time and place. Please turn off all cell phones for the duration of this Meeting.

OATH OF OFFICE

Ellen Horak, Borough Clerk, administered the Oath of Office to Eugene Wronko, who was elected Councilman at the November 3, 2020 election.

ROLL CALL

Council Members:

Councilman Cipollini – absent	Councilman Romano – present
Councilwoman Kuncken – present	Councilman Thornton – present
Councilman Riccardi – present (arrived @ 6:15pm)	Councilman Wronko – present

Mayor Zdichocki – present

2021 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Administrator McNeilly stated the figures listed for salaries should be ignored at this time. There has been an egregious error in how the self-spreadsheet calculated the percentages up and down. The other area to disregard is the costs charged for the current year. There are still several months of costs to be added to these figures for 2020. The last page of the budget book lists a 1.4% increase which will change depending on the needs and requirements.

3a General Admin: OE – Councilman Romano asked if PPE was charged to Office Supplies, Line #10510021. Administrator McNeilly stated there will be some things charged to line 0021 and 0022 which will be reimbursed for 2020. The COVID items will be called out as expenditures due to the declaration. The COVID items are not called out individually in the budget paperwork. Councilman Romano asked if Line #10510032 Copier Lease could be reduced. Administrator McNeilly stated the 2020 Charged amount does not include the entire year and historically looking back at prior years, the budgeted amount is valid.

3b Mayor & Council: OE – The 2021 requested budget shows a 0% increase. Mayor Zdichocki asked for detail for Line #10511021 Office Supplies for 2020 Charged. The budgeted amount was less than the 2020 charged amount. Administrator McNeilly will request the detailed list.

3c1 Municipal Clerk: OE - The Municipal Clerk's budget has a decrease for 2021. Mayor Zdichocki asked why Line #10512025 has a 6.7% decrease. Ellen Horak, Borough Clerk, stated Ordinances are codified the year after they are adopted. In 2020, there will only be one ordinance to be codified. In 2019, there were five ordinances. The costs for 2021 will not be as high. The budgeted amount also includes the maintenance for the e-code book. Mayor Zdichocki stated the difference between what was budgeted in 2020 and what is requested in 2021 is only a difference of \$200 and asked if that equals at 6.7% decrease. This is correct.

4a Financial Admin: OE – This budget has an increase due to the increased cost for Line 10513031 QPA Services. Councilman Thornton asked what the savings are overall with the QPA. Administrator McNeilly stated the QPA is necessary for any expenditures over \$17,500. The Borough has required this service several times. When pipe needed to be purchased for Spring Street and Coursen Street, the cost was \$26,000 and the Borough had to go through a laborious bidding process for something that was basically a catalog item. This drove the cost up. By utilizing the shared services of the Sparta QPA, the Borough can take in quotes up to \$40,000. The quote is then sent to the QPA for approval, a resolution is adopted and the parts can be ordered. This is a cost savings for labor and parts.

4b Computer Services – Administrator McNeilly stated there are still items to be addressed for this budget. The final line is not correct. Line #10514031 DocuScan Maintenance will change. Councilwoman Kuncken asked if a total was set for the scanning project. Administrator McNeilly stated there is an annual cost for the service and another cost set by resolution for scanning the documents. Councilman Romano asked why the charges for Line #10514024 Internet/Website increased for 2020 Charged. Administrator McNeilly stated he does not have the backup at this time but the increases may be a result of COVID issues. The backup will be requested from the CFO.

4c Tax Collector: Other Expenses – This budget has a decrease for 2021 of 16.2%. There is a decrease in Line #10514526 Training & Education.

4d Tax Assessment: OE – Administrator McNeilly stated the Tax Assessor's budget holds steady as usual. The Tax Assessor will be giving his annual report at the next scheduled Mayor and Council meeting.

5a Legal Services (Lgl Dept): OE & Engineering Services: Other Expenses – The 5a budget will be revisited at a later date.

5b Land Use Board: OE – There is no increase in this budget for 2021. Councilman Romano asked if the Land Use Board has met recently. Ellen Horak, Land Use Board Secretary, stated the Board had a meeting last night and a meeting was also held in October.

5c Regional Planning Board – The Regional Planning Board has not submitted a 2021 budget as yet. This budget will be addressed at a future time.

5d Construction Official: OE – There is no increase in this budget for 2021.

5e Zoning Officer: OE – There is no increase in this budget for 2021.

