

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE EAST PETERSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL

DATE AND TIME:	March 28, 2024	6:00 p.m.
LOCATION:	Community Center	6051 Pine Street
ATTENDANCE:	Council Members:	Debra Miller, President John Schick, Vice-President (Absent) Adam Gochnauer, Pro Tem John Herr Randy Rannels William Sharp Sandra Valdez
	Mayor:	James Malone
	Borough Manager:	Karen St. Clair

Meeting was called to order by Debra Miller, President of Borough Council: 6:00 p.m.

Moment of Silence / Pledge to Flag

Visitors: Karyl Carmignani, Tammy & Jeff Moseman, James Swarr, Don Schoenberger, Samuel Maurer V, Jay Parrish, Mary Armstrong

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Tammy Moseman said: Everyone knows what's going on with the Library and I have spent time processing my thoughts and concerns on this and I am not here to pass judgement on this. Each is of their own. I am deeply concerned that taxpayer dollars are supporting a library that is having drag queens read and interact with our precious vulnerable children. When the library representative came here she asked for money and an increase in the money, but there was no mention of this type of function occurring. I understand we can choose not to attend such events, but I can choose to voice my opinion as to where my tax dollars are being spent. In my opinion it is political, divisive, and morally wrong, and an inappropriate function to occur at a taxpayer funded library. I have no problem with the LGBTQ group, but I do have a problem with the drag queens reading to our young children and individuals making threats to our republican commissioners. I watched the last couple Lancaster Commissioners meeting and there were a high amount of threats made to them because of their concerns and I invite you all to watch it. It is online and you can watch it. It was deeply concerning the threats that they are receiving. She pointed out that children should not be exposed to an individual that made negative statements about children publicly. She continued to say: I watched East Hempfields Board meeting, and they made statements as well. One individual there said there were 2 Christian groups that asked to have venues there and they were denied. Per Lissa the executive director, she doesn't censor and that is a quote that she put online. But to me, they do censor because they are not offering a Christian venue. With that being said there are now safety concerns and a bomb threat and physical threats that are occurring to our commissioners and even to local communities. I feel you as councilmembers are fiscally responsible for our money and I personally do not want my money associated with a library that has a function that could possibly harm somebody. You don't know what's going to happen or what's going to occur. You're having bomb threats and physical threats to people and if you don't associate with these type of people who's going to be vulnerable. I feel as if our community and our children are at that state. You as councilmembers have to consider all for the community not just a select few of the community and I believe our tax dollars can be better utilized, not funding possible harm. I do not want to be associated with a function as a community funding harm. I personally don't want my name there and I am an East Petersburg resident so ultimately my name is there and that frightens me. I think we can use our taxpayer dollars better, elsewhere. I just think it's very sensitive political, and divisive and its inappropriate to have adult individuals dressed up as woman reading to our children, who does adult functions and children's functions. Do we know when the check is submitted; it's 3rd quarter? Manager St. Clair said yes, it is always around October. Tammy Moseman continued to say: We have time to think about this and discuss it. Do we want to add it to the agenda? I don't know how all this works, but I think we need to discuss this as a community. We need to put out there that we are contributing to a function that could be harmful and it's very scary to me that we are influencing our small children. I think it should be up to the parents to be able to do. If you want to go, go. I have no problem with that but do it in a private area not in a publicly funded facility. I read all the ins and outs of it on Facebook and WGAL. I watched EH Township meeting and they are thinking about withdrawing. I watched all the commissioners' meetings. I invite you to do all of that and get a

good perspective on your thoughts and what you think, but it scares me to death that we are accommodating to a select few with our children with our tax dollars. I just think you all need to consider discussing it this evening or putting it on the agenda for further discussion.

