

ETNA BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

TUESDAY, November 19th, 2024, at 7:30 P.M.
For approval on December 17th, 2024

The regular meeting of the Etna Borough Council was held on November 19th, 2024. Chairman Becki presided and called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Roll was called, and members present were Ms. Semler Ms. Schaefer, Mrs. Tuñón, Mr. Burke, Mrs. Rothmeyer-McElhaney, Mr. Trader, Mrs. Gabriel, Chairman Becki, and Mr. Iannuzzi was absent, he had attempted to Zoom into the meeting, but he could not get in. Also present were Mayor Tuñón, Manager Ramage, Police Chief Rodman, Administrative Assistant Birks, Public Works Director Joe Balistrieri, Assistant Fire Todd Lunn was absent, Shaler Hampton EMS Executive Director Eric Schmidt, and Solicitor Rushford.

Mayor Tuñón led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Semler and seconded by Councilman Burke to accept the August, September and October Minutes as written. Motion Carried.

President Becki stated that Council received a copy of the Treasurer's Report and asked if there were any questions. There being none, the accounts are reported as follows:

Fund 01 General Account	\$ 1,126,982.10
Fund 05 Education Account	\$ 936.20
Fund 03 Payroll Account	\$ 277.69
Fund 04 Police Fund	\$ 20,651.81
Fund 21 Hockey	\$ 4,036.83
Fund 30 Capital Improvement	\$ -----
Fund 33 Christmas	\$ 10,280.57
Fund 34 Etna Senior Center Fund	\$ 4,687.71
Fund 35 Liquid Fuels Account	\$ 64,306.49
Fund 36 War Memorial Fund	\$ 5,405.30
Fund 38 Sanitary Trunk Line Account	\$ 164,613.85
Fund 39 Middle Street Escrow Account	\$ 6,692.65
Fund 42 Capital Reserve	\$ 338,288.01
Fund 44 Sewer Account	\$ 88,736.51
Fund 45 Project Escrow Account	\$ CLOSED
Fund 46 Riverfront Park & Trail	\$ 489.50
Fund 48 Etna Green Streetscape	\$ 12.07
Fund 50 GI Account	\$ 1,205.83
Fund 51 Fire Escrow Account	\$ 37,567.10
Fund 52 Infrastructure Account	\$ 88.47
Fund 53 Youth & Recreation Fund	\$ 4,525.72
Fund 54 American Rescue	\$ 351,338.76

A motion to accept and file the Treasurer's Report was made by Councilwoman Tuñón and seconded by Councilman Trader. Motion carried.

A check register by fund (bills already paid) as well as outstanding accounts payable (bills due) were given to each member of Council.

Total Owed	\$ 448,746.80
Total Bills Paid	\$ 147,509.00
Total Balance Due	\$ 301,237.80

A motion to pay the bills was made by Councilwoman Gabriel and seconded by Councilman Trader. Motion carried.

Police Chief's Report

Police Chief Rodman provided his monthly report which included: Police Committee Scheduled for Wednesday 12/4/2024 at the Borough Office, hiring process, Information was forwarded to civil service on 10/29/2024 and looking to advertise for another position, Chief Attended a police conference and classes, Emergency Operation Plan/Flood Warning & response committee meeting to be scheduled soon.

President Becki stated that there would be an upcoming meeting of the Police committee to discuss the possibility of a new hire for the police. He also stated that the Emergency Management Agency included Tuñón, Chief Rodman President Becki, Manager Ramage, Fire Chief Porter, and Assistant Fire Chief Tood Lunn.

Engineer's Report

Engineer Richard Minsterman had provided their monthly report which included the following: Source Flow reduction Consent Order Compliance, Pine Street Bridge Rehabilitation, Year 50 Paving Contract Administration / Inspections, Dewey & Spring Street Sewer Separation Project, Streetscape Phase 4, Streetscape Phase 5.1, Streetscape Phase 5.2, Act 152 County Demolition Grant, and Etna 2024 MS4 Program

Public Works Directors Report

Public Works Director Joe Balistrieri submitted his monthly report which included: 63 Prospect Street repaired damaged sewer (replaced riser) and grate, Cut hazardous tree on Houston Street, Cleared brush along Route 8 between Kittanning and Catherine Street, Removed Banners, Christmas Prep, Sign repair and replacement, General maintenance, Corridors, ballfield, and bridges, Leaf collection, Playground, Riverfront Park, Potholes, Street sweeping, and Garbage collection.