6a Insurances – Some discussion took place regarding the various insurances. No changes were made.

7a Police Department: S&W – This budget will be revisited at a future date.

7a2 Police Department: OE – This budget has a 6.1% increase for 2021. Administrator McNeilly stated many of the budgeted items are required by contract. No changes were made.

7b Police Dispatch & 911 Services – Councilwoman Kuncken stated the contract expires in two years. Next year some discussion will need to take place. Administrator McNeilly stated if any changes will be made, capital funds will have to be allocated. No changes were made.

7c Fire Department: OE – Line 10526530 for Hose Testing is a standard cost and is priced through the co-op. Administrator McNeilly was asked to obtain back up for Line #10526537 Fire Police for the 2020 Charged amount which exceeded the budgeted amount. Mayor Zdichocki asked if there is a cost for the cross training which is done between the Fire Department and the Ambulance Squad. Councilwoman Kuncken stated when the cross training is going to be done a discussion will have to take place to determine how the costs will be covered. There are times when the training requires a certain number of people to be present. The Borough covers the cost for the Fire Department. Councilman Wronko asked what Line #10526565 Volunteer Incentives involves. Administrator McNeilly stated around this time of year a spreadsheet is compiled listing all the volunteers and how many calls they responded to, attendance, drills attended etc. The \$5,000 is divided among the volunteers based on those figures. Mayor Zdichocki asked for a summary for this line item. Councilman Thornton asked if a follow up meeting will be held once the attorney completes the agreement paperwork. Councilwoman Kuncken stated a Public Safety Committee meeting will be scheduled. The attorney has already responded.

8a Road Maintenance: OE – There is no increase to this budget for 2021. Councilman Wronko questioned the amount for Line #10529026 Tree Trim & Removal. Administrator McNeilly stated over the past few years tree trimming and removal have become an issue. There has been storm damage and more city scape trees have needed to come down. Ash trees are required to be removed. The Borough does not want to be caught without funds to address the tree issues. Mayor Zdichocki stated Line 10529023 for Dues & Membership has been charged \$75.00 for the past two years but there is still no requested amount for 2021. Administrator McNeilly will ask for the supporting paperwork.

8a2 Road Maintenance – Discussion took place regarding a street sweeper. The current street sweeper needs to be replaced but the cost is very high. The budget includes a cost to rent a street sweeper a few times throughout the year and keep the old machine for small jobs. A shared service agreement is not advisable due to maintenance and repair issues that would arise. A place holder amount of \$20,000 has been included in this budget for Line #10529050 Equipment Rental. Actual quotes will be obtained.

8b Solid Waste Collect: OE – Councilman Wronko questioned Line #10530531 Flow Control Costs. Administrator McNeilly stated this is a legacy item to cover fluctuations in tipping fees. Currently, they have been stable. The funds in this line item allow for some cushion in the budget for any irregularity in the costs. This happened with the cost of recycling. The hauler was no longer able to pick up the recycling for the contracted fee. A few years ago, this was a very hot topic. Mayor Zdichocki asked if the garbage and recycling will be picked up with the mechanical lift in the future. Administrator McNeilly stated that will be a governing body decision when it is time to renew the contracts. When the time comes to renew, the bid should take place in October, if legally possible. The contract will expire in the month of May. This will allow time for changes to be included in the Borough calendar. Councilman Thornton stated during the last bidding process only one bid was received and this has been a problem across the state. No changes were made to this budget.

8c Buildings & Grounds: OE – Administrator McNeilly stated Line #10531037 Crosswalk Sign-Brooklyn has not been budgeted for 2021 as yet. This item is to be determined by Council decision. In 2019, the budget included \$10,000 for the shared crosswalk located at Crestview Terrace. The next crosswalk is for Maple Terrace and Brooklyn Road which has already been committed to. The one remaining would be located at Lloyd Avenue. The governing body will readdress this item later in the budgeting process.

9a Shade Tree: OE – This budget has no increase for 2021. No changes were made.

9b Vehicle Maintenance: Police Department - This budget has no increase for 2021. No changes were made.

Mayor Zdichocki asked if a sale is planned to sell the items currently stored at the DPW yard. Administrator McNeilly stated there will be a sale when time allows.

9c Vehicle Maintenance: Fire Department – Councilwoman Kuncken stated the brush truck has been removed from the budget. No changes were made.

9d Vehicle Maintenance: DPW – Administrator McNeilly stated Line #10531543 2005 Ford F550 Mason Dump will be going offline for the 2021 budget. The costs for Line #105311549 Sweeper/Cleaner will also drop offline. No changes were made.

