

Work Session
Mayor and Council
February 28, 2013

A Work Session of the Mayor and Council was called to order at 7:37 p.m. by Mayor Barra who announced that the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act were met by the required posting and notice to publications.

The following individuals answered roll call: Council members McSwiggan, Strauch, Wilczynski, White and Mayor Barra. Ms. LaMonica arrived at 7:52 p.m. Mr. Bernstein was absent absent. Mrs. McCarthy and Mr. Bole were also present.

Public Comments

Patrick Shea of Franklin Turnpike was in attendance as part of his requirements for the Boy Scout's Citizenship and the Community merit badge. Mrs. Wilczynski noted that Patrick's Father, Jack Shea, was a former Council member in Allendale.

Agenda Review

Ordinance 13-03 Water Rates

Mayor Barra said the Water Committee had originally set up a five year plan that would include an annual 5% rate increase for residential water customers. The commercial customers were to have an additional 3% increase in order to bring the two groups to comparable water rates.

This year the Committee feels that based upon Allendale's financial situation and United Water taking over the operations of the Water Department, there would not be the necessity for a 5% increase for either the residential or commercial customers. The 3% increase will still be put into effect for commercial customers.

Mr. Strauch pointed out that in Allendale, the most any customer will pay is less than 1 penny per gallon for water.

Mayor's Report

Mr. Barra reported that it was revealed today that State Aid will be flat this year for municipalities. The Finance Committee and the CFO had anticipated this information and prepared for it.

The Budget will be introduced at the Council meeting on March 14th. Mayor Barra encouraged any Council members who have questions to contact the CFO before that evening.

Legal

Mr. Bole discussed an amendment to Chapter 233 of the Code with regard to Streets and Sidewalks. Currently the Code places an obligation on the homeowner to replace and repair sidewalks. The proposed amendment will allow for the Borough to replace sections of the sidewalk that have been damaged by a shade tree in the Borough's right of way. It would be up to the Shade Tree Commission to make the determination of which sections to replace.

Mayor Barra said it seems unfair to make homeowners pay for damage caused to sidewalks by Borough shade trees. The Joint Insurance Fund has stated that a municipality does not have to make all such repairs at once because that would be fiscally impossible. As long as the municipality has a repair program in place, those repairs can be made at a reasonable pace. If an unrepaired sidewalk causes a problem, the Borough would not be considered negligent because a repair program is underway.

Mr. Barra said that Mr. Cauwenberghs implemented a plan in which the shade trees are put outside of the right of way. Going forward, heaved sidewalks from shade trees will not be a problem.

Mrs. Wilczynski said for the past few years the entire Shade Tree budget has been spent on removing trees, not planting them.

The Shade Tree Ordinance will be introduced on March 14th.

On a motion by Mrs. White, seconded by Mrs. McSwiggan, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn to Regular Session at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen McCarthy
Municipal Clerk