Fire Department Report

Etna Volunteer Fire Department (EVFD) Chief Porter provided the monthly report which included: Public Relations Event - 10/5 ETNA Community Care Fair, Apparatus Maintenance - Battery Replacement & Halloween Candy Bag Packing, Safety Standby – Halloween Safety Event, Fires 13, Over Pressure Rupture 1, Explosion 1, Rescue & Emergency Medical Service 12, Hazardous Condition (No Fire) 3, Service Call 2, Good intent Call5, False Alarm & False Call 4, and Total Incidents for the Month 40

Hampton Shaler EMS Report

Hampton Shaler EMS Report was provided by Director Eric Schmidt and included the following information: Year to date there was 542 calls, 3 Canceled, 1 DOA, 6 refused, 23 Transported, 6 transported BLS, and 1 treated. The average response time is five minutes. HSEMS would like to share their annual capital contributions to Etna this year is \$4,500.

Eric then elaborated on some new information that he had wanted to share with the Council beginning with the year-to-date stats and that the last page of the report shows the response time, this time reflects safest time to the expected site. Looking at the times, most of the transport to the hospitals do not use sirens so their time may look slower. He added that the EMS will be present at Light up Night and that they would be receiving two new ambulances on December 16, which were ordered in June of 2022.

Solicitor Report

The Solicitor Rushford's report included information on the following: Right to Know, Parking Ordinance and Porky's, Reserve Police, Etna Police, and Officers in their official capacities, Police Request for Unio Recognition, 30 Pine Street, Wilson Street Parking Lot, and Ethics Training

Agenda

1. ACBA

President Becki reported that the Allegheny League of Municipalities Bi-Annual Legislative Reception would be held on January 16, 2024, and it is \$75.00 per person to attend. He stated that the Borough would cover the cost of any elected Etna official who wished to attend and asked that the Manager be informed by the end of the year if they wished to attend. He went on to announce that the annual Spring Education Conference will be held April 3rd – 6th, 2025 at Seven Springs. With attendance being on a rise, he requested that Council please let Manager Ramage know by December 13th, 2024 whether they would attend or not. Manager Ramage stated that it is easier to cancel someone than it is to get someone into the Lodge at a later date.

2. Proposed Zoning Map Ordinance

President Becki reminded everyone that an error had been discovered on the Borough's adopted/published Zoning map and that our solicitor had presented all with a Draft Ordinance to make the proper correction on this map. He also reminded everyone that Etna shares a Zoning Map with the Boroughs of Millvale and Sharpsburg. This draft ordinance had been provided to the Planning Commission for their review and comment already and had also been sent over to Allegheny County Planning Department for their comments and they had no issue with the proposed correction. At the Borough's last Planning Commission meeting the ordinance was reviewed, and it is listed in their minutes that the ordinance follows the borough Comprehensive Plan and Zoning ordinance. The next step in correcting this map, he added, was that a public hearing had to be held. A public meeting will be scheduled at 6:30 p.m. before the December council meeting once the borough receives the planning commission meeting minutes. Barring any issues, the ordinance could be passed at the January Council meeting. Manager Ramage showed all in attendance the map in the room where the area needs to be changed on the map which is salmon in color and explained the situation with a miscoloring of one area in the map, which was Ann Street and added that she would notify Sharpsburg and Millville cause the area on the map is being changed.

3. Proposed Sidewalk and Street Ordinance

President Becki said that the borough received many comments back about the proposed ordinance and some were good, and some changes were also found by the borough staff. These comments and other proposed corrections should be given additional time for consideration, but since the ordinance was advertised for Action at this evening's meeting, it will still have to go before Council tonight. He added that the original ordinance was adopted in 1979 and added that sometimes the ordinance needs to be revisited to reflect current times. He recommended that a motion to table the ordinance for a future meeting once these other changes have been fully reviewed concerning the use of the sidewalks in commercial business district.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Semler and seconded by Councilwoman Tuñón to table Action on the Proposed Ordinance. Roll Call, all Aye, Motion Carried.

4. Paving Project Bids

President Becki said a CDBG grant was acquired for the paving of the Dewey Street Area. The specifications were written and advertised for this construction project. In front of the council, you have a letter from Gateway Engineering showing three (3) bids were received and that our engineers were recommending the Borough award the bid to Folino construction for \$83,758.79, which was the low bid. He added that the original Grant was for \$100,000, with an additional \$20,000 Borough contribution for the engineering, which is NOT covered by CDBG.

