

MINUTES
FORD CITY BOROUGH COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
Location: Ford City Public Library
January 24, 2015

CALL TO ORDER Council President Bartuccio called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m. [morning] and advised the audience that the meeting for Saturday, January 24, 2015 will be audio taped by Ford City Borough, Eden Ratliff, and Lisa Bittner. Is anyone audio or video taping the meeting? Jonathan Weaver – Kittanning Paper is audio taping.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Bartuccio led everyone in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL Josh Abernathy, Kathy Bartuccio, Gene Banks, Scott Gaiser, Jerry Miklos, Vicki Schaub and Mayor Mantini were present.

ATTENDANCE Solicitor Tony Vigilante, Eden Ratliff – Borough Manager and Lisa Bittner- Borough Secretary, Rob Mohney, Tyson Klukan – FC Planning Commission, Kim Bish, Melvin Marin and Julie Martin – Leader-Times and Jonathan Weaver – Kittanning Paper were also present.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Rob Mohney explained he lives on the road and travels for work and is not around much. He does Follow everything that is happening in the paper. He is here to show his support for the Mayor. I read numerous comments about no complaints or people aren't calling or people aren't saying this or that. The Police Dept., the Fire Dept. they are kind of like insurance. You are not going to get calls and complaints unless something really happens. This community needs to keep the Police Force. Intact, in full, the way it was. It's great living in this little community. But it is also great coverage, knowing if I pick up the phone there going to be there a nights. Knowing that while I'm away for my job, my wife's protected. So, to have a little bit of a raise in my taxes..... I think the people spoke at all the community meetings you have had. They want that. The majority it out to support this. We just keep doing what the people don't want. What the people want, we do the opposite. I would like you to reconsider. Give the Mayor's idea some thought. That's the only reason I'm here. Good job Mayor.

Miklos asked Mohney, who was on Council for four (4) years, what has changed from the time you were on Council to now, in terms of your support for the police? And for keeping approx. half a million dollars in the Police Dept.?

Mohney nothing has changed in my support for the police. I've always been for the Police Dept.

Miklos says really, I don't remember it that way. I remember you and others also saying the biggest problem we have here

Mohney interrupts Miklos and states I never said problem, I said the biggest challenge we have. Miklos says problem, challenge.....

Mohney says the challenge is keeping the police the way they are. I spoke at a couple meetings on some of my thoughts, going forward on how you handle some of those challenges. Nothing was ever acted on.

Miklos says enlighten us.

Mohney stated I don't care to completely speak out on what I said then. Salaries are negotiable. That's why you have negotiations. I have sat in many negotiations.

Miklos says have you heard of Act 111? Binding arbitration. We tried to negotiate, there were grievances filed.

Mohney disagreed. The grievance was filed because you are in violation of the contract. Previous Council's before us agreed to a minimum number on the police force. We've been in violation. This Borough has been in violation since Officer Klingensmith retired. We are doing nothing to correct that. You don't go to binding arbitration until you reach an impasse.

Miklos stated there is not much we can do with the contract. The contract is up again at the end of the year. The contract was negotiated with your group of Council. We are obligated to live with that contract. Obviously in terms of salaries.

Mohney disagrees. We are obligated to live with a contract that was negotiated years. I read that contract, I understand that contract. There is a lot in there that was given the police force.

Miklos asked how do we make it palatable for the Tax Payers? In terms of what it is costing them to support a Full Time Police Dept.

Mohney says I will speak to you off the record sometime if you want to have some thoughts and ideas on what I see the contract could be going forward. I've been on both sides of the fence. I've worked for a union job and I'm currently a management position. I was union president for nine years. So I've done a lot of negotiations.

Miklos asked why didn't you put forth those ideas when you negotiated the contract previously when you were on Council.

