

Work Session
Mayor and Council
July 12, 2012

A Work Session of the Mayor and Council was called to order at 7:35 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 Bernstein, LaMonica, McSwiggan, Strauch, Wilczynski and Mayor Barra. Mrs. White was absent. Mrs. McCarthy and Mr. Bole were also present.

Public Comments

Mayor Barra opened the meeting to the public for comments.

Brendan Routh, a Boy Scout from Cambridge Drive asked how the proposed sump pump ordinance will affect the average home owner.

Mrs. McSwiggan said when basements get flooded there are sump pumps to drain the water to the storm drain on the outside of the house. Some people however, have sump pumps discharge the water into a slop sink. That water is metered and the town gets charged for whatever goes into the sewer system in Allendale. Every year Allendale pays approximately \$1.7 million in sewage fees. Waldwick has passed an ordinance that said homes must be opened to inspectors who would make sure that sump pumps were connected legally into the yard or into a storm drainage system.

A meeting was just held of a Sewer Advisory Committee to discussing how Allendale could enforce compliance through implementation of a sump pump law. A lot of people in town may have been getting water in their basements and bought a sump pump to handle the flooding not realizing the sump pumps shouldn't be connected to a slop sink. They also aren't aware that doing so is against the law. Sometimes people have homes located over a stream and there is a possibility that stream water is coming into their basements during a heavy rain. In that case a stream is being emptied by a sump pump into a slop sink and the town is paying for all that water in sewage fees. The goal of the committee is to inform the residents and get them to comply with the ordinance. Compliance would save tax dollars for everyone.

Lowell Schudel, a Boy Scout from Crescent Place asked how the town would know if a house had an illegal sump pump.

Mrs. McSwiggan responded that the town has an ordinance that addresses the issue of an illegal sump pump. That ordinance states that ground and roof water cannot be discharged into the sewage system.

Mr. Barra said when a home is sold it is a requirement to obtain a Continued Certificate of Occupancy. The Building Inspector goes into a home to make sure it is in compliance for smoke

detectors and sump pumps. Unfortunately that is only fifty or sixty homes a year so something else must be done.

Mrs. McSwiggan said nothing has been decided but she believes the first step in this process will be to ask for voluntary compliance. A resident would voluntarily allow an inspector into their home to examine their sump pump. If it was connected incorrectly the inspector would work with them to make the necessary changes. There is another way to determine the illegal use of sump pumps. A camera can be put into the sewer lines to see if there is water being pumped out every ten or fifteen minutes. If there is water coming out of a sewer line on a regular basis that is generally an indication of the presence of an illegal sump pump. The hope is that most people will voluntarily comply.

Mayor Barra said the consequences of non-compliance could be severe in terms of fines. The resident would also be responsible for the cost of the investigation. No one would be grandfathered in because discharging a sump pump into the sewer system is illegal and has to be corrected.

Mrs. McSwiggan said this change will amount to a savings of \$100,000+ a year to Allendale's budget. Also she believes that most people don't realize that their sump pumps are illegally hooked up and correction could be very easy. Other towns have taken similar actions and they have been successful.

Mr. Barra said sewer charges are 15% of Allendale's total budget.

Mrs. McSwiggan said the town has a responsibility to enforce the law for the greater good of the community.

Agenda Review

Resolution 12-205 – Approval of Townwide Garage Sale

Mayor Barra asked if anyone had an objection to the town allowing the Allendale Woman's Club to use the Borough's parking lot for distribution of maps on September 15th with a rain date of September 16th.

Resolution 12-206 – Approval of Water Restrictions

Mrs. McSwiggan said the Water Committee met to talk about the water level in the wells. With no significant rainfall predicted in the future they felt it would be prudent to put Level One restrictions in place. Those restrictions are basically an odd/even watering schedule with no restriction on time. Monday is a day to recharge the system. Mayor Barra noted that Allendale is not the only town with water restrictions in place.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Barra said in the very near future the Council will be seeking proposals to outsource the operation of Allendale's Water Department. The Water Committee is not looking to sell the Water Department but is only looking at replacing the operation of the department.

The Water Committee has met with our Water Engineers and with their help, have created specifications for a request for proposals. There will be more meetings on this topic and more discussions, but Mayor Barra wanted the public to know that in the next month or two they will seek proposals for operating the Water Department with the ultimate goal being reduced costs. The water fees are, in a sense, an indirect tax on the residents. The tests for licensing and monitoring have become so onerous that it is becoming close to impossible for small towns to run their own Water Departments.

Mrs. McSwiggan said the Borough wants to make sure its water is plentiful, safe and monitored. The testing requirements that the DEP has instituted have become burdensome when combined with the filing and reporting. It is a much bigger job than it has been in the past. As the community grows, water has become a big issue.

Legal

Mr. Bole said Fibertech would like the Borough's consent to put their cable on Allendale's telephone poles. The route map was received from Fibertech and their proposal is to go up West Crescent to Hillside and then to South Central Avenue. They intend to put the cable on the poles and not on the ground. The Borough would like to have protection for administrative costs for review as well as insurance, indemnification and a hold harmless agreement. It is not a situation where permission can be denied, but it can be regulated.

Mr. Strauch noted that West Crescent's poles are more heavily laden with wires than any other street in town.

Mr. Bole said Verizon will review the structural integrity of the poles before approval for any additional carriers.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen McCarthy
Municipal Clerk