President Becki asked for a motion to award the project to Folino Construction in the amount of \$83,758.79, and a motion was made by Councilwoman Gabriel and seconded by Councilman Burke. All Aye, Motion Carried.

5. Shaler Township's 125th Anniversary

President Becki stated that Manager Ramage suggested to honor Shaler Townships upcoming 150th anniversary, the Borough should write a congratulatory resolution. He added that the Township has been a great neighbor and had always celebrated our anniversaries with us as well. The Manager added she would be happy to work on this resolution.

6. CDBG Resolution

The next Agenda item dealt with the submission of a CDBG grant for Streetscape IV, which has funding from a previous year in the amount of \$500,000.00 but bids had come in at a cost of \$895,000. Manager Ramage added that she had spoken to the County and while there were no additional funds to add to the original grant, they agreed to provide an extension if the Borough agreed to seek additional funding. One of the avenues she suggested was to reapply through this same program in the current round, in addition to several other avenues she would be pursuing. The grant application was submitted but the accompanying required resolution was now needed.

A motion was made to approve the following resolution, by Councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhaney and Seconded by Councilman Trader. All Aye, Motion Carried.

CONCURRING RESOLUTION

The purpose of the Resolution form is to have on record a statement confirming that the applicant has formally requested CDBG funds, has designated an official to perform the required duties between the applicant and Allegheny County Economic Development and has assured, where applicable, the provision of local matching funds. In addition, the applicant will comply with all other provisions of the CDBG application.

Resolution of the Borough of Etna Name of Operating Agency/Municipality authorizing the filing of an application for CDBG funds with Allegheny County Economic Development.

WHEREAS, the Borough of Etna is desirous of obtaining funds from Allegheny County Economic Development in the amount of \$438,482.00 under the Federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1970, as amended. (CDBG Funds)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Borough of Etna does hereby formally request CDBG funds from Allegheny County Economic Development.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Borough of Etna does hereby designate North Hills Council of Governments (Authorized Official) as the official to file all applications, documents, and forms between the Borough of Etna and Allegheny County Economic Development.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Borough of Etna will assure, where applicable, the provision of the full local share of the project costs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Borough of Etna will assure, that the project will be awarded or under construction within 180 days after contractual execution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Borough of Etna will assure, that the project will be awarded or under construction within 180 days after contractual execution.

Adopted this 19th day of November, 2024, by the Borough of Etna Operating Agency/Municipality

Signature (Must not be same as Authorized Official)

Title

Printed Name

7. Liquid Fuels Account

The Auditor General's Office had sent the Liquid Fuels Audit results for the years 2022 and 2023 which had been provided to the Council. This report needed received and filed and amotion to do so was made by Councilwoman Gabriel and Seconded by Councilman Burke. All Aye, Motion Carried.

8. Volunteer Services Tax Credit

President Becki said that Allegheny County Council recently enacted the Volunteer Service Tax Credit Program. Active volunteer fire department members may be entitled to reductions on their County real estate taxes for their primary residence, up to 100% of their gross annual tax liability but with a maximum of \$500 reduction. Fire Department leaders are required to track participation in qualifying events and remit names of those eligible for the refund. Manager Ramage informed Council that Etna Borough had previously adopted a similar program and that the Fire Department submits and annual report of their active members which is sent to the Keystone Municipal Collections for a reduction in their wage tax. The application needs notarized and the deadline to summit the application is November 30, 2024, and Manager Ramage had already provided this information to Fire Chief Porter.

Councilwoman Semler said that since the application come across Senator Williams Office and the applications for each fire department needs to be notarized, she would be able to notarize them.

9. 30 Pine Street Phase 2 Study / Extension

President Becki said that American Geoscience, Inc. (AGI) will submit a statement-of-work to conduct a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) for 30 Pine Street Property located in the borough of Etna. To perform this study it takes four weeks, so the Borough asked for an extension to amendment 1 which changes the closing date to January 20, 2025. This study includes background, sampling plan, project schedule, and Limitations and it will cost \$21,800. Provided in the council packet the map of the property shows you where they will be doing some of their sampling. He also added that our Bond Council will be sending over a required ordinance for the issuance of bonds to pay for this building and improvements and that they will advertise this for adoption at the December Council meeting.

10. Civil Service Eligibility List

President Becki said that the Civil Service Committee was given the results of the oral and written exams for the opening for one full time police officer. He added that only two candidates were tested that received a score of 70% or better. He continued stating that with two of the borough police officers on workman's compensation and non-related work injury, Chief Rodman has asked council to speed up the process so the positions could be filled. After the civil services committee has done their review then the borough can start the interviewing process. The top candidate can be hired if the council confirms the hiring. At that point the borough can make a conditional offer for employment after the interview.

President Becki asked for a motion for a conditional offer of employment to the successful high scoring candidate should they pass the interview with Council. A motion was made by Councilwoman Tuñón and seconded by Councilwoman Schaefer that a Conditional Offer of Employment be made after the results of the interviews. All Aye, Motion Carried. President Becki stated that the interviews will be conducted on December 3rd at 7:00 p.m. All council should be present.

Councilwoman Semler asked to address an issue the Manager had brought up earlier in the meeting when one of the Council members cell phones had rung. At that point in the Meeting, Manager Ramage stated that she felt that Council should be asked to silence their cell phones during the meeting, as she had several members of the Audience comment on members texting during the meeting, as they were visibly typing. She stated that at times Council members could have their phones out to check schedules when meeting dates are being announced, etc. She also added that phones provided access to emails, etc. from the Borough. Manager Ramage stated she did understand that and that also she was aware that some members had work responsibilities and could be on call, etc. during a meeting but that it is common practice that at the beginning of meetings, church, theater, etc. that attendees are asked to silence their phones. President Becki said Ms. Semler's comments were so noted.

Councilwoman Semler added that she would not be available for the interview with the candidates for Police and Councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhaney stated that she is on call that week.

President Becki said that Chief Rodman would like to begin to advertise again because Allegheny County is about to have a class graduate from the academy soon and he was now losing another full-time officer to another community. He also stated that advertising should include the new hiring salary.

President Becki asked for a motion to advertise for hiring a police officer, and a motion was made by Councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhaney and seconded by Councilman Burke, All Aye, Motion Carried.

11. Pine Street Permit Parking

President Becki said that the police department gave out warning tickets to those residents on Pine Street that didn't have their parking permits displayed on their rear-view mirror as part of a routine drive through that the Chief occasionally requested from his officers. After this was done, numerous residents received Warning Notices about not having permits for parking in the Residential parking Areas. He added that at least four to five residents called the borough about eliminating permit parking on Pine Street altogether as Scare House is no longer there, and neither was Forms and Surfaces which really impacted residential parking in that neighborhood. He stated that should Council consider this request; the current ordinance would have to be amended. Manager Ramage will write a letter and send it indicating that if permit parking goes away there are more open spots on Maplewood and Locus Street, which would mean the lines and signs would go away. When the pool is open people will also be parking on these streets because it will no longer permit parking signs or markings. A letter should be sent to all residents and clearing spelling out all the factors if permitting parking is eliminated.

President Becki said any concerns about eliminating Pine Street Permitting. No concerns from the council. A letter will be drawn up first and revised ordinance with the changes will be made by Mr. Rushford.

12. Wilson Street Parking Lot

President Becki said that an Agreement of Sale had been provided based upon the negotiations Manager Ramage conducted with St. Matthew's parish, which established a sale price of \$45,000.00 for purchase of the Wilson Street parking lot.

President Becki asked for a motion to execute the purchase of St. Mathews Parish Wilson Street parking lot and a motion was made by councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhane and seconded by councilwoman Semler. All Aye, Motion Passed.

Manager Ramage added that upon the purchase the Borough will need to get insurance on the lot and that Public Works will have to take over maintenance of this public parking lot. If the condition was not good, she could investigate the CDBG grant for next year's grant cycle. It would be eligible because it's located in Block Group 2.

Councilwoman Semler stated that she lived one house away from the lot and was very appreciative of the Borough making this purchase. Manager Ramage talked to the Real Estate agent, and he believed this could be fully completed by the end of the year, now that the Borough signed the Agreement of Sale committing to this purchase at the agreed upon amount.

13. Locust Street Development

President Becki said the Locus Street development is another long explanation but added that the developer proposed the development of four houses on Locust Street originally but there were zoning ordinance issues with the lot sizes and the setbacks and that the bottom line was that they resubmitted their plans and now they cut the development down to three houses. They have required the necessary variances from the borough zoning and hearing board between parking pads and adjoining properties. He added that this development will now need approval for the subdivision of the lots from Allegheny County and a meeting was held two weeks ago. The County reviewed the new plans and provided their approval for the changes. He then stated that the Borough Planning Commission, at their last meeting, had a review of those documents and approved the changes. The meetings of both meetings had been provided to council and now Council must act on the Subdivision Plan as well. The Planning Commission is recommending that Council move to step two of the county process which was to approve this action.

President Becki said he was asking for two motions. The first motion was to move forward with the subdivision of Parcel 167-J-4 and 167-K-3. Councilwoman Gabriel made that motion and Seconded by Councilwoman Tuñón. All Aye, Motion Carried. The Second motion was to approve the plan of recording the lots showing three structures rather than four structures. A motion was made by Councilman Burke and Seconded by Councilman Trader. All Aye, Motion Carried.

14. 2025 Budget

President Becki said many of council had attended the Budget Workshop meeting last Thursday which went well past 11:30 p.m. He added that he had revised the Draft 2025 Budget based on more up-to-date figures and input from that meeting and this Draft was before the Council now this evening. He stated that some of the highlight or low lights depending on how the council receives this included the Alcosan increase for sewage treatment by 7%. And the contracted Garbage and Recycling costs per the contract which would go up in 2025 by 9.8 percent. He added that included in this budget was the purchase of a new public works truck. He added considering all these items, the excess carryover for 2026 would only be roughly \$27,000.

Manager Ramage reminded President Becki that the borough will be reimbursed for about \$77,000 for grant reimbursement from the Little Pine Creek Connector Trail. President Becki said with the amount we came up with on Thursday and the grant reimbursement the borough will have about \$113,000. This would be the lowest the cushion has been for quite a while and could something serious occur, the Borough would not have sufficient funds in the General Fund to address that. He added that if the council wanted to raise the millage they would have to do it in a separate Council meeting in December when the 2025 Budget must be adopted and that a millage increase would require an Ordinance which would need to be advertised, along with the Proposed Budget in advance of that meeting. He said he is not suggesting the borough raise the millage but that he was just throwing it out there because the council discussed it at the budget workshop meeting and if council doesn't decide tonight, it will stay at 9 mills.

Councilwoman Gabriel commented if it would be raised by a ½ mill, a small increase, and it would give some room in our budget. Councilwoman Semler also agreed with Councilwoman Gabriel

President Becki said he did not to bring up the crossing guards' salary by the wage chart from 3% to 6%.

President Becki said other members of Council were welcome to add their input and with none asked the Solicitor if a motion for an ordinance would be needed and Solicitor Rushford replied that it would be. A motion was made by Councilwoman Gabriel and Seconded by Councilman Burke. All Aye, Motion Carried.

Councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhaney said to increase by ½ mill is the most responsible thing to do at this time, council doesn't want to do it but it might help the borough. President Becki said the millage has not been increased in ten years. Councilwoman Semler said other municipalities are doing this. This is why the council has elected to review finances and to increase the millage if necessary.

President Becki asked for a motion to advertise the draft budget and a motion was made by Councilman Burke and Seconded by Councilwoman Schaefer. All Aye, Motion Carried.

15. Resolution Grant

Manager Ramage stated that DCED had opened a new program this year called Main Street Matters and added that this program/grant focuses on Economic Development in small communities. She said that could mean the aesthetics, sidewalks, and mobility just to name a few. She thought this would be an excellent place to apply for, not only the overage in Streetscape IV but for the second half of Streetscape 5.1 (Butler at the storage facility). This was also in keeping with her promise to Allegheny County Economic Development to seek other avenues to fill in the gap for the construction of Phase IV. She submitted the application on the 15th of December and now needed to have Council adopt the Resolution supporting this application. President Becki thanked the Manager for finding this new source of potential grant funding.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Tuñón and Seconded by Councilwoman Gabriel to adopt the proposed Resolution. All Aye Motion Carried. Resolution was LEFT out of the minutes by the staff member writing the minutes, it will get included next month. Mary Ellen Ramage, Secretary-Manager December 12, 2024.

16. Cable Franchise

President Becki said the North Hills Council of Governments was currently working on the renegotiating of the Cable Franchise Agreement with Verizon on behalf of 8 communities, including Etna. This expires at the end of 2025, and this was a joint service provided through the COG. Through the Cohen Law Group. A requirement of this process is a public meeting and the COG would be holding one on behalf of all communities involved in the negotiations. The date is December 12, at 7:00 p.m. at the North Hills Council of Governments offices on Welzel Road

17. Library Grant Funding

President Becki stated that a federal grant award notice was received for three million dollars for construction of the new library. The Borough, in partnership with ECO, submitted the grant application and now a new bank account would be needed as these monies, as many grants require, need to be kept separate from the General Fund.