Jay Parrish said: There were a lot of comments just made about harm, threats, and violence. When I go to the library I don't see that. Libraries are extremely important to me and our society, and all aspects of society. It is critical for the basis of anybody's education. Where can you go if you are starting up a business; you can go to the library to get this information. If anything, we should be tripling, quadrupling, or giving ten times the amount we fund the library now. If you ever live in a community that actually funds a library, it is a wonderful community to be in. I have had the privilege of living in other states and libraries are wonderful places with fabulous programs for kids, and it's a delight. I don't think that anything that happened this week, in the terms of offering somebody who'd be reading, was political, divisive, or harmful, and none of that happened in terms of the people who are offering it. I went to college with a guy who was a head of our University Christian Fellowship, and he was a wonderful guy. It turns out now he is a drag queen and a devout Christian, and unfortunately has cancer right now. Unless you know somebody, and say I knew them, I've know them; you know they are human beings. I would strongly urge you to drastically increase the amount of funding for the library. If you look at the amount of funding for Chester County, our municipalities give half as much as they do. We are way down on the list of supporters. It's personally painful for me because I know Ray D'Agostino, having worked with him for many years. It really hurts me to hear him say the things he does because I know he wasn't that person a few years ago and he has become much more prone to things he never would have noticed before.

Tammy Moseman asked Jay Parrish if he watched the commissioners meeting with the threats.

Jay Parrish said: I did not watch it. I actually worked in county government and knew the previous commissioners. I also worked in state government and experienced a public that might be angry about things, threats, and violence, but never have I seen a local politician use their power to do something that would incite a violent reaction like these commissioners did. In 30 years, I never saw this.

Tammy Moseman said: I appreciate what you're saying, and I agree, a library is a most important place for everyone to go, but when there is threats being made, it was a bomb threat. There is no conclusion where it came from because the e-mails are being investigated. This is a problem; a safety issue.

Mary Armstrong said: I have lived in East Pete since 1980 and I am very involved in the Lancaster Public Library. I have been the chairperson of the big book sale for the past six years and have been involved for the past 10 years. Lancaster County has the lowest support of the library system in the whole state. I understand everybody's concern. Lissa Holland is the executive director of the library, and she is one of my many friends at the library, and they are all scared to death at work. The important thing is we need to keep up funding for libraries, all the libraries. I did some research and East Petersburg Borough funds less than \$1.00 for each resident for the library. To me that is pitiful. 37% of the budget comes from the municipalities, the rest is raised by people like me who are working very hard to keep the library open. They need to be inclusive of everybody too, not just certain groups. I know it wasn't political or religious and had nothing to do with that. It was a non-profit group who wanted to use the facility. They are perfectly acceptable to do that. When you talk about non-profit groups and how we support them, not just East Petersburg Borough, but the whole state, all the churches are in a tax-exempt position, so really my taxes that I pay are helping to support the churches. If they would pay property taxes like the rest of us do, then my taxes wouldn't be so high. That's all I want to say. Thank you.

James Swarr said: I just want it to be put on record that Councilmember Sharp, Councilmember Herr and Councilmember Miller gave the last two speakers their undivided attention, but when Tammy Moseman was speaking, one was cleaning their glasses, one was shuffling papers, and the other was doing something else.

Adam Gochnauer said: We should probably address the concerns now.

Debra Miller said: We might want to take a look at the meeting room policy, and the American Library Bill of Rights, which is why I was shuffling through papers. We might want to learn more from the director of Lancaster Public Library to get some facts before we discuss something we don't have facts on. She would like everyone to do some research and put this on the agenda for April.

Adam Gochnauer said: It's not a legal issue or contractual issue and everyone probably has an opinion about it now. I am not sure what we can gather to make concerns better. I don't think it's a legal matter, it's more of a moral thing whatever side you're on and if we wish to fund them, or not, or increase it in some cases. I value opinions of the other

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councilmembers. I don't think waiting a month will change anybody's opinion on it. I don't think it was a question of if they have a right to do this, but whether it was a smart decision or not. Therefore, funding should be addressed by it.

Mayor Malone said: There were miscommunications presented equating non-binary presentations as harmful relating to the bomb threat, whether that was a cause or not. If we waited to give authorities a chance to actually work through the threats to find out who made those threats; where they came from, why they were made. We could then actually address those fears in a confident manner rather than throwing out our own opinions.

Adam Gochnauer said: The bomb threats are not from the library staff. That's nothing to do with this. The people who have spoken about the library funding were asking what our opinion is and what we should do with library funding about the event they were part of. Our specific question we were asked to debate is what do we do with library funding? Should we continue funding? It was not who threatened to bomb them; that's for the police and legal.

