

**BOROUGH OF EDGEWOOD
INDEX TO THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF JUNE 15, 2020**

MOTION SUBJECT	MOTION	PAGE
Approve the Minutes of May 18, 2020	M-1	4
Approve the Minutes of June 1, 2020	M-2	4
Authorize Payment of Bills	M-3	4
Advertise 2020 road paving program	M-4	5
Adjourn	M-5	6

BOROUGH OF EDGEWOOD
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD JUNE 15, 2020

President Wainright called the meeting of the Borough of Edgewood to order at 7:30 pm.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call, the following responded: Mr. Bright, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Love, Mr. O'Donnell, Ms. Yaney, and Mr. Wainright. Councilmember Petrolla was absent. Solicitor Tim Barry, Mayor Wilson and Junior Councilperson Benjamin Bermann were also present.

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR:

Due to COVID 19 pandemic, the following comment was submitted electronically prior to the meeting for consideration (read aloud by Mr. Zahorchak):

Dear Chief Payne,

We are very concerned about the recent deaths of African-Americans and violence against peaceful protesters by police. We would like to assure that these don't occur in our community. A number of reforms have been proposed across the country. Are you considering any of them for Edgewood? Some of these include creating a civilian review board, eliminating racial profiling, requiring de-escalation, prohibiting choke holds, duty to intervene etc. We hope you will address these at the Council Meeting and look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,

*Jo Schlesinger and Allan Willinger
119 Lacrosse Street 15218*

*Cynthia Magistro and Barry Beal
142 W. Swissvale Ave 15218*

No further comments were offered.

Edgewood Borough Police Chief Robert Payne addressed council and the audience regarding the events that occurred resulting in George Floyd's death at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department. He spoke at length about the process for becoming a municipal police officer in the state of Pennsylvania through any of the twenty-one police academies in the state and satisfying the education requirements of the Municipal Police Officer Education Training Commission (MPOETC). Before a student can become professional police officer, each student must complete 859 hours of classroom and field training in criminal procedure, social and ethical issues, psychology, cultural and religious consideration, mental health concerns, crowd control and civil disturbance, and so on.

Only after passing all of the examinations and graduating from a police academy can a police officer apply for a job in a police department. Part of that application process includes a physical and psychological evaluation, a written civil service examination, full background investigation, and in some cases a polygraph. Only after the civil service commission evaluates and ranks each candidate based on their combined test scores will an individual be

considered for employment. Once hired, each officer candidate in Edgewood must complete a one year probationary period where they are supervised by a field training officer (FTO). The FTO can recommend termination at any point during this probationary period for a variety of reasons. The FTO is also required to correct, guide, and coach the probationary officer and offer advice on conduct and policing in the field. An FTO is required to attend special training to learn the skills necessary to mentor and supervise probationary officers.

This process is the standard that all departments in the Commonwealth should follow for hiring police officers. It is the standard by which all full time officers are hired in Edgewood Borough.

Chief Payne spoke about the department's accreditation on CALEA, the Commission on Accreditation on Law Enforcement Agencies. This certification is a nationally recognized accreditation established by the nation's four largest law enforcement major executive associations. It is rare that a municipal department of our size would undertake such a challenging accreditation process but your elected officials insisted this was important for the community.

Under CALEA, the department maintains a voluminous policy manual that defines each officer's responsibility and code of conduct. Each officer is required to follow the policies contained in the manual. One of those policies is to conduct unbiased enforcement of the law. Another requirement is to be respectful and professional at all times and to identify yourself to the citizen and explain the reason for the interaction. Edgewood officers are trained to always identify themselves and explain to the citizen why they are being stopped.

Edgewood officers are also required to adhere to strict ethical standards and any deviation from those standards will result in a full internal investigation. This adherence is required to maintain the trust and respect of the community. Chief Payne stated that the biggest problem with law enforcement today is that many chiefs won't terminate their problem officers. This department has terminated two full time officers and several part time officers for their conduct and ignorance to our personnel manual. Consequently, the department has not received a citizens complaint against a police officer in eight years.

Chief Payne next discussed the department's use of force policy. This policy parallels the PA Chiefs of Police use of force policy and the Allegheny County District Attorney's use of force policy. The department's policy clearly defines the use of force continuum, starting with the physical presence of a police officer. An officer's physical presence is the first step in the use of force. The second is the use of verbal commands. An officer's command to do something is considered force. Under Pennsylvania law, when you are commanded by a police officer to stop, or told that you are under arrest, you must comply. Failing to comply usually compels the third level of force, which is the use of OC spray (pepper spray) or taser. These are considered hands-off mechanisms meant to protect the officer from harm. The fourth step is considered hands-on and this step includes the infliction of physical pain through mechanical compliance. This includes arm holds and other physical restrains. The next step is the use of impact weapons to include batons and other less lethal items. The sixth and last step is the use of deadly force.

