

Palmyra Borough Council Meeting
 Tuesday November 26, 2024
 7:00 PM

President Beth Shearer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers of the Palmyra Municipal Center, located at 325 S. Railroad St. Other Council members in attendance included Anthony Catalani, Nancy Fleegle, Jane Quairoli, Marcus Riddell, and James Tesche. Also in attendance were Borough Manager Roger Powl, Assistant Borough Manager Brenda Pera, Mayor Fred Carpenter, and Western Lebanon County Regional Police Chief Andrew Winters. Matthew Andrews was absent from the meeting.

Public Comment Period #1

- Tom Miller, 306 W Walnut St., thanked Council for their hard work on the budget.

Consent Calendar

The following agenda items were acted upon by a single motion:

- a. Approve the minutes of the November 12, 2024, Borough Council meeting.
- b. Approve payment of all bills listed on the October 2024 Detailed Check Listing Report.
- c. Approve the Treasurer’s Report for the period October 1 through October 30, 2024:

	General Fund	Sewer Fund	Refuse Fund	Capital Reserve Fund	Special Sewer Fund	Liquid Fuels Fund
YTD Revenue	\$3,709,490	\$1,702,668	\$1,162,088	\$535,391	\$145,216	\$224,179
YTD Expenses	\$4,225,397	\$1,488,683	\$1,003,187	\$829,549	\$0	\$230,000
Difference	\$(515,907)	\$213,985	\$128,901	\$(294,159)	\$145,216	\$(5,821)
Fund Balance	\$70,723	\$408,761	\$230,270	\$1,161,637	\$2,378,809	\$41,939

	Library Fund	Joint Fire Apparatus Fund	Cemetery Fund	Employee Benefits Fund	Fire Protection Tax Fund
YTD Revenue	\$29,506	\$151,695	\$559	\$108,873	\$348,046
YTD Expenses	\$32,500	\$135,374	\$0	\$532,494	\$296,904
Difference	\$(2,994)	\$16,321	\$559	\$(423,621)	\$51,142
Fund Balance	\$615	\$177,233	\$44,863	\$245,497	\$84,366

Motion: To approve the consent calendar. Motion by Jane Quairoli, second by Nancy Fleegle. Motion passed.

Action & Discussion Items

- a. 2025 Preliminary Budget Discussion: Mr. Powl presented the preliminary budget. He explained that he was able to reduce the original \$819,000 shortfall to \$707,000 and worked with Chief Winters to enable an additional \$100,000 reduction. He explained that the School Crossing Guard salaries had to be added back into the Budget because they are not part of the Western Lebanon County Regional Police Budget. The School District reimburses the

Borough for 50% of the crossing guard salaries. Council reviewed the budget and discussed various additions and deletions and requested that the \$11,390 budgeted to install the battery back-up system for the traffic signal at Main St & Lingle Ave be cut. As a result, the 2025 Budget shortfall stands at \$600,487, which will require a real estate tax increase of 1.19 mills to cover. Mr. Powl noted that 2025 expenditures are approximately \$80,000 less than 2024 budgeted expenditures, which demonstrates the revenue problem being experienced this year.

Motion: To authorize the Borough Manager to advertise the 2025 Preliminary Budget and to make the 2025 Preliminary Budget available for the required 10-day public review period pursuant to Section §1308(a) of the Borough Code for final consideration of the Budget to occur at the Monday December 23, 2024 Borough Council meeting. Motion by Jane Quairoli, second by Nancy Fleegle. President Shearer called for a roll call vote:

<i>Anthony Catalani -</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Nancy Fleegle -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Jane Quairoli -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Marcus Riddell -</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>James Tesche -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Beth Shearer -</i>	<i>Yes</i>

The motion passed with a 4-2 vote.

- b. Ordinance #833 – Amend Chapter 48 (Pensions), Chapter 59 (Police), and Chapter 100 (Alarm Systems) of the Palmyra Borough Code of Ordinances:

Motion: To enact Ordinance #833, an ordinance to amend the Palmyra Borough Code of Ordinances to reflect the formation of the Western Lebanon County Regional Police Department, eliminate the Police Pension Fund, and revise and update penalty and enforcement provisions. Motion by Jane Quairoli, second by James Tesche. Motion passed with a 4-2 vote with Councilors Catalani and Riddell voting against the motion.

- c. Ordinance #834 – 2025 Real Estate Tax Ordinance:

Motion: To authorize the Borough Solicitor to prepare and advertise Ordinance #834, the 2025 Real Estate Tax Ordinance, to set the real estate tax rate pursuant to Section §1310.1 of the Borough Code for the Year 2025 at the following rates:

*Real Estate Tax = 5.30 mills;
Fire Tax = .67 mills;
Public Library Tax = .06 mills*

Motion by James Tesche, second by Jane Quairoli. President Shearer called for a roll call vote:

<i>Anthony Catalani -</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Nancy Fleegle -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Jane Quairoli -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Marcus Riddell -</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>James Tesche -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Beth Shearer -</i>	<i>Yes</i>

The motion passed with a 4-2 vote.

d. Ordinance #835 – 2025 Sewer Rates:

Motion: To authorize the Borough Solicitor to prepare and advertise Ordinance #835, an ordinance to amend Chapter 288 (Sewers) of the Code of Ordinances of the Borough of Palmyra in order to increase the rates charged for domestic sewage from the current \$98 per quarter to \$109 per quarter for flat-rate residential dwelling units, and from \$98 to \$109 per quarter for commercial units plus \$10.90 per each 1,000-gallons over 10,000 gallons used, effective January 1, 2025. Motion by James Tesche, second by Nancy Fleegle. President Shearer called for a roll call vote:

<i>Anthony Catalani -</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Nancy Fleegle -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Jane Quairolì -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Marcus Riddell -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>James Tesche -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Beth Shearer -</i>	<i>Yes</i>

The motion passed with a 5-1 vote.

e. Resolution #2024-23 – 2025 Refuse Rates:

Motion: To approve Resolution #2024-23, a resolution to increase the 2025 Refuse Collection Rates from the current \$89.00 per quarter to \$112.00 per quarter, effective January 1, 2025. Motion by James Tesche, second by Beth Shearer. \ President Shearer called for a roll call vote:

<i>Anthony Catalani -</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Nancy Fleegle -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Jane Quairolì -</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Marcus Riddell -</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>James Tesche -</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Beth Shearer -</i>	<i>Yes</i>

The vote was a 3-3 tie with the Mayor breaking the tie by voting for the motion.

f. Resolution #2024-24 – Authorize Statewide Local Share Assessment Grant Application:

Motion: To approve Resolution #2024-24, a resolution authorizing application for a Statewide Local Share Assessment Grant from the Commonwealth Financing Authority and to name the designated officials to execute all documents and agreements between the Commonwealth Financing Authority and the Borough for 100% of the funding needed for the replacement of the Borough's 2007 sewer jet-vac/hydro-excavation truck with a replacement cost of \$572,091. Motion by Marcus Riddell, second by Jane Quairolì. Motion passed.

Reports

a. President's Report: President Shearer wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

b. Financial Report: Mr. Powl provided a copy of the October 2024 report.

c. Fire Department:

1. Fire Services Commission meeting: Mr. Powl reported that a meeting was held on November 20th to discuss the status of the volunteer fire department and next steps due to

the dwindling number of volunteers. The Fire Chief announced that he could no longer guarantee 24/7 fire protection. Mr. Powl indicated that the Fire Service Commission will begin meeting regularly starting in January 2025 to assess the best way for the community to transition into a paid fire department.

- d. Library Report: Councilor Quairolì will have the report prepared for the next meeting.
- e. Western Lebanon County Regional Police Department: Chief Winters provided a copy of the October 2024 report and outlined auto-theft training to be held at the County Emergency Management headquarters on December 2nd.
- f. Recreation Commission: Councilor Quairolì commented that the report was emailed to Council.
- g. Solicitor's Report: There was no report.
- h. Zoning & Codes Enforcement: No hearings were conducted in November 2024.
- i. Borough Manager's Report:
 1. East Ridge Road – Melrose (Phase #1) Update: (Off-Site Stormwater)
Mr. Powl presented the following options for consideration. After a brief discussion, Council agreed to wait until January 2025 to contemplate a decision.
 - a. Borough troubleshoots and repairs existing drain tile on northside of E. Ridge Rd and requires developer to pay Park & Rec Fee-In-Lieu of money to Borough instead of using for stormwater improvement.
 - b. Developer removes the existing drain tile pipe along the north side of E. Ridge Rd within our existing easement area and install the new drainage/infiltration system and allow the water to flow east along the north side of the road. Borough would pay difference in cost between Park & Rec Fee-In-Lieu money and cost of project (\$72,393.31 – 56,000 = \$16,393.31)
 - c. Property owners reconsider granting the necessary stormwater easements on their properties to enable Developer to use Park & Rec Fee-In-Lieu money to extend existing discharge pipe underground to the south to an east/west alley right of way to a temporary dead-end inlet on the east side of N. Lincoln St.
 2. Magisterial District Judge Office Lease: Mr. Powl commented that Lebanon County has not been paying the full monthly lease fee. In an email sent to the County last November, Mr. Powl outlined the equation for calculating the rent according to the lease agreement and received no response. The County did increase the rent payment in January but not to the level calculated by the increase of the total Consumer Price Index increases over the previous 6-year period. Mr. Powl has contacted the County on this issue, but no resolution has been reached. He will discuss the matter with the Borough Solicitor.
 3. Steve Ricker, a member of the Palmyra Rotary Club, contacted Mr. Powl regarding the placing of a Rotary peace pole at the Borough square. Council was not familiar with a peace pole and Mr. Powl offered to get more information.
 4. Mr. Powl shared the enthusiasm of the public works department. They put the Christmas tree in the square and wanted to add additional decorations. They were thinking about presents around the tree. Council had no issue with the request.

Other Business

- Councilor Riddell wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and thanked staff for their hard work on the budget.

Public Comment Period #2

- Dave McCloskey, 212 E. Ridge Rd, shared his concerns about Council not deciding on the East Ridge Rd - Melrose stormwater issues.
- Don Barry, 711 N. Grant St, shared his concerns about Council not deciding on the East Ridge Rd - Melrose stormwater issues.

Announcement

President Shearer announced that Borough Council will conduct its next public meetings on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, and Monday, December 23, 2024, beginning at 7:00 PM.

Motion to Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Marcus Riddell, second by Jane Quairola. Meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger E. Powl
Borough Manager