William Sharp said: We are already paying well below what we should be paying at \$0.72 per capita. That is not sufficient to help to fund a public library that provides exceptional benefits to this community. They provide a great deal of opportunities for people to have a safe environment in which to work. They can go in there and study. It's a safe place for children. It provides information and resources and one event that you disagree with should not negate the fact of all the benefits that they provide. Yes, you are entitled to your opinion and thoughts and whether it should occur. However, that is not the end all, be all, as to what a library is for.

Tammy Moseman said: Her thing is safety.

William Sharp said: The people holding the event would not have made a bomb threat. We have no control over how other people react and what they do. If you are referring to the bomb threat, the people holding the event did not do that. They would not do that. If you are talking about what other people do, we have no control over that. We cannot control how people are going to react over events that are held. What we can control is our action and whether or not we support an organization which provides us with benefits.

Tammy Moseman said: I agree with supporting them, absolutely no doubt in my mind. I never had an issue with that. What I have an issue with now is safety. I am not biased whatsoever. I have gay family members and friends. My concern is our money could possibly contribute to harm of children and families due to having an event in a public library that is funded by taxpayers. That's my concern.

William Sharp said: That is a far leap. That's a leap in logic. A leap in thoughts.

Tammy Moseman said: Don't degrade my thoughts.

William Sharp said: I'm not, what I am saying is the logic that you are speaking about that doesn't come to pass. We have multiple situations where people are committing violent acts with no justification, so you can't say that because someone has an event that is going to cause them to have this type of reaction. People are going to do what they are going to do, and we have no control over it.

Tammy Moseman said: There was a threat and it's called safety for our children and our families and our public and the community.

Mayor Malone asked: Would you block the meeting?

Tammy Moseman said: No, that's not my point. When you bring in a small group of people that are adults dressed up as drag queens reading God knows what to our children, now it becomes an issue. I don't have an issue with it. Other individuals do and now there is bomb threats and that is my issue.

Mayor Malone said: What if you have a bomb threat because someone chose a story of the Quran and there is a bomb threat.

Tammy Moseman said: That is precisely my point. I don't know and that's a problem when other people have a problem. I don't have a problem; I don't care what they do. My issue is the fact you have a small group of individuals that are drag queens that are reading to small children and other individuals have issues with it and now it's a safety issue. I don't want my taxpayer money funding something that is going to go ahead and possibly have harm on somebody.

Debra Miller said: What we are going to do is let the councilmembers speak.

Randy Rannels said: Mary raised a good point; we don't spend \$1.00 per person, and I agree that libraries are very important. I don't know a lot about the situation that happened with the library with the bomb threat and everything else. I do need to educate myself on that. I agree that it is not out of bounds for us to pay \$1.00 per resident for the library. That's all I have to say for now.

John Herr said: The first time I ran for borough council, I knocked on a lot of doors over a summer and a number of times I talked with kids in the 8-16 year old range. Their parents were off working. I said to them: what do you need here? What can this town do to make your life better? One thing they said was do better upkeep in the parks. The other thing they said was we need the library, and we need to be able to get to the library. They always mentioned the library. They didn't have an easy way to get to and from the library, but they did care. To make it short, I would double and triple what we give at least. If you start hurting the library you are hurting society in some really basic way.

Debra Miller said: We don't want an illiterate society. I had certain misconceptions relating to this event. When I was doing my research I found there is a Library Bill of Rights and there is a link to this on the Lancaster Public Library website. Two of the things on the Bill of Rights that stuck out to me was (1) A person's right to use the library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views. (2) Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve, should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless on the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use. That was new for me; I was not aware there was a Library Bill of Rights or that those things were highlighted. As far as the meeting room policy, the Lancaster Public Library allows qualified and approved individuals or organizations to use its meeting room only for approved educational and recreational activities which support the libraries' purpose. The library will not sponsor or subsidize commercial, religious, or political activities by outside organizations or individuals. I took note of that because religious and political activities by outside organizations or individuals on library premises, are prohibited. That's why we can't do political or religious activities in a library. It's right there in black and white. The library as an independent, not for profit cooperation, reserves the right to limit or deny use of its meeting facilities by group or individual organization if such use is deemed to be not in the best interest of the library. If you want to take it and flip it the other way, I understand a lot of people were upset it was a drag story hour, but if the director would have ruled against it and not approved their application to rent a room, she would have been discriminating against the drag story hour. You just have to flip it and look at it a different way. These are some of my takeaways.