Mohney says I did. Like everything else we drag our feet, we don't get to where we need to be. I was on certain committees. Certain committees were handling it their ways. My opinion is, if you have a meeting in a town this size and 300 people show up in support of it and 100 people show up in support of getting rid of something, i.e. the water plant. I feel you have a pretty good majority in support of what you are doing. If you do those numbers and look over history, most time a no show is considered to keep what you got.

Schaub stated you can't assume. At the Town Hall meeting at the school there were a total number of 119 attendees. Of those 85 were residents. That's 2.85% [of total residents]. That's a very low number.

Miklos explains he has spoken to a lot of people Tax Payers, as I know my other colleagues on Council have. I have not spoken to one person who is interested in having their taxes raised. I have spoken to a

lot of people in support of either reducing the cost of the Police Dept. or disbanding and going totally with the State Police. Those people by and large did not show up at these meetings. These meetings were basically a pep rally. There were a lot of out of town people. A lot of family friends of this Police Dept. Let's face it I understand these people when I said why don't you come and voice your opinion. Oh no, you know what would happen to me. Let's be realistic, we've all been targeted here. Well not all. Many of us have been targeted. We've been given tickets where typically they go by the way side for the General Public or for the people that have supported the Police Dept. People are not going to come. Are you going to come to a meeting with the FOP [Fraternal Order of Police] and the Police Dept. and speak against what is in their interest? I would say it would be safe to assume most people will not. Some of those people even came to the meeting who voiced opinions of either reducing the Police Dept. or disbanding. In private, they voice those opinions. I saw their faces in the audience. But they remained silent. So we can't assume that everyone who was there was in support. From my perspective, what I've seen, it's been a vocal minority.

Mohney says but aren't you assuming at that point

Miklos says I'm saying from my perspective, from my experience, from people that I have spoken to, I was.....

Mohney says he is speaking over me, Kathy you gaveled me down.

Bartuccio stated I didn't know if you were done or not.

Miklos says I thought you asked me a question.

Mohney says I'm trying to make a point and you jumped right in before I got to the end of my point. You prefaced your statement with we can't assume. But yet what you are doing is assuming. I prefaced mine with this is my opinion. Also, over the course of history, in polls and what not. When they do a poll for a presidential election, there is an equation that is used to figure out these many votes in support would represent the country in this way. So, it's kind of the same way in local government, and Eden is agreeing with me right now. Thank you.

Ratliff interject that I was agreeing the polls do have an equation where they try to make that up. But, I think, this is my personal opinion, that it is all an assumption. I see the point you are trying to make.

Mohney continues, I feel this Borough wants to keep what they have. I feel this Borough is challenging you as a Council, just as they challenged me when I was on Council, to come up with ways to make that happen. We've watched jobs leave, we're going to watch a school close. What is this town going to become when that place [Ford City High School] closes? Right now it's a busy hub with the school in town. It's going to become a ghost town with it not in here. The unwanted or the criminal type element of the world are just going to take over this town in full force. And we're giving them an avenue to let that happen. I hate to see that happen. This is a great, great, little community. Let's come up with a way to keep it the way it is. Let's keep driving to try to find jobs. Try to put some people on the vacant property [Brownfield]. You gotta do something to keep increasing the tax base.

Miklos asked Mohney [who was on Council for four (4) years and Bish who were on Council, what did you guys do in that regard?

Mohney says we tried. We did get one business to come in to town. I spoke at numerous meetings, you are the road block. I spoke to the County. They're willing to try to fill this property, they want full responsibility for that. They want you to sign an agreement, while they're trying to promote, they and they only will be the ones that do that. At the time, Mr. Banks volunteered to be the liaison, between us and them. I'm in agreement with that. They want sole..... they want to know when they bring somebody in they are going to have a chance to bring that business in to the property. Give it [PPG Brownfield] to somebody. If somebody is willing to come in here and build or create jobs or improve the infrastructure, give them whatever they want. Give them the waterfront. Its only as good as something that's on it. Right now it's worthless.

Miklos stated I don't think Council brought in Belleflex. I'd like to correct that. I think Council was at a complete shock when that property changed hands.