President Becki asked for a motion to open a new bank account for the federal library funding and a motion was made by Councilwoman Schaefer and Seconded by Councilwoman Semler. Abstained was Councilwoman Tuñón abstained as she is the Director of the Etna Community Organization, all others were Aye, and the Motion Carried.

Council / Mayor and Manager Reports:

Manager Ramage provided her monthly report which included: – Code / Zoning Updates, Freeport St/PENNDOT/One Way Study, City of Bridges Land Trust/Locust Street Lots, TriCog Land Bank, Age Friendly Grant, Council of Governments, Bridge Street One Way/Duquesne Light Poles, CRS/Flood Warning System Updates, Administrative Committee, Allegheny County Clean Air Fund, Reconnecting Communities/Federal Grant, Light the Night, Little Pine Creek Connector Trail Grant, ARF, MS4 Inspection, Army Corps of Engineers, Main Street Maters Grant, Final Billboard, Route 8 and North Hills Cog

President Becki gave a special thanks to Manager Ramage for the progress she has made getting the Army Corps of Engineers to agree to correct the damage that was done on our Flood Control project and the silt catching basin after the April heavy rain events.

Manager Ramage said she has two things to add, the first thing is to remind everyone that tomorrow is the emergency test for the boroughs emergency warning system. There will be a representative from Rave

Mobile System about installing mini sirens in locations throughout the borough that cannot hear the main siren when it goes off. Members of the PPI Committee (CRS program) Meg Hill, Bob Casey, John Martin, and herself. She received a quote for the sirens they are on council seats at tonight's meeting because she received this late in the day. She was proposing, as previously discussed that these additional mini siren installations be included in the funding received from the American Rescue funds and be authorized, should all locations test out tomorrow that the Borough move ahead with the proposal when it comes in, they then would be obligated before the 12/31/24 deadline. She added that what she means by obligated is the borough must have the money assigned to a particular piece of equipment or project with documentation such as a signed proposal, signed purchase order, etc. She added that Chief Rodman was instrumental in helping to pick out locations for these sirens. Further for obligation of the funds would be the signed Agreement of Sale for the Wilson Street for \$45,000. Prior to December's meeting there will need to be a meeting to open bids for the Pine Street pedestrian bridge replacement. This will also be being paid out of the American Rescue funds. The borough still has not heard back about the funding grant for the playground equipment. She added that she felt that the borough should purchase some new playground equipment, as even if the grant is awarded for the updated playground, the borough could purchase a lone piece that could be installed when the entire playground gets rehabilitated next year. This would also AID in getting the American Rescue funds obligated this year, as this purchase could be made off of the State CoStar Contract, as would the mini sirens, thereby forgoing the need to advertise bids, as it is far too late now for that to be obligated. At least the bids for the Pine Street Bridge would be opened in early December for award also prior to the end of the year. The funds from this program must be spent by December of 2025, but the dollars must be obligated by the end of this year. She had asked Zoning Officer Bob Snyder to go with her and together measurements were made as to what size equipment would fit with the additional equipment that might come through the DCNR grant. The last item that might be able to be included in the use of these funds is that Chief Rodman assisting with acquiring a state contract price is the possibility of a generator for the new building. She added that this has been extremely stressful trying to ensure these funds are obligated before the end of the year, especially with all the other staffing issues.

Council/Committee Members Reports

Councilman Burke said happy to see all the Christmas decorations everywhere.

Manager Ramage said that there is a huge surprise this year when Dequenue Light flips the switch on this year. She added that Public Works Director Joe Balistriero and his crew have done a lot of work on the lights and decorations for the town.

Councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhaney informed the Manager that if she needed some assistance with discussing our bid estimates with the engineer, she would be gladly assist with that. She thanked all those who assisted with the Halloween decorating contest. She updated all that the fall season of Deck Hockey is completed for all divisions and that next year Deck Hockey will be able to play with some new organizations, which was new to Etna Deck Hockey, and she felt would be very beneficial to the program. This could help multiple organizations that don't get quite enough kids to have ample teams. She added that if anyone was interested in helping with Deck Hockey that'd be great, and they would be welcome. She also stated that there is room on the administrative board if anyone is interested in participating in that manner.