Some of us toured the Lancaster Public Library last year before it was opened, and I had quite a few takeaways. They do a specialty lending; you can borrow an American Girl doll, outdoor games, board games, specialty baking pans. These items are available to be borrowed at the library. There are 11 rooms available for use. Rental fees start at \$25.00 per hour for study rooms and go as high as \$250.00 for a 2-hour use. They also have an autism resource center equipped with sensory space, sensory toys, games, puzzles, fidget toys, books, DVDs, and more. One of the largest check-outs they have per media is actually their DVD collection.

I am in favor of funding the library and raising it up to at least \$1.00 per person/per capita.

Adam Gochnauer said: Thank you Deb for holding this discussion tonight and thank you to councilmembers for talking. Without getting into personal beliefs, whether you think this event was right or wrong, I think you have to look at it as we do on the council; keeping our personal beliefs out of it, looking at what has happened and how it effects the library, did they make a good decision or bad decision. We could get into a discussion all night about personal beliefs on the whole incident. However, we are here because it was brought up by our residents to address library funding. First, with that being said, we already approved the funding for this year. As far as the increase, I don't think that is a discussion to have tonight. We already approved this in the Fall when Lissa Holland was here and discussed everything and we came to a consensus, and we agreed to an amount. I think no matter what, that amount is in stone. If we want to have this talk again in the Fall and Lissa Holland wants to come, I would encourage her to come before council in the Fall and we can talk to her. I would like to get it off the table immediately about an increase. We are done with the budget. As far as to other concerns on the other side about taking it off, again not getting into personal beliefs on anything. I think the library did something that they are going to look back on and regret what they did, because of what has happened. The turmoil it has created, and they are probably going to lose a lot of funding from municipalities because of this one incident. Agreed, not to say libraries aren't worth being funded but they made a mistake and I think they are going to pay for that in the long run. When you make a mistake you have to learn from that and whoever approved this is probably saying it sounded good initially, but it wasn't the right thing to do. I'm not saying left or right because people have called bomb threats, and I don't agree with any of that. It is not right and it's way political. We have to look at it as saying do we personally feel it was a mistake, do we keep funding or cut funding? To me, that is what we have to discuss tonight; cut it or keep it? Then we can have the discussion as far as any raise in the Fall. I think, myself talking, it was a mistake what they did; not to kids. Adults is one thing, but not to kids. I would say cut the funding and say this is not to the library but to the person who authorized

this made a mistake and we will not tolerate that to our youth. Then I would love to have Lissa Holland come here to discuss it in the Fall and we might learn more: who made that decision and is that going to continue? Maybe Mary Armstrong can answer if this was booked after she was here.

Mary Armstrong said: It was booked months ago, but I do not know the answer to that. I don't know when she was here. It would not have gotten to this point unless it was brought up in a public situation. It would not have exploded. It would have been like any other story hour. The people who wanted to bring their children would have went and it would have been all calm and nobody would have even known. But it was brought up in a public situation, and it exploded. I don't believe the staff of the library ever thought it would get to this point. That there would be bomb threats, etc.

Adam Gochnauer said: It's my opinion that it's a mistake, but I respect anyone that doesn't think it was. I am fine with that. We might agree to disagree on the funding, but I think it's an important thing. I think we probably learned that in the Fall to maybe ask a few more questions about what they are booking. I've never heard of this before and maybe it opened our eyes to the new world. That is what I would like this council to decide on record tonight. Maintain funding or cut funding, and then in the Fall let's have a discussion for everyone that says about raising it. I think that is the time to do it.