Mohney disagrees. We did have meeting with the party involved the bank [Farmers & Merchants]. We were told up front that there were negotiations to bring this company.

Miklos explained we didn't go out and find Belleflex. They found us.

Mohney explained we, people on Council, were trying at the time to bring jobs in.

Mayor thanked Mr. Mohney. We had misunderstandings while he was on Council. But I do believe he tried to do a good job. There was not one police grievance filed when Mr. Mohney was on Council. Belleflex is here. The proof is in the pudding. Belleflex came under Mr. Mohney and Ms. Bish while they were on Council. The meeting as the high school, that was after a series of meetings. Meeting after meeting after meeting. The people spoke numerous times. Maybe you can put a referendum in Mr. Miklos for the Police Dept.

Mayor read aloud the letter received from Ford City Ambulance. (Attached)

Schaub explained she has read that letter and expressed concern as to why Mayor would actually say the date, because the Police Schedule is not supposed to be disclosed to the public. The date the Mayor gave is a Saturday. Schaub stated we tried to ask the Mayor in Executive Session about scheduling. Schaub asks who does the scheduling?

Mayor refuses to answer. Schaub stated she was told it was Sgt. Brice, then Sgt. Atherton. If is public safety, why wouldn't police be scheduled for a Saturday. That is one of your highest crime days of the week.

Mayor stated number one (1) is officer safety. You never talked to me about these reductions. You just bulled ahead and did it.

Schaub stated that's the Mayors job to do the scheduling. She asked him to do it.

Mayor Mantini stated the Mayor can delegate the authority.

Schaub stated whoever is doing the scheduling is not keeping in mind public safety. Those hours should be set according to when there is the most traffic going on in the Borough. A Sunday afternoon, there is a football game, does anybody need scheduled? Probably not. I would hope that the Mayor would

discuss with the Sgts. or whoever is doing the scheduling to look at the schedule and think. They know what their crime rates, speeding rates, burglary rates or whatever. They know the times when that coverage needs to be done. I have been told by the Tax Payers, many of them, several times, that there is no leadership. That the Police Dept. runs the Mayor. I think it's time that the Mayor does his job and runs the Police Dept.

Mayor responds get a Chief. We've operated.....

Schaub stated we can't afford a Chief.

Mayor \$1.2M in the bank account. Explain that to the Tax Payers.

Schaub stated she will let Jerry explain that, I don't have the numbers in front of me.

Miklos explained the majority of that money is in the Public Utility Fund. We've already explained that.

Abernathy added the Pension Fund.

Miklos added the biggest cost to the Borough is the Police Dept. and the Pension Fund. Something that the Tax Payers will have to live with forever. Unless we come up with some kind of miracle.

Miklos asked in terms of the Mayor, who is running the Police Dept.? That's what we want to know. We need a chief? What's the difference between a Chief's function and the Sgt. in Charge? Aren't they both in charge? They do the same function. Miklos asks Mayor for explanation.

Mayor states the Sgt. in Charge does not have the powers a Chief has. Miklos asks Mayor if Sgt. in Charge is in charge of the Police Dept.? The Sgt. in Charge does not run the Police Dept. Miklos asks if the Sgt. in Charge calls the shots?

Mayor stated we need a Chief, we were told that many years. Mayor asks Abernathy do you have a Chief who runs the show where you work? Abernathy stated we have an Officer in Charge. Mayor asks what is his rank? Abernathy answers Lieutenant.

Miklos wants the Mayor to explain what the difference is. Isn't the Officer in Charge in a similar capacity as the Chief?

Mohney stated he can answer that question.

Miklos stated he want the answer from guy who is the Mayor, the guy that is supposed to be running our Police Dept.

Mayor state I believe that the Police Dept. is run very well with a bare bones minimum for the last nine (9) years. We did not have a Chief. Under manned, under staffed. We have not had one (1) grievance. What did that grievance that you led us into, cost the Tax Payers?