9e Vehicle Maintenance: Administrative - No changes were made to this budget.

9f Board of Health: OE – The Board of Health budget has no increase for 2021. No changes were made. Administrator McNeilly stated there will be some challenges with the rabies clinic. Councilman Romano stated the board is working on a plan.

The budget discussion concluded at this time. The governing body will begin discussions with 10a at the next scheduled Mayor and Council meeting.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Dell Road Milling and Paving – Administrator McNeilly stated weather delays continue for the milling and paving of Dell Road. The milling is currently scheduled to be done on November 16th with the paving to be done on November 17th. This project will require police involvement at the entrance to Dell Road at Route 183. Multiple staff members from DPW will be on duty as flaggers located at Young Drive, Maryann Terrace, James Terrace and the top of Dell Place. Councilman Romano asked if this window is missed will the work be able to be scheduled for this year. Administrator McNeilly replied the deadline for paving is getting very tight. As long as the weather temperature does not get down into the 20’s and 30’s it should be alright.

Netcong-Stanhope Shared OEM Agreement Renewal – Administrator McNeilly stated the three-year agreement for the Netcong-Stanhope Shared OEM agreement ends on December 31, 2020. The renewal resolution will be prepared for the November 24th meeting agenda. Councilwoman Kuncken asked if a quote has been received. Administrator McNeilly replied the cost increases by 2%.

CARES Act Reimbursement Request – Administrator McNeilly stated the CFO is working with Millennium Strategies to complete and submit the application to the State for the CARES Act reimbursement. The requested amount is nearly \$18,000.

DPW Leaf Pickup – Administrator McNeilly stated the final round of leaf pickup is beginning and the loads of leaves are substantial. Due to the manpower required for the Dell Road paving job, there will be overtime hours required to make sure all of Route 1 is completed. Residents are again being asked not to put leaves in the street, as this will clog the catch basins and a heavy rain could cause spot flooding. Zone 1 leaves will be picked up next week. Zone 2 will be the week of November 30th and Zone 3 will be completed the first full week of December. These are the last pickups for the year. The equipment will then be stored away for the winter.

DPW Holiday Decorations – Administrator McNeilly stated the DPW has begun the holiday decoration process. Petersons will be decorating the Borough Hall tree next week.

November 24th Meeting Reminder – Administrator McNeilly stated the November 24th Mayor and Council meeting start time will be 6:00pm. This change is due to the conflict he and Councilman Romano have with the MSA meeting and the multiple presentations scheduled for the Mayor and Council meeting.

Leaves - Mayor Zdichocki stated she has had calls from residents regarding where to place their leaves. The leaves are not supposed to go into the street but if they place them back from the sidewalk they feel the leaves will not get picked up. Administrator McNeilly stated he has watched the DPW reach up onto walls to get the leaves because the residents have no where else to put them. If a resident has an issue, they can always call Borough Hall. The calendar calls out on Sunday that all leaves should be curbside no later than 7:00am Monday morning for pickup. It

would be nice if the DPW could go out on just one day and complete the entire zone but the reality is they have to go through the zone several times during the week.

JCP&L – Councilman Thornton asked if an update has been received from the JCP&L representative. Administrator McNeilly stated he has not received a response. The last correspondence took place just before the last meeting.

Leaves Route 1 - Councilman Riccardi asked how leaf pickup will be affected with the paving work. Administrator McNeilly stated Leaf Pickup for Route 1 is scheduled for November 16th through November 20th. The paving of Dell Road is scheduled for this same week. Therefore, leaf pickup may not start until Thursday of that week and it may take Thursday, Friday and Saturday to get them all cleaned up.

Tax Collection – Administrator McNeilly stated there was concern for how the tax collections would go for the second, third and fourth quarters for 2020. The first quarter collection rate is almost at 99%. The second quarter collection rate was 98.4% and the third is 97.6%. The fourth quarter is still open. The overall collection rate for 2020 is 96.2% which is better than last year and better than expected. Councilman Romano asked if the online payment system is the reason for the collection rates. Administrator McNeilly stated it is hard to determine. Councilman Romano stated it would be interesting to see how many residents are utilizing the Muncipay system. Administrator McNeilly stated Councilman Riccardi did give a technology report with regard to Muncipay at a prior meeting and the amount collected through the system was around \$150,000.