President Becki interjected at this point that everyone needed to talk about the upcoming Light the Night stating that he certainly needed help with setting up and decorating as was done in the past. He added that he didn't want to keep bringing up the past, but we have always had a person that was very instrumental in drumming up volunteers and he is missing that and him this year. He asked if anyone has some free time on Sunday the 24 at around 10:30 a.m. to meet at the borough office, for the pole wrapping on Butler Street. He also stated not to forget to meet at the borough building for Light the Night at 6:00 p.m. to get your Santa hat ready for the parade at 6:30p.m.

Councilman Trader thanked Councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhaney for all her efforts with Deck Hockey and added it could be bigger with more volunteers.

Councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhaney stated that Etna Deck Hockey could always use volunteers. And added that she wanted to thank Councilman Trader and his wife Vicky for all the volunteering they do in the concession stand for Deck Hockey this season and last. Vicky also helps with donations and her seasonal cupcakes are always great. She also wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Councilwoman Gabriel thanked everyone who attended the gardens of Etna workday and added that there were plenty of helpers as some were drummed up through Judge Konieczka court ordered volunteers. She stated that on that day, they built and installed eight new. She added that there were four more needed to be built and also wished all a Happy Thanksgiving.

Councilwoman Tuñón thanked Councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhaney all her work on Deck Hockey and for teaching her boys sportsmanship. She also thanked Manager Ramage for all the grant applications that

are on the agenda and added that it is exciting to see all the potential things that can come down the pipeline. She provided an update on the library stating another grant in November, so the library has plenty of money to finish the project that has been started. So far, she added, the library has done all the remediation, which was required due to asbestos, etc. She added that bids were put out for the demolition scope for the interior and the rear apartments on Locust Street. She said there would be a public community wide groundbreaking because the library will have space to do that in the rear of the building one demo is done. As far as programs were concerned, she stated that the library will continue to run programs in different churches in the community throughout the winter who will all be hosting different programs.

She also reported that the Heart and Soul team would host a table at Light the Night at First Congregational Church and will also be hosting a big event in January and postcards will be coming out for that event which will be held on January 24th. The Group also had an interviewing session earlier this month at the Etna Senior Center, which went very well. She concluded that they were also currently working on a window display that you will be able to see on Butler Street with some people's responses to the Heart and Soul questions as well as some pictures.

Councilwoman Schaefer wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. She also wanted to say how much fun judging the Halloween house decorating contest was. In keeping the decorating theme going, she added that she would like the community involvement and cannot wait to see happens in the Decembers decorating contest and would be super honored if she was asked again.

Councilwoman Semler asked about putting salt boxes out which had been discussed at the budget workshop meeting, basically public salt bins.

Manager Ramage said the borough used to put them out, but they were not for resident personal use but for residents to salt their road earlier than the public works might get to. She added there is an abundance of salt, but that some misinformation was being kicked around that the borough over ordered and she wanted to clarify that. She explained how the contract worked and that some years you cannot purchase enough, as the weather is so unpredictable and sometimes it goes the other way, with little or hardly any snow so there is an abundance of salt. She said that the vendors need to be assured of a certain amount being purchased and a limit to what can be purchased to cover both those instances. The Borough did lower its order total last year, but still there was a lot left over. As to putting out salt for public use, that could run into problems that we aren't providing free salt to every one of the residents and we would have to have boxes everywhere. She added that the borough used to have three out and the borough used them on High Street, Gardner Street for the residents to throw on the road if they were leaving early for work. It turned into a nightmare with people as in some cases residents thought the salt was free and were taking it for their private use. Then more people in other neighborhoods wanted salt boxes as they felt that they were not getting the service that others were. The road department could not keep up with maintaining and filling the boxes. The borough prosecuted someone for stealing salt from the public works garage as honestly, everyone would want free salt.

Councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhaney said the borough had a mild season last year. Each year the borough goes through the COG to purchase their salt, and the borough buys the minimum amount they must purchase.

President Becki the borough did not over buy the borough underused because of mother nature.

Manager Ramage said you must purchase 60% of what you stated you would need, and you could only purchase up to 120% of what you need at the cheaper bid rate. The salt contractors have to some kind of guarantee as they must bring the salt into this area to be stored to be delivered.

Councilman Trader said the salt boxes were available when he first moved in on the side streets which were never salted. Now the borough has more skilled drivers which allows them to plow the streets by his house. They go up and down the street with no problems.