Miklos stated if every Council gives the police everything that they want, of course you won't have a grievance. Why would they grieve it if they get everything that they want? But, somebody has to pay

for it. Are you going to keep putting the burden on the people in town, 2/3 of the people collecting social security in this town? And you are going to put more on their backs?

Mayor stated since you are in power, I've had nothing but contention. What business have you brought here?

Solicitor Vigilante states this is more for Citizen Comments.

Miklos adds he still never got an answer from the Mayor. You can never get an answer from the Mayor.

Kim Bish stated this is a constant ongoing thing between Jerry [Miklos] and Marc [Mayor]. If Council overrides the veto there is a place in the Police Contract for an "Ordinance Officer". This is at the discretion of the Council. I have said to the Borough Manager. I have asked Borough why Council is not using that discretion, because it now it goes back on Council.

Bish asked Scott [Gaiser] and Abernathy if they read the contract. Gaiser answered just bits and pieces. Abernathy answered yes.

Bish stated the "Ordinance Officer" is at the discretion of the Council depending on budgetary availability.

Bish stated Eden's [Borough Manager] answer was they are letting the Mayor decide.

Borough Manager clarified his statement. The contract calls for an "Ordinance Officer" to work from 10 to 6. Council has the right to control the budget, in which therefor controls the Police Dept. So they at their discretion, which is completely allowed, are giving a certain amount of allotted money to the Police Dept. and at that point the Police Dept. is willing to schedule. They can schedule an officer to work 10 to 6 that isn't an "Ordinance Officer". That can be a regular patrolman and not an "Ordinance Officer". That is at the discretion of the Mayor.

Abernathy stated it doesn't say 10 to 6. It just says "Ordinance Officer". There is no specific time.

Bish stated she used to ask how many ordinance violations appeared on the Police Report. That is why I had on officer on the bicycle. Now they say they need special training to ride a bike. Really? Eliminate that shift or make it 10 to 4. You can only give tickets to 4:00 p.m. So why is there somebody on until 6:00 p.m.? Officer Safety is a concern. There are 168 hours in a week.

Borough Manager states the budget allows for one officer to be on 120 hours per week. There is less than seven (7) hours per day without police protection.

Bish stated officer safety is a concern. Call Manor Twp. or call Kittanning. Eliminate that 10 to 6 shift. I would rather have someone on duty on the weekend when there are rowdy people running around here, than see two (2) officers in a car on a 10:00 a.m. to a 6:00 p.m. shift.

Miklos agreed.

Bartuccio stated the PSP didn't understand the schedule.

Tyson Klukan looking at this financial hardship have we looked at options for a non-union Police Chief? Have we thought about getting rid of the full-time and going part-time and having 24/7 coverage? Your costs are from health care, pension, and full-time officers. If you have a non-union Chief and part-time officers you will save. You will still have 24/7 coverage.

Abernathy stated the Chief has to be paid as the highest rate police officer. We are under Act 111. Which means we can't do it.

Miklos added unless they agree to it. If we truly wanted to act in the best interest of the Tax Payers and the citizens of this town in terms of saving them money and providing the best police protection we can, we could do that. But we need the cooperation of the Mayor, which we have not gotten. And we need the cooperation of the Police Dept., which we have not gotten. They are forcing us to hire a third full-time officer. Now we continue with the legacy cost. The pensions, the benefits continue to build. They never end. We have people on full benefits, pensions, insurance. Five (5) from retired police officer. Four (4) of the five (5) are deceased. Their pensions and benefits continue with their spouses. These are legacy costs that we cannot continue to sustain. That's what we are trying to accomplish here. If we had cooperation from the Mayor. If he was not as interested in providing the best benefits and wages etcetera to the police, if he was a little more concerned about the citizens end of it maybe we could get a little cooperation, maybe we could do that. We would love to hire a Chief. Ok Mayor you want a Chief, we'll hire one. Give us exactly what that young man [Tyson Klukan] said. A non-union working Chief. I would be willing to bet this Council would be willing to hire that Chief on Monday. There's your Chief solution. You've got your third officer now.

