

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
March 21, 2008

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Friday, March 21, 2008, in the State College Municipal Building Council Chambers, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Ms. Goreham called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Present: Elizabeth A. Goreham, President of Council
Ronald Filippelli
Donald M. Hahn
Theresa D. Lafer
Silvi Lawrence
Peter Morris
James L. Rosenberger

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, II, Borough Manager; Thomas S. Kurtz, Assistant Borough Manager; Roger A. Dunlap, Assistant Borough Manager; Carl R. Hess, Director of Planning; Thomas R. King, Chief of Police; Linda S. Welker, Tax Administrator; Timothy Grattan, Information Technology Director; Michael S. Groff, Finance Director; Arthur Caccavale, Parking Manager; Mark A. Whitfield, Director of Public Works; Norma J. Crater, Accounting Supervisor; Cynthia S. Hanscom, Assistant Borough Secretary; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Public Hour. There was no one from the public wishing to speak.

Local Tax Return E-Filing. Ms. Welker presented a detailed report on the new e-filing system recently made available on the Borough's website. The tax office is currently receiving 10-15 returns a day through the system with that number expected to go up when the credit card option is available.

When asked about the cost savings, Ms. Welker noted that there would be some savings in response time but it is more of a convenience for taxpayers.

Paperless Council. Mr. Grattan presented an update on the Paperless Council project. He reviewed a background of the project. Option 1, which has been completed, included electronically distributing the agenda packets, made the information available to the public via the website and provided a secure area of the website for Council.

Option 2 included the purchase of computers for the Council table to allow access to the electronic agenda. Staff discussed whether permanent computers should be installed with a modification to the Council table or laptops should be used. Mr. Grattan recommended 14 laptops be assigned to Council members. The other seven laptops would be left in the Council Room and could be used by any of the other ABC members at the meetings. This could be done in about 6 months and would cost \$49,000 with an annual fee of \$3,000.

Option 3 was an agenda/minute management system that would standardize minutes and agendas across the Borough. The system would have an enhanced search capability. This would cost \$77,000 with \$20,000 in annual fees.

Option 4, which was to create a link between the video presentation and the laptops was not being considered at this time because of the cost.

Mr. Grattan recommended Council schedule demonstrations for July or August with the laptops.

Mr. Fountaine noted that the option for Council members to receive hard paper copies will always be available. He also noted that staff was reviewing tax issues that may be involved with distribution of the laptops.

Council discussed the need to improve the Internet connections in their homes to be able to view the information from home. The issue of whether or not the change would be cost effective was discussed. Some Council members expressed concern with spending money on a propriety system. Mr. Fountaine said that the agenda/minute management system would be most cost effective in the time saved by staff and the ability to create a record keeping system for meeting agendas and minutes. He also noted that standardizing the agenda and minutes could allow for more flexibility in staff assignments to cover the meetings.

Year-End Financial Report. Mr. Dunlap presented a summary of the 2007 Financial Report. Actual revenue exceeded expenditures by \$562 compared to a budgeted deficit of \$46,000, and an October projected year-end deficit of \$80,000. He noted that the 2008 budget overstated the 2007 capital expenditures by \$353,000 which means there will be an increase in the 2007 year-end fund balance. To balance the budget, there would be 15 percent of the 2007 budget placed in reserves rather than 12 percent.

Mr. Dunlap presented a series of slides showing the trends in revenues and expenditures from 1998 to 2007. He also showed how the real estate valuation has grown by 6 percent in a 10-year period.

Mr. Groff reviewed the status of the Borough's debt and assured Council that the municipality was not subject to many of the fluctuations that impact other communities. The outstanding credit rating reflects good government and solid financial footing.

Mr. Fontaine presented a schedule for review of the 2009-2013 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and the 2009 Operating Budget. He noted that calendar showed that the 2008 CIP process would start one month earlier than in previous years.

Council discussed changes shown in the 2007 report included the decrease in the cost per capita, interfund transfers and property valuations.

A question was raised about the financial capacity forecast and Mr. Fontaine explained that it would be revised as part of the review for the operating budget. He cautioned that the financial capacity forecast would predict out two or three years if operations were continued as usual. However, he said he did not believe it was a good long-range planning tool.

Council discussed a strategic planning session that was proposed to be held in May that would take a look at the goals that Council would want to accomplish in the next two years and then in the next five years. This would be done to guide staff in coming up with the capital improvement plan, which is a five-year plan.

There being no further business, Council adjourned to a work session at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary