

A special meeting of Bloomsburg Town Council was held Tuesday, September 27, 2011, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Town Hall, 301 East Second Street, Bloomsburg, PA. Present were Mayor Daniel Knorr; Council Members Diane Levan, Paul Kinney, Sylvia Costa, W. Carey Howell, William Kreisher and Claude Renninger; Town Administrator Carol Mas and Superintendent of Public Works John Barton.

Mayor Knorr summarized the expenses the town has incurred to date as a result of the flooding event - \$39,558.27 in overtime plus 172 hours of unpaid overtime from salaried employees, \$19,375.00 for portable toilets, \$195,800.49 to load and haul debris and \$110,295.86 in disposal fees. 110 hours were donated by inspectors assisting the code office. Over 650 calls were taken by code employees and over 550 homes received a post-flood assessment. There were twelve (12) structures declared unsafe and unfit for occupancy. Two (2) of those structures will require demolition. 100 electrical inspections have been conducted by code officers in order to restore power. Council will need to decide if they want to waive the building permit process.

Mayor Knorr is aware that there is a lot of debris to be collected and that some may not have had the time to finish cleaning out their homes. Working with John Barton, the Mayor proposed a plan to allow the debris in the flood affected areas accumulate through Sunday and then next week remove the debris street by street. Once the street has been cleared no materials will be allowed at the curb.

Gregg Wirth, 519 East Third Street, understood the plan to mean that the town would take care of the collections instead of individuals hiring haulers. He asked if this would be offered to those outside the affected area as well.

Mike Chyko, 556 West Third Street, agreed with the Mayor. Many people are elderly or are at work during the day. It gets dark earlier making it difficult to see.

Kathy Zimmerman, 415 Hillside Drive, volunteers for Mennonite Disaster. She has seen several homes that have had no work done. Some are elderly who do not trust volunteers. She asked if it would be possible to extend the deadline even further.

Victoria Wilcox, 57 Hunt Club Drive, volunteers for Agape. They are trying to address the mold issue. She knows of six (6) families living on the second floor because they have no where else to go. One person said they weren't going to clean that they would move someday.

W. Kreisher asked if the town was going to limit the type of materials that would be collected. The Mayor said no. S. Costa wanted to know what would happen to the homes that were not cleaned. The Mayor responded that it would be a code issue at that point.

C. Howell thought Mr. Wirth had a good point. If the town is paying why not pick up from everyone. G. Wirth explained he was not advocating for everyone to be picked up. He also asked if the expense could be tracked separately and not as an expense in the general fund. Mayor Knorr assured Mr. Wirth that the 2012 budget would not incorporate the flood expenses. C. Renninger did not believe this one-time expense would warrant a separate tax at this time. Council may want to consider at a future date should flood protection become a reality.

Jeff Eichner, 474 West Third Street, commended Public Works for the fantastic job they have done both now and in 2006. If residents got as much cooperation from other departments they'd be in good shape.

P. Kinney asked if the announcement regarding the collections could be on the radio as well as the paper. Many have not seen a paper since the flooding began.

Charlyne Eichner, 474 West Third Street, suggested the town pass out flyers. Mayor Knorr told her that would be difficult due to the population of Bloomsburg.

Leo Yodock, Jr. suggested the town ask neighboring communities to donate trucks and operators. J. Barton did not believe this would work as they have their own flooding problems and some would not have the size truck needed for this type of collection.

On a motion by W. Kreisher, seconded by C. Howell and voted on unanimously, Council approved non-flood related collections to take place this week; flood water affected areas can continue to place items at the curb through Sunday with collections to begin Monday; the collections next week would be done street by street and once the debris has been removed no materials would be allowed at the curb.

Charles Wagner, Town Park Improvement Association, announced that the town park is closed and would not be cleaned until spring.

APPROVAL OF RE-ADVERTISING TOWN ADMINISTRATOR POSITION

On a motion by C. Howell, seconded by D. Levan and voted on unanimously, Council approved up to \$1,500 to re-advertise the Town Administrator position as the first round of applicants proved unsuccessful.

UPDATE ON FLOOD PROTECTION PROJECT

G. Wirth asked for an update on the flood protection project. Mayor Knorr stated we are in the middle of the design phase. He emphasized that a lot has happened since the 2005 vote – the present council reversed that vote; the Bloomsburg Area Joint Flood Control Authority was formed and all cost sharing funds are in place with the establishment of an \$800,000 line of credit. The problem now is the lack of a federal allocation.

C. Renninger believes this is the prime time for community and legislative support. W. Kreisher agrees. The money spent on each flood is far more than it would cost to build the wall.

Bob Strouse, 936 West Main Street, would like to see the town buy out the entire 900 block of West Main Street. C. Mas went over the requirements of the Hazard Mitigation Grant program.

Oren Helbok, 705 East Fifth Street, does not believe the Corps plan in the feasibility study is a good one. He does not know how it will not flood in behind the wall at Ninth Street. We get more water because of the levee in Luzerne County. What will happen to Danville if we build protection?

P. Kinney said that is why he voted against plan in 2005. The levee did not protect the water company, sewer plant or high school and the Corps did not address the ponding issues behind the wall.

Jim Davis, 579 West Main Street, thinks something needs to be done about the islands in Fishing Creek. The floodwall is never going to happen.

G. Wirth read the minutes from the 2005 meeting. Several talked about a better plan. There is no better plan. This flood shows us that we can't continue to do nothing. We need protection.

Sheree Kinsley, 597 West Third Street, could not hear the early warning system alarms.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:26pm.

CAROL L. MAS
Town Administrator & Secretary