Sandra Valdez said: I think that everyone who has provided their opinions and concerns; they are all valid. Everyone has their freedom of speech and is able to say how they feel. For the incident, unfortunately I cannot comment as to the threat or what was in the news because I was with my grandkids. However, I did hear on the news it was going to happen, but beyond that I can't necessarily comment on that. What I would say is whether it was something to do with what Mary Armstrong indicated that if it never would have been public it might have occurred under the radar. As a social service person who works in the community, I try to be equitable and diverse and inclusive to everyone. I don't think our children should be harmed in the sense of not having the necessary tools in the library to be able to do their research, their studies, or to be able to do whatever it is that they need in public that they cannot do at home. Working in the city there are a lot of families there, and even in East Pete, who cannot afford technology at home and cannot afford to have these things that their children will need to access from a library if they cannot get it from a school setting. To Adams statement: When you talk about cutting funding are you talking about cutting what was approved or meaning in the Fall.

Adam Gochnauer said: What I am saying is we approved the budget for this year, so we have essentially one choice do we continue with it or cut it? Later on, would be: a lot of our council people and a couple residents said do we increase it and that's a discussion for the Fall. We approved a set amount this year. What has come up is do we continue to give that amount, or do we stop giving that amount?

Sandra Valdez said: I believe we should continue to fund it. We should not cut the funding. I think it's a valid statement to invite Lissa Holland to come in and if there are additional questions that councilmembers needs to ask to determine whether or not it be increased to \$1.00 per capita than I think that's an additional conversation we can have, but I do not believe it should be cut.

Debra Miller said: I think we should continue funding.

William Sharp said: What I was trying to say was I spent a considerable amount of time in foreign countries where people do not have any rights. They don't have first amendment rights. They don't have any rights to get information, to get knowledge, to have an opportunity to get an education. Yet here we have in our country been blessed with the opportunity to have education, have resources, to have all of these things that the library provides, and that is expensive. We should as citizens, provide for them to ensure that our children are safe, our children are educated, and have the ability to do that which they want to do. So, I believe we should maintain what we have already promised, since we already promised it. Then moving forward, we should look at if we want to increase and I believe that we should because of the benefits that are provided by the library.

John Herr said: Definitely keep it.

Randy Rannels said: Keep it.

William Sharp said: Keep it.

James Malone said: Keep the funding. I grew up in a very closed, tight community that had some very negative elements that ran around claiming to be Christian, so I often have a back petal first approach when something looks dangerous, but I know it's not. I have taken courses with the FBI and have learned not to trip out about different groups. I also know that having a heavier and longer exposure to differences increases that understanding of diversity, whether its military, or

different religions, or whatever. Same with normality of dress and all that. I believe not only should we maintain funding, but I believe it's very sad that this particular event has gotten such a negative presentation on it, especially since it was come if you want to, because it is a chance for individuals to be able to present different experiences to their children to be able to provide them with a broader experience of life in general. I think everywhere we are lacking in that, especially in the United States.

II. AGENDA ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION ONLY:

1. Landowner Access Agreement:

Debra Miller said when she looked up 5260 Main Street it showed that the Hyundai dealership owns the large area of commercial parcel in this area. Manager St. Clair said this has already been discussed at previous meetings and pointed out that the Landowner Access Agreement just pertains to where the fire hydrant is at Miller and Main Street and the fact that it gets hit frequently. Scott Liggins talked to the property owner about relocating the hydrant. The Agreement will give us access to the hydrant at any time. It is being done just for this hydrant at this location.

2. NLCRPD Charter Update:

The Commissioners have not yet passed both agreements. They plan to approve the agreement at their April 11th meeting. After they make the approval it will come back to us for further discussion. It looks like somewhere between 14% - 15% will be our buy-in cost. We don't have to do a start-up cost because we already paid that in 2020. It will just be the buy-in cost. Some benefits of being in the charter are: we will have equal voting, we will be an equal voting member, we generate a percentage of ownership, we maintain costs associated with special investigations or special events. For us to join the charter we will have to change our workers' compensation carrier to Beacon. Beacon recommends us to create a safety committee which Manager St. Clair has taken steps to do. The savings with a safety committee will be 5% discount on our workers' compensation coverage. She met with the third party administrator with Beacon and talked about rates and to compare what we are paying through Amtrust now. Beacon came in at \$12,950.00 vs. what we are paying now through Amtrust \$14,500.00. This amount covers all employees. The other members of the charter are Warwick, Clay, and Penn. With all members using Beacon it will help offset costs especially for the police who have a lot of claims due to the difficult job they have. Debra Miller asked what the 14%-15% buy-in cost is. Manager St. Clair NLCRPD used the 22-23 audit to come up with the amount which is approx. \$130,000.00 and this is less than what was first talked about. Manager St. Clair will give an update at the next committee meeting. James Swarr asked if this changes the budget amount. Manager St. Clair said the budgeted amount of \$860,000.00 for 2024 remains the same. The cost will be much lower for 2025 if we join the charter. All members of the charter are locked in for 10 years. She will have these numbers for everyone after the commissioners vote on this.

