

Borough of Hellertown
Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 26, 2022

The Meeting Was Held In Person, Via Zoom, and Streamed Live on Facebook.

An Executive Session Was Held Prior to the Meeting to Discuss Personnel Matters and Potential Litigation

- I. Call to Order – Thomas Rieger, 7:00 p.m.
- II. Pledge - All
- III. Roll Call – Thomas Rieger

Theresa Fadem-	Present
Earl Hill-	Present
Andrew Hughes-	Present
Matthew Marcincin-	Present
Michael McKenna-	Present
Thomas Rieger-	Present
Gil Stauffer-	Present
Mayor Heintzelman-	Present

Also in attendance were Cathy Hartranft, Angie Thiede, Michael Corriere, Barry Yonney, and Chief Shupp.

- IV. Adoption of Meeting Agendum

Motion made by Gil Stauffer, seconded by Theresa Fadem, to adopt the meeting agendum as written with the addition of a public statement prior to Courtesies of the Floor. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Rieger read a prepared statement regarding the history of the Hellertown Area Library.

Mayor Heintzelman presented a timeline of the discussions, emails, and meetings between Hellertown Borough, Lower Saucon Township, and the Hellertown Area Library regarding the proposed agreement which began in 2020 until the end of December 2021.

Mr. Rieger- This timeline was very different from the one presented by Lower Saucon Township. The Borough never received a list of issues and all parties were provided with the same draft proposals. No single entity should have any more power than the others. The Hellertown Area Library is also audited and the reports are provided to both Councils which can then see how the funds are being spent. By a vote of 5-1, Hellertown Area Library rejected the \$50,000.00 donation from Lower Saucon Township. I would like staff to work with the Hellertown Area Library to create a 2-year agreement solely between Hellertown and the library. I would also like to see a provision for children under the age of 18 from Lower Saucon Township still able to use the services. Council would also like to use \$75,000.00 from the American Rescue Funds as a one-time emergency appropriation. This Council can only address the issues for the Hellertown community. We cannot control other entities actions.

VI. Courtesies of the Floor

A. Public Comments on Agenda Item

Briana Rich, 3554 Old Philadelphia Pike- I homeschool my children and use the library on a weekly basis. It would cost almost \$8,000.00 per year to purchase all of the books that we borrow. She thanked Hellertown Borough and Hellertown Area Library for their efforts and transparency.

Richard Gress, 3704 Old Philadelphia Pike- I would like to thank Hellertown Borough for listening to the community and I urge Lower Saucon Township residents to be more present at the Council meetings.

Eric Medei, 1606 Ilona Drive- As the commander of the American Legion, I know what a resource the Hellertown Area Library is to veterans. I would like to see a provision that will allow children as well as veterans of Lower Saucon Township to still utilize the Hellertown Area Library.

Judith Malitsch, 1505 Willowbrook Drive- Thank you for the timeline. It completely changes the course of events. The kids lost so much during the pandemic. Ms. Andrea thought outside of the box to interact with the community. I have visited other libraries and they can't hold a candle to the Hellertown Area Library.

Priscilla Deleone- I have received many calls and emails regarding what happened at the Lower Saucon Council meeting. I did vote no against the majority of Council. I have been in local government for over 33 years. Hellertown and Lower Saucon weren't talking back then. We worked really hard to remove the "lines".

I asked the Lower Saucon township manager to put out a statement regarding the meeting and also to provide a timeline for the discussions between the 3 entities. I was told that she did not feel comfortable making a statement without a majority of Council asking for it and that she didn't have time to get me a timeline.

Barrett Geyer thanked Council for providing more information than Lower Saucon Township. We have been a shared community for many generations and are united by a single school district and community members. The residents will take action against Lower Saucon Township Council.

Victoria Opthof-Cordaro- I would like to thank Hellertown Borough for holding this meeting. I am shocked by what happened at the last Lower Saucon Township Council meeting. It has come to the point that the communities are fractured. The agreement being discussed that Lower Saucon Township Council has issues with is basically the same agreement that Lower Saucon's attorney wrote 6 years ago. There were no questions asked to Southern Lehigh Library. I hope Lower Saucon Council will reconsider an agreement and funding to Hellertown Area Library.

There were residents that were willing to pay a fee to attend the library.

Kristen Stauffer- I am a former councilperson from Lower Saucon Township and the library liaison. Thank you, Council, for allowing everyone to speak. The library does so much with a small budget. This decision will haunt the community for years to come.

Shanti Sajnani-I am the teen liaison at the Hellertown Area Library. When I first moved to the area, I didn't know anyone. The library helped me connect with other teens. Now, I try to help other teens that were in my situation. I would suggest creating a policy using children's school id so they can still utilize the library.

Andrea Wittchen- Thank you to Hellertown Borough for showing an example of good government and transparency. Thank you for your actions and suggesting using \$75,000.00 of American Rescue Funds. That will really help the library.

VII. New Business

1. Discussion and Possible Action on Current Status of the Contract/Agreement with the Hellertown Area Library and Lower Saucon Township

Council acknowledged the passion coming from all of the speakers. They would like to reach an agreement that allows the children and veterans to still use the library. Council thanked the library staff and board for their tireless efforts.

Mr. Rieger- I fully support a one-time emergency appropriation from the American Rescue Act to the Hellertown Area Library. The library is a non-profit and can accept donations.

Motion made by Matthew Marcincin, seconded by Andrew Hughes, to authorize staff to draft a new 2-year agreement solely between Borough of Hellertown and Hellertown Area Library. The agreement is to be put in place by February 1, 2022. The parties should also work to ensure that children and veterans of Lower Saucon Township can still utilize the Hellertown Area Library. Motion carried 7-0.

Staff will meet with the Hellertown Area Library to draft an agreement. Without an agreement, there can be no appropriation. A special meeting will be called to approve the agreement.

Council thanked all of the participants and urged everyone to stay informed.

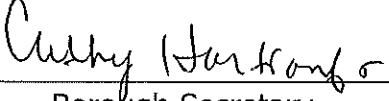
VIII . Executive Session- None

IX. Adjournment

Motion made by Michael McKenna, seconded by Earl Hill, to adjourn the meeting 8:32 p.m. Motion carried 7-0.

Council Meeting Minutes
01/26/22
Page 5

Adopted by the Hellertown Borough Council this 7th Day of February 2022.



Borough Secretary