

A reorganizational meeting of the Richland Borough Council was held on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Richland Borough Office. The President being in the chair and the Secretary being present.

Mayor Owen Landes called the Richland Borough Council reorganization Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked everyone to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Owen Landes completed roll call, Present were Kelly Bricker, Mark Brubaker, Larry Hartman, Matthew Johnson, James Niethammer, and Robert Rittle, Mayor Owen Landes, Secretary Rebecca Schnoke, Road Supervisor Dwight Belleman, and Road Laborer/Water Technician Benjamin Becker. Absent was Travis Randler and Solicitor Andrew George.

Mayor Owen Landes administered the Oath of office swearing in elected officials Kelly Bricker, Larry Hartman, Matthew Johnson, and Robert Rittle.

Mayor Owen Landes opened the floor for nominations for the office of President of Council for 2024 & 2025. Mark Brubaker nominated Kelly Bricker for Council President. No other nominations were presented; a motion was made by Mark Brubaker, seconded by Robert Rittle; Motion unanimously carried.

Mayor Owen Landes relinquished control of the meeting to President Kelly Bricker.

President Bricker opened the floor for nominations for the office of Vice President of Council for 2024 & 2025. James Niethammer nominated Mark Brubaker for Council Vice President. No other nominations were presented; a motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Matthew Johnson; Motion unanimously carried.

President Bricker opened the floor for nominations for the office of President Pro Tem of Council for 2024 & 2025. Matthew Johnson nominated Larry Hartman for Council President Pro Tem. No other nominations were presented; a motion was made by Matthew Johnson, seconded by James Niethammer; Motion unanimously carried.

Appointment of Committee's & Committee Chairs:

Water Committee – Matthew Johnson, Kelly Bricker, James Niethammer, and Mark Brubaker. A motion was made by Larry Hartman, seconded by Mark Brubaker to appoint Matthew Johnson as committee chair; motion unanimously carried.

Highway Committee – Larry Hartman, Matthew Johnson, Kelly Bricker, and Robert Rittle. A motion was made by Matthew Johnson, seconded by James Niethammer to appoint Larry Hartman as committee chair; motion unanimously carried.

Public Safety Committee – Mark Brubaker, Kelly Bricker, Matthew Johnson, and James Niethammer. A motion was made by Larry Hartman, seconded by Matthew Johnson to appoint Mark Brubaker as committee chair; motion unanimously carried.

Property Committee – Robert Rittle, Kelly Bricker, James Niethammer, and Mark Brubaker. A motion as made by James Niethammer, seconded by Mark Brubaker to appoint Robert Rittle as committee chair; motion unanimously carried.

Finance Committee – James Niethammer, Kelly Bricker, Matthew Johnson, and Larry Hartman. A motion was made by Matthew Johnson, seconded by Robert Rittle to appoint James Niethammer as committee chair; motion unanimously carried.

Recreation Committee – Matthew Johnson, Kelly Brubaker, Larry Hartman, and Mark Brubaker. A motion was made by Larry Hartman, seconded by Mark Brubaker to appoint Matthew Johnson as committee chair; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by Larry Hartman, seconded by James Niethammer, to appoint Rebecca Schnoke as the Richland Borough Secretary; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by Mark Brubaker, seconded by Robert Rittle, to appoint Rebecca Schnoke as the Richland Borough Open Records Officer; motion unanimously carried.

The President asked for a motion to approve the previous months minutes. A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Mark Brubaker, to dispense with the reading of and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on December 12, 2023; motion unanimously carried.

President Bricker opened the floor for citizens' and visitors' comments. There was one (1) person present.

Duane Nolt (K&K Feeds) – 23 N. Park Street – Presented questions regarding zoning violations posted by Kraft Municipal Group regarding the dog grooming business in the basement and how to appeal for variance. The council advised appeals for a variance are submitted to the zoning hearing board. Mr. Nolt inquired if a sign could be placed on the telephone/electric pole located at the southeast side of the railroad tracks to direct delivery drivers. The council advised they cannot approve this request, recommended locating pole number and contacting PPL to identify the owner of the pole and the permitting process. President Bricker advised that additional future action or maintenance agreement may be required if delivery trucks are entering through the parking lot.

The following Committee reports were presented to Council: Water Report, Highway Report, Property Report, Finance Report, Safety Report, and Personnel Report.

Water Committee – Scheduling appointment with Senator Meuser's office, getting Well No. 9 online is priority, and water tank property appraisal received the solicitor writing letter of intent, will set meeting with property owner.

Highway Committee – Planning to bid tar & chip of Richland Heights in March.

Property Committee – Nothing to Report.

Personnel Committee – Recap meeting with employees Thursday 1/4/24 at 9:30am.

Finance Committee – Opening new accounts with PLGIT & LFCU, looking into investment options. Expecting new dump truck by end of summer.

Safety Committee – Researching grant funding for digital speed signs. Plan to use recycling grant funds towards sign costs.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Larry Hartman, to accept the Committee Reports. Motion unanimously carried.

The following reports were presented to the Council: Mayor Report, Road Supervisor Report, Office Report, Solicitor Report, Code Enforcement, and State Police Report.

