

STROUDSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 17, 2024

A regular meeting of the Stroudsburg Borough Council convened at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Stroudsburg Borough Municipal Building with the following members present: Council President Matt Abell, Council Vice-President Erica McCabe, Council Pro-Tem Joseph Shay, Council Member J. Zac Christman, Council Member Cheryl Joubert, and Council Member TJ Lopez.

Also present were: Mayor Michael Moreno, Borough Manager Larry Kopp, Borough Solicitor Christopher Brown, Esq., Street Superintendent Brian Ace, Jr., and Executive Assistant Becky Smith.

Council Member Victoria DeVries, and Zoning/Codes Officer Kenelle DeStefano were absent.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Public Hearing and Consideration to Adopt an Ordinance of the Borough Council of the Borough of Stroudsburg in the County of Monroe, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing execution of a Cable Franchise Agreement between the Borough and Blue Ridge Cable Technologies, Inc.**

This ordinance will renew the cable franchise agreement between Blue Ridge Cable Technologies, Inc., and the Borough of Stroudsburg. The agreement authorizes Blue Ridge Cable Technologies to maintain, construct, and operate its cable system for use by the Borough's residents.

There were no questions or comments from Council or the public. A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Lopez to close the public hearing. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

The aforementioned Ordinance was adopted on a motion made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Lopez. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

**Public Hearing and Consideration to Adopt an Ordinance of the Borough Council of the Borough of Stroudsburg in the County of Monroe, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Fixing the Real Estate Tax Rate for the Year 2025.**

This ordinance will set the Real Estate Tax Rate for the Year 2025 to 11.205 mils, which is an increase of 1.37 mils from 2024, or approximately a 14% increase. Mr. Lopez asked if there is anything wasteful in the proposed 2025 Budget. Mr. Kopp stated he has already cut back as much as he could. Tarah Probst added that Stroudsburg Borough residents are lucky to have police and fire services, costs for which are a large portion of the budget. Mr. Kopp explained there are a number of projects planned for 2025, most of which are grant-funded. Street paving is mostly done in-house, saving the borough money. The borough's pension fund took a hit, and the required MMO costs increased by \$500,000.00 for 2025. Also, there has been a decrease in the borough's tax base.

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Lopez to close the public hearing. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

The aforementioned Ordinance was adopted on a motion made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. Joubert. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

### **Approval of Council Meeting Minutes for the Regular meeting on December 3, 2024**

The minutes of the regular meeting on December 3, 2024 were approved as circulated, on a motion made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Lopez. The motion was carried. (yes-6; no-0; abstain-0)

### **Monthly Administrative Reports**

The following monthly reports were approved on a motion made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman: Right-To-Know Report, Parking Report, Fire Department Report, and the Police Department Report. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

### **Accept Unaudited November 2024, Treasurer Report**

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to accept the Balance Sheets, FY 24 vs FY 23, and the Budget to Actual Report. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

### **Old Business**

There was a discussion about the proposed Amusement Tax Ordinance, with its public hearing scheduled for Tuesday, January 7, 2025. The Amusement Tax is a way to raise revenue without affecting residents. The tax would be assessed on people attending events. Rich Berkowitz, of the Sherman Theater, stated the 5% tax will hurt the theater, and requested more information on the proposed ordinance. Mr. Kopp will provide more information, available in person and on the Borough's website, by December 22, 2024. The information will also be sent to the Downtown Business Association. Mr. Kopp will schedule a meeting with business owners to review the proposed ordinance prior to the scheduled public hearing.

### **New Business**

A request from Rabbie Mendel Silman was received to erect a Menorah in Courthouse Square from Sunday, December 22, 2024 through Sunday, January 5, 2025, with the Menorah Lighting ceremony to take place on Sunday, December 29, 2024, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Rabbie Silman requested the event application fee and the requirement for a certificate of liability insurance be waived for the 2024 event. Mr. Moreno added this event has not gone through the correct event process in prior years, but will assure it is done properly in the future. The Menorah will be set on courthouse property, and no street closures are required.

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to deny the event application submitted by Rabbie Silman. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Mr. Moreno announced that a reception will take place in Council Chambers of Borough Hall on Sunday, December 29, 2024, from 4:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m., with the Menorah Lighting taking place from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; members of the community are welcome to attend.

A motion was made by Ms. Shay, seconded by Mr. Christman to approve the proposed 2025 Borough of Stroudsburg Budget, as presented. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

A motion was made by Mr. Shay, seconded by Ms. McCabe to approve the 2024 Stroudsburg Borough Financial Statements. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Lopez to approve publishing the 2025 Stroudsburg Borough Council Meeting Schedule, as presented. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

The Stroudsburg Borough Council Committees' 2025 meeting schedules were set during the Committee Reports section of this meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Lopez to approve a cost-of-living allowance (COLA) increase for retirees of 2.6%, based upon the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

A motion was made by Mr. Shay, seconded by Ms. Joubert to reappoint Joanne Kochanski to the Stroud Area Regional Police (SARP) Commission, to fill the position representing the Borough of Stroudsburg, with a term from January 1, 2025 through January 1, 2028. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Ms. Kochanski added that she has served on the SARP Commission since the inception of the regional police department 25 years ago, and appreciates the reappointment.