Councilwoman Semler said I never meant to criticize the public works who do an amazing job clearing the roads. She added that she could just imagine going back and putting salt boxes on the hills and getting slammed by other residents on why their street hadn't got one. Manager Ramage stated that is exactly the issue.

She also wanted to say thank you to Mary Beth, Mary Ellen and Cathy as she knows that they are really holding the fort down in the office and so just thank you for all you for all the work that you're doing.

Solicitor Rushford had no report.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Tuñón stated that he wanted to thank all the staff that are putting in the extra time and keeping everything afloat. He also wanted to send thanks to Chief Rodman and all the guys who are working the extra shifts. He added that Joe and his team to do a great job on the fields and that the baseball season

lasted eight months and every time they had a game the fields were cut and well maintained and all the sites for all the sports. He also thanked Mary Beth for having the light on. He added that everyone knows this has been a tough month from the public relations standpoint for the borough and some of the criticism that the borough faced, and he just wanted to say of the phone calls that were tough, but they were also really engaged residents who really care about their community and they care about where they live, and they want the borough to support having a great place to live. He wanted to give very heartfelt thanks to our team here, Office Cutenese, Manager Ramage, Chief Rodman and Officer Cerniglia, thank you very much for all your support to navigate what was a tough month but it was important to hear from the residents as far as the Parking Permit discussion was concerned. He said it was important for him to engage and learn. He said some of the things that have been happening are adding up in a positive way, just this parking lot is going to help the residents, just like Councilwoman Semler said. The important things are happening at 30 Pine Street which helps that neighborhood, and the Bridge Street Study will be so helpful as well. He said that when you add it all together the many initiatives going on, there is a lot of positive things happening. He thanked Councilwoman Rothmeyer-McElhaney for all the work she did with Deck Hockey. He said he had one more announcement, which dealt with the community not having indoor recreation anywhere within the community and that the borough struggles with offering kids' things here during the winter for activities. He said that ECO provides a lot of programming during the year at various churches right now with the library being under construction, but they were able to get St. Matthews Parish, to allow use of the Activities Building on Wilson Street on Wednesdays nights from 6 to 9 p.m. It was an open gym where teenagers who play basketball all winter can have a place to play ball, but it will also include dodgeball, baseball instruction, and other things that they will figure out as they go along. There were insurance requirements that ECO had to provide and all volunteers, who will be much needed, will be required to have Clearances. He stated that the Diocesan policy required that an adult cannot be in the building with the kids without clearances. So, parents who wish to be there with their kids without clearances will not be permitted in. He will work on getting enough volunteers to get clearances and ECO has offered to pay for those. He finished with how wonderful that St. Matthews Parish is participating in these Pop Up Programs as is First Congressional Church who are hosting a free community program, Emmanuel Lutheran who is also hosting a free community program and also Calvert Memorial is hosting some programming.

Public Comment

President Becki asked if there were any comments from the audience.

Karen Tomaszewski said, "Great Job to everyone" and she wanted to say as a former council person, who knows that it's a thankless job and mayor and borough manager and chief who do so much. She said as a resident she appreciates all the effort and knows a lot of others that do too. She said as a member of the Etna Neighborhood Association she was thrilled to hear the council enjoyed judging the house decorating contest and she felt ENA would love it if they did do the same for the Christmas house decorating contest. Many on council voiced their desire to do that so Karen offered to send out the list of houses that have already won in the past as they are not eligible and said the dates for Judging was December 20th and 21st. She also added that the EEDC lottery calendars are coming out soon and asked for their support in purchasing as a Christmas gift for someone.

Joseph Ober asked if there were any updates on the vacant home on Vilsack Street which had caught fire (the multi-unit). Manager Ramage stated that she had spoken to the owner, as the insurance proceeds were held in escrow, and he stated he was attempting to sell the property. She will continue to try and move that along. just wanted to check and see if you have an update on the house that was on fire on Vilsack Street.

President Becki said the owner is trying to sell that property in an "as is" condition. The borough has insurance money. The owner cannot receive the insurance money unless he demolishes it or rehabs the property. The borough has the money in escrow. The owner has asked for an extension on the sale of property.

President Becki asked for a Motion to Adjourn the November 19, 2024, Regular Session which was made by Councilwoman Schaefer and seconded by Councilwoman Gabriel. All Aye, Motion carried.

Regular Session adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Mary Ellen Ramage, Manager

Date: Dec. 17, 2024