Capital Project List – Administrator McNeilly stated the list which was requested to be updated for the Capital Budget has been done.

WORK SESSION

2021 Municipal Calendar – Mayor Zdichocki stated the 2021 municipal calendar has been prepared. Ellen Horak, Borough Clerk, stated the calendar includes all the information obtained from all the Boards and Commissions. All of the Boards and Commissions have responded. Councilman Romano stated the Board of Health is still working on setting a date and procedure for the rabies clinic. Ms. Horak stated she has spoken with the Board of Health Secretary and advised her that she can add the date to the calendar up until the first week of December. Councilman Romano stated the proposal is to conduct a drive through clinic. The clinic would be held at the Stanhope Elementary School. The school is fine with this plan. The proposed date, at this time, is April 16th. Byram Township’s clinic is scheduled for April 17th. Councilman Romano stated the board is waiting to hear back from the veterinarian. Administrator McNeilly stated there is an expansion to the state holidays. Juneteenth has been added. The governing body can determine if this will be carried over to the local level. Mayor Zdichocki asked Juneteenth to be added to the next agenda as a discussion item. Administrator McNeilly was asked to find out if other municipalities are going to add Juneteenth to their holiday schedule. Mayor Zdichocki stated in 2021 the holiday would fall on a Saturday. Administrator McNeilly stated the observance of the holiday would then be held on Friday. Councilman Thornton asked if the governing body would receive the calendar ahead of time to review. Ms. Horak stated the calendar was forwarded to the governing body through Google Drive. Administrator McNeilly confirmed the calendar, correspondence and agenda are all present in Google Drive.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Zdichocki offered the following resolutions which were read by title.

Resolution 157-20

BOROUGH OF STANHOPE’S RESOLUTION LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMERGENCY FUND (CRF) GRANT

WHEREAS, as the public health emergency associated with the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the most significant negative financial impacts faced by county and municipal governments throughout New Jersey result from extreme economic contraction, deficits in tax and fee revenues, and extraordinary increases in public safety and health and human services expenditures; and

WHEREAS, severe fiscal stress limits the ability of counties and municipalities to maintain essential services and take the steps necessary to fight COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, without substantial federal assistance, residential taxpayers would absorb the primary impact of meeting these extraordinary needs and closing any associated operating deficits; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Community Affairs (“DCA”), through the Division of Local Government Services (“DLGS” or “Division”), has been deemed the lead agency for the distribution of the Local Government Emergency Fund (the “LGEF” or “Program”), provided through an allocation of the State of New Jersey’s CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF Funds); and

WHEREAS, counties and municipalities excluded from the federal government’s direct CRF allocation plan, as well as those counties and municipalities that are currently the most impacted by COVID-19 in comparison to their available resources, are eligible for LGEF funds pursuant to a maximum distribution determined by formula; and

WHEREAS, a total of \$60 million is currently being made available under the Program, with a potential \$60 million more to be allocated; and

WHEREAS, LGEF Grants exist to support costs incurred as part of a local unit’s response to COVID-19.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that the Borough of Stanhope will apply for a LGEF Grant in the amount up to \$21,296.00.

On motion by Councilman Wronko, seconded by Councilwoman Kuncken and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilman Cipollini – absent	Councilman Romano - yes
Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Wronko – yes

CONSENT AGENDA (All items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered routine by the Borough Council and were enacted by one motion of the Borough Council with no separate discussion.)

Resolution 158-20

RESOLUTION TO WAIVE FIRE AND CONSTRUCTION FEES ASSOCIATED WITH TEMPORARY ENCLOSURES BUILT RELATED TO OUTDOOR DINING ESTABLISHMENTS

WHEREAS, given the strain on Borough businesses due to COVID-19 and related pandemic restrictions, the Borough desires to assist restaurants, bars, and other food or beverage establishments that are seeking to offer outdoor food and/or beverage consumption (“outdoor dining”) in accordance with the New Jersey Governor’s Executive Orders and CDC and DOH safeguards; and

WHEREAS, some Borough restaurants, bars, and other food and/or beverage establishments may desire to construct a building or temporary outdoor enclosure for their patrons in a timely, safe, and cost-effective manner, which requires appropriate Borough review and approval, including fire and construction approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that it hereby waives all fire and construction fees associated to any temporary enclosure being built in the Borough of Stanhope related to outdoor dining establishments.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector certifies that reimbursement is now required to be made to the following lien holder for the required redemption amounts as shown below:

To Lienholder:	US Bank Cust for Actlien Holding Inc. 50 South 16 th Street, Suite 2050 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102
Redemption Amount:	Tax Title Lien #2019-005 and Interest to Date of Meeting \$ 3,293.56 Premium Paid by Lienholder <u>1,900.00</u>
Total From Current Fund:	\$ 3,293.56
Total From Tax Premium Account	1,900.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Borough Treasurer be authorized to prepare the necessary check as stated above and to forward same to the lien holder.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Borough Chief Financial Officer/Tax Collector.

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolutions were duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilman Cipollini – absent	Councilman Romano - yes
Councilwoman Kuncken - yes	Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Riccardi - yes	Councilman Wronko – yes

Mayor's Appointment

Resolution 162-20

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPROVING THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL BALOGH TO THE LAKE MUSCONETCONG REGIONAL PLANNING BOARD WITH COUNCIL CONCURRENCE

Mayor's appointment to the Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board with Council concurrence as follows:

Michael Balogh to fill a vacant un-expired 4-year term, with said term to expire December 31, 2022.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Borough of Stanhope that they do hereby concur with the Mayor's appointment of Michael Balogh to the Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board to fill a vacant un-expired 4-year term effective immediately, with said term to expire December 31, 2022.

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Thornton and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Resolution 163-20

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS

WHEREAS, the Chief Finance Officer has certified that funds are available in the proper account; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Finance Officer has approved payment upon certification from the Borough Department Heads that the goods and/or services have been rendered to the Borough;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the current bills list, dated November 10, 2020 and on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief Finance Officer and approved by the Chief Finance Officer for payment, be paid.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilwoman Kuncken and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilman Cipollini – absent	Councilman Romano - yes
Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Wronko - yes

AGENDA ITEMS

All items listed on the Agenda for November 24, 2020 were approved. Mayor Zdichocki stated, as a reminder, the meeting will begin at 6:00pm. The Juneteenth holiday will be included on the agenda for Council Discussion.

CITIZEN’S TO BE HEARD

Mayor Zdichocki opened the meeting to the public after advising attendees that there is a five (5) minute time limit for each speaker.

Rosa Tadei, 22 Valley Road, stated she would like to know what the governing body plans to do about the abandoned house at 9 Valley Road which is a physical mess, an eyesore and a rat problem which has been going on for years. Ms. Tadei stated she has lived at her address for 27 years and there was never a rat or mouse problem prior to this. Over the last couple of years, she has heard her neighbors complain about rat situations. Rats have gotten into their yards, garages and even their homes. It has cost them thousands of dollars to hire exterminators, even as far as two blocks away up on Hickory. Ms. Tadei stated she stopped at the home on Hickory prior to tonight’s meeting to talk to the homeowner who has a problem with the rats and the exterminator she hired drove around the neighborhood and told her that 9 Valley Road was a problem source. It is an abandoned house. It attracts rodents and every time the railroad ties or driveway is dug up it sets the rats free and they scurry around the neighborhood. Unfortunately, the homeowner on Hickory was not able to attend tonight’s meeting. The exterminator charged the homeowner \$1,200 to get rid of her rat problem. On Sunday night, after spending two days pulling weeds around her house, Ms. Tadei stated she saw a rat in her backyard near her sliding glass door. Now is the time of year they will try to get indoors. Ms. Tadei stated she lives next door to the school. Ms. Tadei consulted with another exterminator who confirmed the observation of the exterminator hired for the home on Hickory. The exterminator told Ms. Tadei, based on her description, it is not a field rat but a rat from an infestation. The exterminator told Ms. Tadei by law the town should be monitoring any type of construction site, such as that, for problems resulting from the construction and monitoring for unsafe conditions. Recently, the railroad ties were removed and the sidewalk was pulled up. They have left the area in an unsafe condition. There is no fence or any type of barrier. There are mud and rocks spilling out into the road. Ms. Tadei stated for the amount of property taxes which the Stanhope residents pay, they should not have to put up with these issues or be afraid to go outside at their own homes. The town should not be known as a town with a rat problem. Ms. Tadei has also spoken with people who live near Linden Avenue and they too have a rat problem. The house has been gutted and the windows removed and plastic put up which is now torn and falling down. Mayor Zdichocki stated she is very sorry for the situation Ms. Tadei is dealing with. Mayor Zdichocki asked if anyone has actually seen rats coming from that particular home? Ms. Tadei stated there are no cameras watching the home but they have the opinion of two professional exterminators. There is another abandoned home at 18 Valley Road but that home has been undisturbed. It is not for sale. It is bank owned. Mayor Zdichocki asked Administrator McNeilly if he knows of any complaints regarding this situation or if the Zoning Official has received any complaints. Administrator McNeilly stated he has not heard of any complaints but he will consult with the Zoning Official tomorrow. Active construction sites would fall under the Construction Official’s area and some portion would fall under the Zoning Official. There have been questions, comments and concerns regarding rats over the years. There was a complaint awhile ago regarding rats on High Street. The County Board of Health was called in and determined the issue was being caused by on site bird feeders. Subsequent concerns were brought up on Route 183 which were relative to wood piles. Administrator McNeilly suggested the Borough’s Board of Health should reach out to the County Board of Health and inspect the area. A rat is an animal of opportunity. It will not live where food is not available. This property in question has dumpsters located out behind the property which are an opportunity for a food source. Bird feeders and garbage cans are also a source of food along with any food placed outside for pets. Councilman Romano stated there