A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Mr. Christman to approve scheduling a public hearing on January 7, 2025, for the consideration to amend an Ordinance of the Borough of Stroudsburg, County of Monroe, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Chapter 15 "Motor Vehicles and Traffic", Section 15-401 1, "Parking Meter Zones Established", of the Stroudsburg Borough Code. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

Mr. Kopp discussed a potential EV power station in a privately owned parking lot at 4<sup>th</sup> and McConnell Streets. It was suggested to find a better location for an EV power station within the borough, possibly towards the west side of town. The power stations that are in the Ann Street parking lot are not utilized to their potential. Mr. Moreno suggested installing quick charging power stations in the Visitors Bureau's parking lot, and mentioned a potential grant for them.

### **Committee Reports**

**Codes Committee** – The Codes Committee will meet on the fourth Wednesday at 4:30 p.m., via Zoom in 2025. The committee will discuss year-round sidewalk dining, and property transfer inspection ordinances at their next meeting.

**Budget Committee** – The Budget Committee will meet as needed throughout 2025.

**Parking Committee** – The Parking Committee will meet on the fourth Monday at 5:00 p.m., via Zoom in 2025.

**Recycling Committee** – The Recycling Committee's quarterly meeting dates will be advertised once they are determined. Mr. Kopp reported the Twin Boro Recycling 2025 Budget was approved at the last committee meeting.

**Sewer Committee** – The Sewer Committee will meet as needed throughout 2025.

**Street Committee** – The Streets Committee will meet on the third Wednesday at 4:30 p.m., in person and via Zoom in 2025.

**Personnel Committee** – The Personnel Committee will meet as needed throughout 2025.

**Public Relations/Media Committee** – The Public Relations/Media Committee will meet on the third Thursday at 6:30 p.m., in person and via Zoom in 2025.

Redevelopment Committee – The Redevelopment Committee will meet on the second Wednesday at 4:30 p.m., via Zoom. The committee will discuss the HARB process, and potentially having HARB meetings at the Monroe County Historical Association’s building.

I-80 Expansion Task Force Committee – Tarah Probst reported that PennDOT plans to file a permit with PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for the I-80 project in the Spring of 2026, which then takes approximately one year to be approved.

Parks and Rec (Stroud Region Open Space and Recreation) Committee – Ms. McCabe reported a fundraiser will be held at Panera Bread on Thursday, December 19, 2024, benefiting SROSRC. Winter Discovery Days at SROSRC will be held December 26 through December 31, 2024 for children ages 5 to 12. The committee will meet on the fourth Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. Stroud Quest, an exciting community challenge, is scheduled for Saturday, January 18, 2025. More details about all programs and events can be found on SROSRC’s website: [www.srosrc.org](http://www.srosrc.org).

Ms. McCabe advised Wanda Lasher’s term for the alternate member of SROSRC expires at the end of 2024, and nominates Ms. Lasher for another term. A motion was made by Ms. McCabe, seconded by Ms. Lopez to nominate Wanda Lasher as an alternate member of SROSRC, effective January 1, 2025. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

### **Mayor’s Report**

Mr. Moreno attended: the homeless encampment strategy meeting on December 5, 2024, at the Monroe County Administrative Building; the ribbon cutting ceremony for the reopening of Gallery at 530 Main; and the Stroudsburg Christmas Festival.

### **Council Member Reports**

Mr. Shay reported the America250PA kickoff meeting is January 9, 2025 at the Northampton Community College, Tannersville campus. (Inclement weather date is January 16, 2025.)

### **Solicitor’s Report**

No report.

### **Manager’s Report**

## Borough Manager Report December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

### **Meetings**

County Commissioners/Adaptive Reuse Study	December 4 <sup>th</sup>
County Commissioners/Homeless	December 5 <sup>th</sup>
Funding Status/Delta Development	December 6 <sup>th</sup>
SARP Executive Committee	December 9 <sup>th</sup>
Litter & Solid Waste Advisory Committee	December 10 <sup>th</sup>
Christmas Luncheon	December 10 <sup>th</sup>
Bart/Mural Plan	December 12 <sup>th</sup>
PJM Price Spike Webinar	December 12 <sup>th</sup>
Recycling Committee Meeting	December 16 <sup>th</sup>
Safety Committee Meeting	December 18 <sup>th</sup>
Denny/Hazard Mitigation Project	December 19 <sup>th</sup>

### **Infrastructure/Streets/Capital Projects**

***Ann Street Sewer Replacement & Paving.*** Complete! Received payment from BCRA; waiting on STSA.

**Quick Build / Main Street Project.** Sent request for Signage District to PennDOT. 4<sup>th</sup> Street Mural complete. Upgrades to the Borough's sign printer & laptop in 2025 budget. Waiting on notification from Labor & Industry that Prevailing Wage is not required for project labor.

**Creek Walk Trail.** Statewide LSA Grant submitted November 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Parking Garage Repair/Rehabilitation.** Design complete. Intent is to go out to bid for 2025 completion.