The department's use of force policy is reviewed annually to ensure that it complies with current law. Chokeholds are not authorized in the department under any level of force. Under no circumstances can any officer continue to use force except for mere physical restraint against any individual who has stopped resisting. Any Edgewood officer who uses any type of force is required to report that use and is subject to review by a commanding officer and the chief of police.

Chief Payne outlined the process for registering a complaint against an officer and the process for investigating the incidents that led to the complaint. Multiple officers are assigned to the investigation and discipline will be assigned based on the standards contained in the department's police manual.

Chief Payne concluded his presentation by providing an overview of the department's involvement with community groups focused on preventing violence and mentoring youth. He stated the department will be receiving training on procedural justice on June 30.

A brief question and answer session followed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M-1 Mr. O'Donnell moved to approve the May 18, 2020 meeting minutes. Second by Mr. Fuller.

Upon roll call vote the following responded yes: Mr. Bright, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Love, Mr. O'Donnell, Ms. Yaney, and Mr. Wainright. **Motion carried.**

M-2 Mr. O'Donnell moved to approve the June 1, 2020 meeting minutes. Second by Mr. Fuller

Upon roll call vote the following responded yes: Mr. Bright, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Love, Mr. O'Donnell, Ms. Yaney, and Mr. Wainright. **Motion carried.**

AUTHORIZATION TO PAY BILLS

M-3 Mr. O'Donnell I move to authorize the payment of bills, for goods and services received by the Borough, having been reviewed and approved by the General Government Committee, from the General Fund in the amount of \$20,756.74 and from the Sewer fund in the amount of \$174,537.47 for a total of \$195,294.21. Second Mr. Bright.

DISCUSSION: Mr. O'Donnell held his comments for the General Government Committee report.

Upon roll call vote the following responded yes: Mr. Bright, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Love, Mr. O'Donnell, Ms. Yaney, and Mr. Wainright. **Motion carried.**

Committee Reports:

GENERAL GOVERNMENT: Mr. O'Donnell stated the bill payment list was fairly routine and contained the ALCOSAN sewer payment passthrough.

POLICE: Mayor Wilson reported that all officers have been healthy and Officer Susalla is recovering from shoulder surgery.

PUBLIC SAFETY: Mr. Fuller said the committee did not meet.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Mr. Bright said the committee did not meet.

PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Love said the committee meeting was postponed and will be rescheduled for June 18.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: Ms. Yaney said the committee is entertaining a proposal from a boy scout to build a gazebo in Memorial Park. The committee will meet when more information becomes available.

PERSONNEL: Mr. Fuller said the committee did not meet

PENSION: Mr. Fuller stated the committee did not meet.

AD HOC COMMITTEES-

CONNECT: Mr. Zahorchak the next CONNECT meeting is scheduled for June 18.

WOODLAND HILLS SD EDUCATION CONSORTIUM: Mr. O'Donnell and Mr. Love participated in a conference call regarding the donation of 3,300 Chromebooks for students in the school district. The consortium is brainstorming ways to provide internet to all students.

VOILENCE PREVENTION COALITION: Mr. O'Donnell said the coalition has not met in some time.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT: Mr. Barry had nothing to report.

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT: Mr. Zahorchak reported that the signal poles for new traffic light at Maple and Swissvale were delivered today. Installation is approximate 6-8 weeks away, the poles arrived well ahead of schedule due to pandemic related order cancellations. The public works committee is in possession of the revised road paving list which reflects the budget adjustment downward to \$200,000 in expenditure. There is a motion to advertise the program on tonight's agenda. Lastly, Mr. Zahorchak is working on two grants due at the end of July, one for traffic signal upgrades on S. Braddock Avenue and the second for a new playground on Laurel Street.

Mr. Wainright briefly addressed the audience on the reduction in the budgeted amount for road paving due to the potential for revenue shortfall due to pandemic.

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Love announced the public works committee will meet Thursday June 18 at 6:30pm at the borough building.

M-4 Mr. Love moved to authorize the borough engineer to advertise the 2020 road paving program. Second Mr. O'Donnell.

DISCUSSION: None.

Upon roll call vote the following responded yes: Mr. Bright, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Love, Mr. O'Donnell, Ms. Yaney, and Mr. Wainright. **Motion carried.**

M-5 Mr. O'Donnell moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. Second by Mr. Fuller
The aye vote on the motion was unanimous. **Motion carried.**



Rob Zahorchak, Borough Manager