

White Haven Borough Council meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by President John Klem. Roll call was taken, and the following were present: Charlie Best, Julie Fallon, John Klem, Bob Lamson, Zane Writer, and John Zugarek. Absent: Harvey Morrison. Also in attendance: Mayor Fred Meier, Attorney Karpowich, Borough Manager Linda Szoke, Assistant Borough Secretary Holly Potance, Police Chief Rich Mocofan, and Sean Reynolds from Public Works.

**Public Hearing –**

- President Klem opened a public hearing that was advertised regarding changes to zoning in Wood Haven at 7:00 pm. Attorney Karpowich stated the hearing is to change the property of Invest Track Inc, 30 Maple Ridge Lane White Haven. The property is known as Lot 12 located on North Woodhaven Drive, White Haven Borough from R3 Multi-family residential to R1 Single family residential. The adjoining property owners were notified, and the public notice appeared in the newspaper on October 14, 2024. A written comment was received from the Luzerne County Planning Commission stating that they have no comment and there was also no comment from the local planning commission. Attorney Karpowich asked if anyone wanted to be heard regarding the application. There was no comment. Attorney Karpowich then asked for a motion to close the record at 7:05 pm. A motion was made by Lamson and seconded by Best to close the record on the zoning change.

**Minutes –** Minutes from the September 23rd meeting were presented. A motion was made by Best and seconded by Fallon to approve the minutes. All in favor, the motion carried.

**Public comment on agenda items –**

- John Marotta and Jim Curato came before council to ask for support of a project they are working on. They are looking at the former White Haven Center property in Foster Township. They have spoken with legislators, the Governor, and other local governments and are looking for support in considering this property to be used as a homeless veteran facility. They stated that we have 50,000 disabled and homeless veterans living on the streets. Attorney Karpowich will draft a letter of support for council.
- David Chernago of Valley Gorge Mobile Home Park asked about jake brakes on the trucks that travel 940. He stated that they make a lot of noise at all hours and wanted to know if there is anything stating they cannot use them or if signs can be placed stating not to use them. Attorney Karpowich stated that 940 is a state highway and would require Penn Dot approval for any signage or traffic studies. The most we could do is write to Penn Dot and ask them to consider it. Borough Manager Linda said she would have to find it in the minutes but she believes the last time this was brought up, Penn Dot denied putting signs up. They said we did not meet the criteria before even doing the study. Council President Klem asked for the Borough Manager to send a letter to Penn Dot.

**Engineer Report –** on file

### **Attorney's Report –**

- Attorney Karpowich stated that he advertised for the public hearing for the façade ordinance and sent it to the county for the public hearing in November. This was also sent to the chamber of commerce to get feedback from the businesses.
- Attorney Karpowich said the second item for the evening is the amendment to the ordinance from the public hearing. A motion was made by Lamson and seconded by Writer to adopt Ordinance 2 of 2024 to amend the ordinance regarding Lot 12 and making it R1 instead of R3. A roll call vote was taken: Best- yes, Fallon-yes, Klem- yes, Lamson – yes, Morrison -absent, Writer-yes, Zugarek-yes. 6 yes, 0 no, 1 absent, and the adoption of the ordinance was passed.

### **Manager's Report –**

- There was a work session before this meeting regarding the 2025 budget. A motion was made by Lamson and seconded by Fallon to advertise the 2025 budget to the public, with adoption at next month's council meeting. A roll call vote was taken: Best- yes, Fallon-yes, Klem- yes, Lamson – yes, Morrison -absent, Writer-yes, Zugarek-yes. 6 yes, 0 no, 1 absent, and the motion carried. Borough Manager Szoke stated that there will be a tax increase but not a full increase. It will go up a half mil by ordinance and the rest will come out of the reserves and savings account to balance the budget. We are not taking it all out on the residents and property owners. The amount coming from the reserves/savings is roughly \$60,000. The half a mil increase will cover the garbage increase of about \$48,000 a year under the new garbage contract. The borough did do a survey regarding what garbage services residents wanted and they wanted to keep recycling.
- Borough Manager Szoke shared a Halloween story. On September 29, the White Haven Paranormal Group met at the Borough Building. We spoke to them during the festival about some odd occurrences in the building. The original clock has hung in the building since the beginning of the borough and dates back to the 1800s. When we started construction things were occurring such as computer screens stopping, cameras turning on and off, and employees not wanting to go to the basement as it felt creepy and like someone was watching them. The paranormal group went down to the basement and identified two entities, a male and a female, in our basement. They told the female she really did not have any reason to be hanging around and that she could retire. They had a lengthy conversation with the male, whom they believe is Mr. Abraham Peters. He was the founder of the White Haven Savings Bank and was the first president who organized the bank here in the borough building on January 2, 1872. In 1886 he said he would be remembered, he never wanted to be forgotten, by building the vault in the Laurel Cemetery. He built it at the cost of \$10,000. The paranormal group believes Mr. Peters was happy to see the clock returned to its original location but was not happy that with all the 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations, he actually had been forgotten. He just wanted to be remembered for his contributions to the community. On July 24, 1896, Mr. Peters was laid to rest in the Laurel Cemetery after a four-year battle with illness. Since it was so important for Mr. Peters to be remembered as the President of the bank and one of the reasons the clock hangs in the building, we would like to remember him from this day forward with a plaque that hangs next to the clock in our building. President Klem was asked to hang the plaque at this time.
- The first request for funding for Main St was the statewide LSA Grant, but we did not make the round for that one.

- A motion was made by Zugarek and seconded by Fallon to Adopt Resolution 15 of 2024. All in favor, the motion carried.

**Tax Collector –**

- Current taxes collected for September \$1,756.37
- Local Realty Transfer Tax for September \$2,812.60
- Delinquent taxes for August \$3,585.63

**Building, zoning, Code enforcement –** Report on file

**Fire Department –** report on file

**Ambulance –** report on file

**Mayor / Police Chief / Police Committee Report –** report on file

- Mayor Meier requested permission to get a price on the Dodge Durango police cruiser to be able to sell it and put money toward a new vehicle. Obtaining a Kelly Blue Book price first and revisiting this at the next meeting was discussed.
- Chief Mocofoan mentioned the Halloween safe house. The tradition will continue at the ambulance building on Halloween night from 6-8 pm.
- Councilman Zugarek thanked Chief Mocofoan for leading the Lions Halloween Parade. He also thanked Freeland and Hazleton for sending an officer to participate. Zugarek stated that entries were the highest they have been since 2018 and it was nice to see.

**Public Works / Public Works Committee –**

- Mileage – F550 29,928 Pick-up truck 50,868
- A motion was made by Writer and seconded by Best to appoint Sean Reynolds as the White Haven Borough Street Commissioner. All in favor, the motion carried.

**Committee Reports –**

- **Building and Grounds –**
- **Blueprint planning group –** traveling to Easton for training
- **Finance –** Best stated we are good
- **Planning –** no meetings
- **Parade Committee –** no meetings
- **Water –** report on file

**Correspondence / Unfinished Business –**

**Seminars & Workshops –** none

**Payment of bills –**

- A motion was made by Lamson and seconded by Best to pay the bills. All in favor, the motion carried.

**Public Comment on non-agenda items –** none tonight

**Adjournment** - A motion was made to adjourn at 7:35 pm by Lamson and seconded by Zugarek. All in favor, the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Holly Potance*

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Assistant Borough Secretary