Klukan stated the arbitration should have never happened. What is the cost of arbitration? That money could have been put toward the Police Dept. It was clearly stated in black and white we needed a third officer.

Miklos added arbitrations are very difficult to win in police matters. We've not done very well. However, to hire that third full-time officer was costly. Mr. Mohny's Council hired an attorney that specialized in police matters. Mohny agreed, we hired him for negotiations, somebody with expertise [in police matters].

Miklos stated the attorney felt Council had a good chance of winning this arbitration, because of a variety of reasons. We took that shot. It was a risk we had to take. We all wanted to hire a non-union working Chief. The Mayor and the Police Dept. put up a road block. We are willing to do that. If the Mayor and Police would allow that I would bet this Council would do that. Or at least advertise.

Klukan stated we provide a service, water, sewage, garbage. We are not being competitive with our garbage. I do live in this Borough and I do pay taxes now. I'll say this as a fact, we are not being competitive in our garbage. We have revenues \$400,000 and \$500,000 in garbage alone.

Borough Manager stated its \$200,000.

Klukan says ok \$200,000.

Klukan suggested raising our rates to be competitive. Waste Management for three (3) 32 gallon garbage cans it will be between \$65 to \$75 dollars. Ours is \$25 now. Raise it to \$50.00. That extra funding could be moved into police coverage.

Borough Manager stated to Klukan you are suggesting raising fees and taxes on the citizens. Mayor stated Klukan said garbage. Klukan answered yes garbage.

Melvin Marin stated he has two ideas. The roll of the Chief has added to it policy as opposed to just enforcement. That is why it is good to have competence in that job. There is a time problem separate from the budget. If you get to the point where any member of the public could say, the arbitration made a ruling, you failed to hire somebody in a reasonable time that could make all the members of the Council personally liable for refusing to obey the arbitration under the Civil Rights Act. This is a due process violation. Fourteenth amendment, Title 42 United States Code. Person liable for damages. For failing to hire the police chief [awarded stated hiring a full-time patrolman] as the arbitrator awarded. Trying to solve this now and hire a part-time non-union Chief of Police cause that would save money. That causes a new problem. If you study the cases on unemployment and labor collective bargaining violations you find if there is an empty space like that you'll find these cases and an arbitrator awards some kind of action and you fail to act on the arbitration. We'll agree to hire if you eliminate your union status, your rights and your benefits. Courts have held when you do that your holding that job position as hostage. Instead of an open and free negotiations.

Bartuccio stated she would like to ask the attorney about that.

Solicitor Vigilant stated that was a shot gun blast all over the place.

Abernathy clarified the arbitration is for a Police Officer not a Chief.

Miklos stated the Police Department could do whatever they want. If they are in agreement with the new plan there would be nothing to bind them to the arbitration. If they are willing to reach an agreement, then so be it. As a matter of fact, they have expressed interest in a buyout. We are evaluating that at this time.

Mayor was unaware of the buyout. Miklos asked why Mayor doesn't know what's going on. Or pretends he doesn't know. Mayor asked who came up with the buyout. Schaub answered Sgt. Atherton.

Schaub stated the officers approached us about the buyout. They are not informing you? Sgt. Atherton and Sgt. Brice.

Bartuccio asked for a comment from the Solicitor.

Solicitor Vigilante had no comment at this time.

A discussion took place concerning the time allotted Public Comment.

Mohney questions why the five (5) minute limit. Mohney agreed he was on the Council that implemented the five (5) minute rule. Miklos reminded Mohney that he (Miklos) was removed from Council meetings even before his five (5) minutes were up.