Mayor Report – None submitted.

Road Supervisor’s Report – No questions about the report.

Water Report – No questions about the report, Mr. Belleman advised the flow meter at reservoir was not reading low flows, possibly needs to be replaced.

Office Report – No questions about the report.

Solicitor’s Report – None submitted, no current ongoing legal matters.

Code Enforcement Officer Report – current long-running violations remaining unresolved, proceed with further enforcement actions.

Police Report – December 2023 report not received.

MRJA Report – Next meeting will be held January 8, 2024.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Larry Hartman, to accept the Officials Reports. Motion unanimously carried.

The Financial Reports for December 2023 were submitted by Secretary/Treasurer Rebecca Schnoke. A motion was made by Robert Rittle, seconded by Mark Brubaker to approve the Financial Report, and have it placed on file for Audit. Motion unanimously carried.

The invoices were presented and reviewed by Councilmember James Niethammer. A motion was made by Mark Brubaker, seconded by Larry Hartman, to pay all the invoices submitted; Motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Larry Hartman to approve to ratify the bills paid; motion unanimously carried.

The following communications were received:

- 5 Zoning/Building Permits Issued
- Lebanon County Commissioner Meeting Highlights
- Xfinity – Data Security Incident Notice
- Richland Heritage Society – current insurance information.

Old Business:

Playground Update – setting up meeting with YSM and Becker Engineering to review designs and confirm everything is on track to bid the project end of January/beginning of February 2024.

N. Race Street Project – no new updates.

New Business:

Three refuse exemption requests submitted since the December 12, 2023, meeting. President Bricker recused herself on this matter. A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Robert Rittle to approve the three 2024 contracted refuse exemption requests received; motion carried, with one abstention.

Concerns pertaining to safety, placement, and aesthetics of a dumpster at a North Park Street apartment were raised. The matter has been forwarded to Kraft Municipal Group for investigation.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Larry Hartman to approve Resolution 2024-01 appointing Becker Engineering as the Borough's engineering firm; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by Mark Brubaker, seconded by Robert Rittle to approve Resolution 2024-02 appointing Kozloff Stoudt as the Borough's solicitor; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Mark Brubaker to approve Resolution 2024-03 appointing Kraft Municipal Group as the Borough's zoning & property code enforcement, and building code official; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by Larry Hartman, seconded by Mark Brubaker to approve Resolution 2024-04 appointing Stanilla, Seigel & Maser as the Borough's independent auditor; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Robert Rittle to approve Resolution 2024-05 to participate in the liquid fuels aid program; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by Mark Brubaker, seconded by Larry Hartman to approve Resolution 2024-06 to set the 2024 Real Estate Taxation Rate, 2.49 mills & Fire Tax 0.30 mills; motion unanimously carried. President Bricker noted there were no tax increases.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Mark Brubaker to approve Resolution 2024-07 to set the 2024 Act 511 Taxation Rates: Real Estate Transfer Tax 1%, Earned Income Tax 0.5%, and Local Service Tax \$52.00 per person; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Matthew Johnson to approve Resolution 2024-08 appointing the Council President, Vice President, President Pro Tem, Secretary, Road Supervisor, and Road Laborer/Water Technician to execute documents; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Robert Rittle to approve Resolution 2024-09 authorizing the President, Vice President, President Pro Tem, and Secretary to sign checks; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Mark Brubaker to approve Resolution 2024-10 for record deposition; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Larry Hartman to approve Resolution 2024-11 escalation clause; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Mark Brubaker to approve Resolution 2024-12 establishing employee salary/wage rates; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by Larry Hartman, seconded by James Niethammer to approve Resolution 2024-13 appointing Dale Althouse to the zoning hearing board for a three-year term; motion unanimously carried.

President Bricker advised Millcreek-Richland Joint Authority sewer billing and payment processing has moved to Diversified Technology and payments will no longer be accepted at 2 N. Race Street or JBT.

S. Race Street Handicap Parking Request – discussion occurred on this matter, tabled for further investigation & consideration.

A motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Larry Hartman to adopt Ordinance No. 395 establishing and ratifying speed regulations of vehicles and traffic within the Borough of Richland, including maximum speed limits on certain streets, roads, and alleys in the Borough; motion unanimously carried.

A motion was made by Mark Brubaker, seconded by James Niethammer to approve advertising Ordinance No. 396 Quality of Life Ordinance; motion unanimously carried.

Water Rates – Considering current water projects and future infrastructure maintenance/upgrades, water rate increases are needed. A water rate schedule from another state was received for review and comparison, the water committee will meet to review increase options.

President Bricker announced that Council will recess the Regular Session to enter Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. The Council returned from Executive Session at 8:40 p.m. reconvening the Regular Session after discussing personnel matters with no action taken.

President Bricker asked if there were any comments for the good of the Borough, Dwight Belleman presented a recycling grant opportunity for a leaf picker, Council requested the Borough employees to continue investigating the grant opportunity & requirements. With no additional matters presented, a motion was made by James Niethammer, seconded by Larry Hartman, to adjourn. Motion unanimously carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Rebecca Schnoke,
Richland Borough Secretary