3. Community Park Pickleball Court Project:

Manager St. Clair said two quotes were received through Costars: Brennaman Company came in at \$17,000.00 and Miller Sports came in at \$27,554.00. This is what we need to get pickle ball up and running. The lighting can come at a later time when it is decided on. The quote from the Brennaman Co. will cover layout, coating for 4 courts, posts and nets and removal of any objects if needed. They also said they will fill in the cracks at the tennis court. Manager St. Clair said her recommendation is to go with the Brennaman Company. Jeff Moseman said it might be beneficial to keep the post and nets to eliminate interference. This will be added to the Council meeting agenda for a vote.

Council discussed the quote for lighting: We currently have 3 sets of lights with 3 vending machines; one of the vending machines is broke and there are no lights at the back court where the pickle ball will be. Wiring could be added to light the back court. The amount of the quote was for \$4,345.00 and this is to get all three existing light systems up and running. LED bulbs will be used. The vending is there, but no way to operate them. Even though there is noise associated with pickleball, not having lights would limit playtime in the fall greatly. It was agreed to keep the coin system because if we use credit cards there are fees, and if we use a fab system money could only be loaded during office hours. This will be added to a future agenda for a vote.

4. Review Account Payables 03/28/2024

John Herr asked about the bill for Amy Leonard that was for a RTK. Manager St. Clair said this is currently a legal matter. He also asked about the PSA testing costs. Manger St. Clair said this was talked about at the January meeting by Scott Liggins.

5. **Misc. Items**

Manager St. Clair

S. Clyde Weaver would like to donate time to help clean up or do maintenance at the park. This was turned over to Jeff Moseman to help Coordinate.

The borough sign at the borough line near Chemgro needs replaced. She would like to have the signs well matched moving forward. The Historical Society and Lions club will be placed on the new sign.

Mayor Malone said the borough emblem will be lost with the new style sign, but he is fine with trading off for the tree if that's what everyone wants to do. It was pointed out that the old sign is falling apart and unsalvageable. It would be very expensive to replace this exact sign and it would not match what we have been using more recently.

6. **Fire Company Financials – for review only**

III. **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. *It was moved and seconded (S. Valdez /J. Herr) with unanimous approval by the board, to approve February 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes.*
2. *It was moved and seconded (A. Gochnauer /W. Sharp) with unanimous approval by the board, to approve the execution of the Landowner Access Authorization Agreement. This permission will allow East Petersburg Borough and its authorized agents to relocate a fire hydrant to the location, as shown in the attached exhibit.*
3. Debra Miller asked who drew this up. Manager St. Clair said it was the County, and it was reviewed by Amy Leonard.

It was moved and seconded (A. Gochnauer /S. Valdez) with unanimous approval by the board, to approve the Lancaster County ARPA Funding Agreement and the ARPA Certificate and Acknowledgement of Obligation Document for the (2) Water projects; The Koser Road Spring Pumps and the City Interconnect Pumps. This project is funded in part through an ARPA grant from Lancaster County Board of Commissioners.

IV. **EXTRA ITEMS: Issues arising in the last 24 hours: None.**

V. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- The next Borough Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
- The Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held Saturday, March 30, 2024, at the Community Park at 11 a.m. sharp! Friday, March 29th there will be an Egg Hunt for children with special needs at the tennis Courts at the Community Park. Email the name of the child & their helper to EPspecialneedshunt@gmail.com
- The Borough office will be closed Friday, March 29, 2024, in observance of the Good Friday holiday.

Executive Session for legal matters: None

Committee Meeting Adjournment: 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kim Strayer, Recording Secretary