Solicitor Vigilante asked if there was a policy that says five (5) minutes? Everyone is speaking..... Vigilante stated he thinks what the Sunshine Act says is reasonable time. I think Council controls what

is reasonable. I think we are getting to the point where we are not really talking about what the motion is.

Mohney stated he truly believes you need a Chief that is non-union and I've never agreed with that. You have hired Eden [Borough Manager] he doesn't belong in the union. Just as you need a Chief to be the leadership non-union. Going forward, there are things in the contract, you asked me to give an example and I'll give you one that it's currently going on across the country. If you are aware of union negotiations, contract negotiations. New hires are hired under a different legacy than the old hires are. They are also, at this point because the unions at the places where I work, I work at Beaver Valley Nuclear Power Plant which it alone employees about 1000 people for First Energy. Which everybody knows they are a huge company, they are negotiating with their unions right now. Locally globally they have to retire by the end of "x day". I think the local contract is the end 2015 the contract where I work it is the end of 2016. If they retire in that time frame they keep their retirement health benefits. Any employee that retires after that date no longer keeps their retirement health benefit. I don't have my health insurance any more when I retire. I used to, it's going away. Those are some of the things you can negotiate going forward. You can negotiate a 75% pay structure for the new hires compared to what our current officers are working under. I spoke with both officers when I was on Council, they are in agreement to listen to some of this. This is the type of thing you gotta go back to the table with. You go to negotiations with to get the cost of the police force down and to be able to keep the police force intact. That's the way we all want it. Thank you.

Bish asked Gaiser if he has been brought up to speed with regard to the Budget?

Gaiser stated right now we are spending more money than we are taking in. We looked at where the most money is being spent. That's in the Police Dept. So we are trying to cut back some in the Police Dept. and any other areas where we could cut. That's where we are at now.

Bish stated one of the things that was brought up when I was on Council by Mr. Miklos was to sell the Fire Truck.

Miklos disagreed. Miklos never said that. Miklos asked Bish to find that in the minutes.

Bish asked what other areas are we cutting in the budget besides the Police Dept. Are there other ways to generate revenue? When was the last time we raised garbage rates, like Tyson [Klukan] said Bish said maybe it's time to raise rates. The DEP wants us to charge more for our water.

Miklos disagrees with her comment about DEP. They haven't made that determination yet. They are still studying that.

Borough Manager stated he has been to every DEP meeting since he came here [March 2014]. He has never heard anyone from DEP say that we need to charge more for our water.

Abernathy added that biggest concern of DEP is that the Public Utility Fund has to be used for Public Utility. This is the whole issue. We are building a water plant and this Council is not taking money from the Public Utility Fund. There is no excess money. We are trying to live within our means. The town wants the Water Plant. We don't know what it will cost. We are going through with building a plant. People have said they want it. We have to pay for that. We have to make up for all the other stuff that

is coming down on us. We laid a Borough Worker off. We spend what we have to spend. The elderly people that live here can't take it. The government has to live within their means.

Bish asked her question again, when was the last time we raised garbage rates

Miklos stated we have raised garbage rates regularly, not to long ago.

Abernathy stated they were just raised.

Miklos added before this new Council came. Go back and look, you'll see a few raises. What's the difference if you raise their taxes, raise their water rates, you're still putting an increases burden on the....

Mohney added previous Councils have always done that. They raised the water, they raised the garbage. They hid the fact that they weren't raising taxes. That's why we are where we are today. They robbed Peter to pay Paul all those years. We are living with what we got right now. I will agree with you on that.