is a Board of Health meeting tomorrow night and this will be brought before the board. The County Board of Health will be contacted as well.

Linda White, 14 Valley Road, stated she spoke with Arlene Fisher, Zoning Official, about 18 & 9 Valley Road. The owners of 9 Valley Road never cut their weeds, and they are weeds, there is no grass. Mayor Zdichocki stated she saw scaffolding on the house and asked if the house is being worked on again. Ms. White stated the scaffolding has been there for months. There is a bag of shingles on the roof which have been there for six months. Ms. White stated she also told Ms. Fisher about the grass not being cut at 18 Valley Road, which is now sort of being taken care of. Ms. White also told Ms. Fisher she had heard there were rats at 9 Valley Road and Ms. Fisher directed Ms. White to contact the Board of Health. Ms. White stated she spoke with Janett Gibbons, Board of Health President who in turn spoke with Monique McNeilly, Board of Health Secretary, and Ms. White was informed that unless there was actual proof, or a sighting of rats, there was not much that could be done. Councilman Romano stated there have been complaints about rats in the past and the County Board of Health will come and investigate. Mayor Zdichocki stated the situation will be looked into. Ms. White thanked the governing body.

Councilman Thornton asked Administrator McNeilly if there is anything Arlene Fisher, Zoning & Code Enforcement Official, can do regarding the length of time this is taking to require the people who pulled the permits to get the work done. This has been going on too long. Administrator McNeilly stated from an active permit standpoint through the Construction Department, the answer is no. As long as some semblance of activity is being done the permit remains open. As an example, there is a property on Route 206, known as the Schuffenhauer house, the permits were open and there was inactivity for an extended amount of time. The permits were then closed out and cancelled so the owner could no longer proceed. The Construction Official can tell you this is all done at a painful slow pace. The Borough cannot give an owner a timeframe for when the work can be done or impose a penalty. Councilman Thornton stated the residents are looking for any type of pressure which can be put on the owner to get the work done. Administrator McNeilly stated the only action that can be done through Code Enforcement is if there is a safety issue that exists off of the property line, such as debris in the road. Councilman Thornton stated there was a project on Mountain Avenue and when the renovation stalled the Borough was able to use some pressure to get it done in a certain timeline. Administrator McNeilly stated that was a town partnership project which was a different type of situation. The Borough had a contract with that developer. Administrator McNeilly stated he will ask the Code Enforcement Official to inspect the situation on Monday. Councilwoman Kuncken stated what is hard to understand is there seems to be no rhyme or reason as to how this project is being handled. Mayor Zdichocki stated there has to be something the Borough can do with these houses. Administrator McNeilly stated as long as it is an active permit and active construction site, there is nothing that can be done. Councilman Thornton stated he has lived in the Borough since 2001 and there was never a rat issue. In the past year and a half, there have been several rat complaints in various areas of town. Administrator McNeilly stated years ago there was a problem with raccoons in the Borough but for whatever reason they moved on. Councilwoman Kuncken stated the investigation should begin with the County Board of Health and the Code Enforcement Official. Mayor Zdichocki thanked Ms. Tadei and Ms. White for bringing this issue to their attention.

Seeing no one further from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Zdichocki closed the public portion of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Thornton, and unanimously carried by voice vote the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

Approved:

Linda Chirip
Deputy Clerk for
Ellen Horak, RMC
Borough Clerk