**Levee Erosion Mitigation.** Emplacing rip rap on the Brodhead Creek side of the levee to stop erosion. Working on plan from engineer; working on funding options, including Hazard Mitigation Grant.

### **Grants Strategy 2024-25**

**2024 Monroe County LSA Grant.** Submitted September 30<sup>th</sup>. Remainder of cost of Parking Garage Repairs/Restoration.

**2023 Statewide LSA Grant.** Received \$250,000 for the Creek Walk Project.

**2023 Monroe County LSA Grant.** For Parking Garage Repairs. Received \$250,000.

**2022 Monroe County LSA Grant.** Received \$500,000 for the Main Street Project.

**EPA Community Change Grant.** Lead Applicant for submission. Application submitted!

**RACP Grant.** DCED received letters of support from elected officials and detailed construction/implementation timeline.

**Monroe County Hotel Tax Allocation.** Requested \$9,847 for equipment for Dog Park.

**PMVB Beautification Grant Program Round 2.** Received \$5,769.00 for electric street sweeper. Received requested grant amount! Sweeper ordered.

**2024 Statewide LSA Grant.** For Creek Walk Trail & Footbridge. In final stages of completion for submission.

**2024 PennDOT Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant.** Submitted. For Five Points Roundabout.

**2025 DCED PA Small Water & Sewer Program.** Opening in late 2024/early 2025.

### **Senior Waste Collection Assistance Program**

Letter to all current participants to reapply mailed. Waiting on responses.

### **Downtown Manager**

Downtown Manager included in Budget. Beginning coordination and hiring for Manager and visioning process Winter 2024-25.

### **Budget 2025**

Draft Budget complete.

### **Dumpster Painting & Screening**

Judy is relooking dumpsters and notifying those that have still not complied. ESU will paint eight/ten dumpsters in Spring Semester, late March, or early April. Working out details.

### **Homeless Workgroup**

Met with County Commissioners and Representative Probst December 5<sup>th</sup>. Next meeting in early January.

### **Commercial/Residential Recycling**

Letter sent to commercial properties notifying them of the requirement to recycle. Inspections of commercial properties ongoing.

### **Residential Rental Property Inspections**

Inspections underway. Approximately half property inspections completed.

### **LERTA**

School Board approved Resolution. County Commissioners approve LERTA Ordinance at 1/2/25 Meeting.

### **Dog Park**

Requesting more equipment through County Hotel Tax Grant/Allocation. Working on welcome sign for park.

### **Monthly E-Newsletters**

December/Holiday issue this month.

### **Safety Committee**

Meeting and training on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Borough Newsletter**

Winter/Holiday issue to printer 12/12; out before end of year.

### **Sewer Rates/EDU Reassessment**

Analysis underway, doing double duty as a confirmation of potential rental properties. Looking at numerous data sets: Water EDUs, Sewer EDUs, Act 511 Payroll Taxes, Rental Property Registrations, and Solid Waste registrations.

### **MyGov Software for Codes/Zoning**

Going fully "live" with MyGov in Winter 2025-26 on all permits and licenses. Requiring all Rental Registrations to be submitted through MyGov. Customers will be required, unless they have a compelling reason, to submit all permit and license online through the Customer Service Portal.

### **Staff Performance Evaluations/ Counseling**

Annual evaluations are due.

### **Sewer Collection System/I&I Initiative**

ArcGIS mapping of all cleanouts & manholes complete. Reinstalled flow meters. Restarting Smoke Testing fall/winter 2024-25.

### **Sewer Fund Delinquent Accounts/Liens**

Becky is looking at our list of liens and see what liens need to be renewed and if any need to be taken off the list.

### **Bicycle Racks**

Three racks remain to be installed: 745 Main, 401 Main & 33 North 7<sup>th</sup> Streets. North 7<sup>th</sup> Street was approved with a slightly changed location. Waiting to hear back from the remaining two property owners. One property owner (1172 Main Street) declined to have the rack on their property.

### **Upcoming Focus**

Downtown Manager

LSA Grant Administration/Budget Development/Coordination

New Year Activities

Day to Day Activities

### **Engineer's Report**

No report.

### **Zoning/Codes Officer Report**

Ms. DeStefano was absent.

### **Street Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Ace reported his department is working on the ice-skating rink at Eighth and Main Streets. The rink will be open once the fence is installed and the rink is in place and frozen. Hours of the skating rink will be 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., weather permitting.

### **Approval of Bills on Warrants 241217**

A motion was made by Mr. Christman, seconded by Ms. McCabe to approve the payment of bills on Warrants 241217. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)

### **Public Input for Non-Agenda Items**

Joanne Kochanski, of 850 Scott Street, advised the garbage haulers continue to leave empty garbage cans in the streets. Mr. Kopp will contact Casella regarding this issue.

Robert Cohowicz introduced himself as the newly appointed Operational Manager of Stroud Area Regional Police Department and will be present throughout the community.

### **Executive Session**

There was no Executive Session.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m., on a motion made by Mr. Shay, seconded by Mr. Christman. The motion was carried. (6-yes; 0-no; 0-abstain)