Miklos stated we haven't really been as fiscally responsible over the years as we should have been. It's far too easy to say we're going to raise taxes or we're going to raise water rates or we're going to raise garbage rates. We have a captive audience. At lease this is what most Council members have felt in the past. All we have to do is go to the public. The public is getting sick of it. We want people to stay here. We are losing our school. That is a big loss to this Borough. Loosing Sheetz. Loosing Projectile Tube. Lost our last grocery store. You want people to come into this town. You don't do it by raising taxes or raising rates for services. You make it appealing. You people got it all wrong. What brings employers here? Number one reason, is low taxes. Under Mohney regime we bought a new Fire Truck which will cost Tax Payers \$750,000 before it is paid off, a new Garbage Truck for \$150,000 that is not working out very well. This was not well thought out. Our Streets are sinking, our 100 year old infrastructure needs replaced. Who wants to come here and bring jobs? This town needs cleaned up and rebuilt. You can't do that without money. You can't just put that heavy burden on the Tax Payers. There has to be a sensible plan. Why did we look at the Police Dept.? Because that's where we are spending the most money.

Bish suggested giving the property [Brownfield] to the County to market. Sign it away. That's a move forward.

Schaub stated the 2012 population decreased by 14.5% from 2000. That's a huge decrease. In 2012 the median income is \$28,163. In 2014 the unemployment rate is 8.4% national is 6.6. 37% [of the homes] are rentals.

Bish speaks about being a landlord and occupancy inspections.

Miklos state what we are trying to do is make this town more appealing to homeowners. Not more appealing for landlords, because that's not working out very well for us. What makes it more appealing for homeowners, low taxes, good services, good streets, good infrastructure.

Banks added police protection.

Miklos added police protection is like everything else. It has to be done in a reasonable and rational manner. It has to be affordable. Banks agreed. The State Police told us, Ford City Borough will never be without police protection. The State Police cover every municipality in this county with the exception of Kittanning and Leechburg.

Banks stated response time is the issue. Mayor just read a letter of what can happen. What kind of incident can happen if you don't have rapid response?

Miklos stated we can play this what if game forever. Miklos said it would have been good if Gene had come to the Borough Assoc. meeting because the Police issue is an important thing right now and Banks doesn't want to hear what the State Police have to say.

Banks interrupted and stated I was at a School Board Meeting.

Miklos stated just let me talk. I know, but this Police issue is an important thing right now.

Banks states let's get on with the meeting. Madam President can we just get on with it.

Miklos laughs and says you don't want to hear what the State Police have to say.

Banks reminds everyone that he brought a State Officer to our Town Meetings.

Miklos says why don't you go right to the State Police. Why don't you go right to the current State Police and find out what's going on Gene.

Banks stated he already knows.

Miklos says you know.....

Klukan reminds everyone there was an email send to every single member of Council and the Borough Manager. Klukan confirmed Mr. Banks was with him and at the School [Board] meeting and Eden too. This is a serious issue we are facing with the school. There has to be a split of Council members [to attend necessary meetings held on the same day].

Miklos clarified there were two members of Council at the Borough's Assoc. meeting with the State Police.

Klukan stated there were three at the School Board meeting. Mr. Ratliff, Mr. Banks and myself.

Schaub stated she was at the TCC [Armstrong County Tax Collection Commission] meeting.

Klukan stated this is a very serious issue. I'm looking out for the Tax. Citizens. We are going to be losing tax base.

Miklos stated to Klukan, when you get on Council, I hope you come to the realization that it's not easy for most of these people to meet their tax obligation and the utility obligation. Miklos asked if he pays utilities here in Ford City? Klukan answers yes. Miklos asks if he pays taxes here? Klukan answers yes. Miklos says you personally do? Klukan answers yes.

TAX ORDINANCE VETO

Miklos makes a motion to override the Mayor's veto of the 2015 Tax Ordinance, which keeps the millage rate at 17.4, which is the same rate as the previous year. Seconded by Abernathy.

Schaub states if we have to bring the police budget back up to where it was, it would have to be a 6.5% millage increase. The mills would go from 17 to 23.

Miklos stated that is mills not percentage. It would be a 6.5 - 7 mill increase

Schaub states the mills would increase to 23.9.

Borough Manager calls for a vote.

