

## Honesdale Borough Council Minutes -Approved Electronic Version Special Meeting: March 31, 2014

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A special meeting of the Honesdale Borough Council was conducted on March 31, 2014, in Texas No. 4 Fire Hall, 440 Grove Street, Honesdale, PA. Council President James L. Brennan, Jr., presided at the meeting, which was called to order at 7 PM.

Attending were Council President James Brennan, Jr., Tiffany S. Kominski, MSP, Robert Jennings, Scott Smith, and Carolyn Lorent. Other Borough officials attending included Borough Secretary Judith Poltanis, and Mayor Ed Langendoerfer.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

President Brennan thanked everyone for coming. He stated that the advertised purpose of the meeting was to solicit public input regarding any and all issues pertaining to Honesdale Borough. He stated the following guidelines for the meeting:

1. Anyone wishing to speak will need to sign in and will be called upon in order of registering and must use the microphone to address Council members present.
2. There will be a five-minute time limit for each speaker.
3. Councilors will listen to the comments made but we are not here tonight to debate issues. We are here to listen to comments from Borough residents.
4. All comments made to the Council will be referred to the committees to which they apply and will be taken into consideration by the entire Council at a future meeting.

### **Citizen Input**

The following individuals registered to speak before Council:

1. Louie Bishop –Asked Council what they were going to do about the sinkhole in his yard. He stated that it is dangerous. **Response:** President Brennan stated that the matter would be referred to Councilor Carolyn Lorent who is in charge of stormwater issues.
2. Margie Rickard –She questioned the water runoff issues. She stated that after two years and four months she has not seen anything in the newspaper. Ms. Rickard inquired as to the Crestmont problem and the Parkway Drive issue. She asked if any grants had been submitted in the last two years. Ms. Rickard stated that she did not want the Borough to lose money from the government and hoped that someone would work on the water runoff issues. **Response:** President Brennan explained about Streams A,B, and C and referred the issue to Councilor Lorent. Councilor Lorent spoke briefly about the Forest Street project.
3. Harry DeVrieze – read aloud a prepared statement addressing what he sees as personal agendas being furthered by Borough officials, namely Councilor Kominski and Mayor Langendoerfer. He stated that it was his hope that the Councilors could work together with the community's best interests at heart. He suggested that instead of taking pot shots at individuals not attending a meeting that perhaps officials would be working together in assisting the Commissioner to help the affected officers get past a change that was unexpected and difficult. He pointed conflicts between the Civil Service Commission rules, the HPOA bargaining agreement and the Borough Code. He suggested a class on parliamentary procedure for the Councilors. He stated that Councilor Kominski may not have a conflict of interest regarding her cousin but she has a

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- moral issue citing her campaign promises. He suggested that she declare her relationship to her cousin at a public meeting so that it could be entered into the minutes.
4. Jeff Hiller -- He stated that he echoed many of the statements that Mr. DeVrieze made. He stated that he would like to see the presence of a police officer about town. He related an example of when a customer saw a guy selling drugs in front of his establishment. When he contacted the Borough cops, he was told that they were watching him. He stated that the fire companies only get \$97,0000.00 of the Borough's budget while the police department gets a larger amount.
  5. Joelee Motichka / Dan Corigan – Mr. Corigan is from Sawmill Cycles and Ms. Motichka is from Rent-E-Quip. He stated that he has seen opportunities that he would like to present to the Borough. He stated that his proposals would cost the Borough nothing. **Response:** Both Councilor Lorent and Mayor Langendoerfer offered to work with him. Ms. Motichka stated that she has spoken with other like groups, such as Leaps and Bounds, Skate Park and other collaborative efforts.
  6. Mike O'Day, Sr. – He addressed the Council over the controversy of Officer Kominski. He stated that people other than Mr. Southerton were far more qualified for the position of Police Chief. He stated that he was the only one who actually lives in the Borough and pays taxes in the Borough. He stated that he was told by a Councilor who is no longer on Council that the “fix” was in and that it had been decided who was going to get the position. If Mr. Southerton is so qualified why am I as a taxpayer paying for his Act 120 and his mileage to drive back and forth to Scranton. Would any employer hire someone and then go learn to be a photographer instead of working? It is also his understanding that the Council will re-advertise for the police chief position he will get a raise if named to the police chief.
  7. Rosina Cordaro – Her complaint is that out-of state drivers get pulled over on a regular basis. She read aloud a letter from her nephew about his experience with the Honesdale Police Department. She stated that as a taxpayer she does not believe the wages and benefits paid to police officer should be that high. She stated that Gus Naring and Cecil Spencer did the job for much less money.
  8. Jack Bishop –He suggested that Council listen to the words spoken by Harry DeVrieze, Jeff Hiller, and Dan Corigan and Joelee Motichka. He related his experiences as Parks and Recreation Chairman while serving on Borough Council such as the pool renovation, the car over Irving Cliff. Then he had to buy a fence which took 3 years to save up to purchase it. The Borough had to purchase a street sweeper which was paid for by all the departments. Then he stated that more police officers were needed and a grant was secured for three years paying salaries for them. The Borough kept the 3 years. He stated that in the 8 years he was on Council that money was always an issue. Then huge raises were given out. He stated he was a retired state employee and related the raise percentages for the following years: 2011, 0%; 2012, 1.1%; 2013, 0.5%; 2014, 0.5% and later a 2% raise will begin. He stated that we can't compare ourselves to other areas. We have to look at the money in this town. He stated that residents are driving an hour away to find work. People in town are on disability and are retired. He stated that DPW does a good job.
  9. Jerry Theobald – His concerns included around (25) abandoned properties around town including one next to his. We urged Council to take a strong stance on property maintenance including the cutting of lawns and snow removal. He stated that he provided the Code Official with a list. There are about 12 commercial properties on Main Street that are empty and he urged officials to work with the GHP and Chamber to promote the downtown area. He stated

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that a lot of junk is accumulating in the rear of buildings. Mr. Theobald stated that he wants action within 60-90 days on signage and painting of crosswalks in the Borough as early in the spring as possible. He stated that the Fire department and the Police department worked together to collect abandoned couch and items that the fire department then burned in a training session. There has to be more cooperation between the Borough departments. He brought up the gas utility and the water utility work on Main Street. The gas utility contractor should have been ticketed for leaving equipment everywhere.

**Adjournment**

Motion                      Adjournment

Robert Jennings moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 PM. Carolyn Lorent seconded the motion.  
MOTION CARRIED.

Judith Poltanis  
Borough Secretary

Attachments: No Agenda