Motion Carried. 6-0 Unanimous

NEXT PUBLIC WORKSESSION Monday, January 26, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. in the Ford City Public Library

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING Monday, February 9, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Ford City Public Library

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mel Marin asked to have an explanation of what just happened. Borough Manager explained the Mayor's veto of the Tax Ordinance has been overridden by the Council. Taxes will stay the same. The budget has already been approved. Marin stated he is a new homeowner and he likes it here. He likes the Police, they are not mean to him.

Rob Mohney stated he may be putting his home up for sale. He's lived here for 30 years.

Kim Bish suggests to the Mayor he eliminate the 10 to 6 shift. It may seem as an officer safety issue to you. You do have back up. That would help you man the Police Dept. on the weekends. You may want to consider asking, or in your case, telling the full-time officers that they might want to work something other than Monday through Friday. Abernathy and Miklos laugh. Bish states that is not an accostal to the Mayor. I'm making a suggestion to the Mayor. Abernathy stated we're in agreement with you. Bish said Mayor they have stuck it on your plate. You will look really bad if you don't take care of it. Now it's all on you, Mayor.

BOROUGH MANAGER COMMENTS

Ratliff made comments that required no action.

MAYOR COMMENTS

Mayor made comments that required no action.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Banks stated he only voted for this budget to pass it was under duress. Right now the Borough is in a volatile position. Can't purchase anything. I would never want to put the people of Ford City in danger. So I voted under duress. For that reason and that reason only. My gripe is this budget process was not

formulated with all six Council members involved. Though the years our accountant would sit down with us individually or two (2) or three (3) in a group to explain to us what we could afford. Police car was one of them last year. When I came on Council it was the same as this an impasse. The budget was in turmoil. Us three [Banks, Bish, Miklos] came on and seen where we could balance the budget. I give Jerry and Kim credit, we sat down and fixed that budget so it wouldn't increase the taxes. Mohney added it was a balanced budget when you came on. Banks asked that in 2015 all Council members be included in the decisions that are made.

Solicitor Vigilante stated to Banks I don't think the term you used under duress is what you really meant. Under duress means you were forced to vote. You weren't happy about it but you voted that way.

Banks stated again under duress.

Vigilante stated then you should have voted no.

Abernathy stated you should have voted no.

Miklos laughs.

Vigilante disagrees with Banks.

Miklos says forget it. Let's move on.

Abernathy is happy that Council is not putting a burden on the Tax Payers of raising taxes and trying to come up with alternatives. That is our challenge. It is going to be hard to entice the people to come to this town with high taxes.

Schaub said Ford City is the second highest tax base in the County. Miklos said Ford City home values and incomes are lowest in the County or surrounding municipalities. Our police costs, excluding Kittanning, are the highest. That does not work very well. We need to call on the Mayor, he is the key to solving the problem. We all agree to a Chief, but under parameters the Tax Payers can afford, a non-union working Chief. It (Police Dept.) has not been working well in the last nine (9) years. Miklos asked Mayor if he agreed. Mayor said we need to discuss it. Miklos said lets discuss it now, that's the problem. Miklos asked the Mayor to call a meeting with the Police Committee.

Bartuccio said we need a better working relationship with the Mayor. Gaiser said the Brownfield development will help, but is not the solution. We still need to spend as little money as we can and to build money at the same time.

SOLICITOR COMMENTS

Solicitor Vigilante all I want to say is, I think we have done a good job at most recent meetings. Being more focused, civilized all those things. I think the cross talk and everything, we've got to do a better job in the future. Not prevent people from talking, but do it in an orderly fashion. It seems like we've got too much going around. Everybody should have their opportunity to talk. But, it should be in a more organized way. So I think we need to work on that in the future. That's all I wanted to say.

Schaub, Miklos, Bartuccio and Gaiser made comments that required no action.

ADJOURNMENT

Schaub made a motion at 8:20 a.m. to adjourn. Seconded by Abernathy.
Motion Carried. 6-0 Unanimous

Kathy Bartuccio
Council President

Lisa Bittner
Borough Secretary