

# WEEKEND EDITION

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COVERING THE GROVE CITY, LAKEVIEW, MERCER, HARRISVILLE AND SLIPPERY ROCK AREAS

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## Council votes 'nay' on water authority's dissolution

### Authority free to proceed with upgrade plans

By Carol Ann Gregg  
*Allied News Staff Writer*

Several citizens implored Slippery Rock Borough Council to consider the facts, even as council decided the fate of the Slippery Rock Municipal Authority this week.

Council's regular meeting Tuesday evening opened with several citizens speaking during public comment about the municipal authority; the decision to dissolve the authority and sell the water and sewer was on the evening's agenda.

"This is a major decision," said Marilyn Hines, local resident. She asked that council consider the financial health

See **WATER**, page A-3

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## Water

### SR authority free to proceed with plans

*from page A-1*

of the authority to determine if they should sell or not sell. "Be pro-active."

"I don't have a strong opinion whether to sell or not to sell. (But) don't take this lightly," said Chuck Brochetti, a borough resident.

John West, a 35-year employee of the authority, asked council to "Leave it alone."

One of the original members of the municipal authority board, John Conway, spoke about the history of the authority that was founded in 1954 and the advantages of the authority system.

"We were able to incorporate the college, and that keeps the rates down," Conway said.

"The municipal authority should be triple-A rated; that should reduce interest rates," he said, referring to the authority's ability to borrow money for major upgrades anticipated for the sewer and water systems.

Resident Bob Osmun came in from another direction, "You take an oath. Consider your fiduciary responsibility." He continued stating that the property could bring \$8 million to \$10 million if sold.

"It could be used to pay down debt and do the things that couldn't be done because we couldn't afford them," Osmun said.

As council discussed the issue, Councilman Jerry Heller noted that they had been studying the issue for six months. "We need to consider, i.e., if we dissolve the authority, it is gone," Heller said.

Councilman Bob Bowser weighed in on the issue. "We heard proposals from two private companies and the water authority," he said.

Councilman Royce Lorentz weighed in with his thoughts.

"We don't know about the economy, the condition of the infrastructure, what future rates will be," he pointed out.

Vice chairman Blase Tucci, who was conducting the meet-

ing in the absence of Dave Miller, president, called for a roll call vote. The motion to dissolve the authority and the sell the assets failed with a vote of 5-1. Tucci was the only yea vote.

Council voted to have Neva Stanger, borough solicitor, send the authority a letter that would set them free from the restriction to incur debt. At the beginning of the process of studying the water and sewer systems, council requested the authority not move forward with any of their renovation or expansion plans for the sewer system.

"We didn't take this decision lightly. I learned a lot through the process," Bowser said.

Heller thanked Tucci for all the research he has done.

In a later phone interview, Paul Dickey, manager of the municipal authority, gave his thoughts on the decision.

"I believe they made the proper decision," Dickey said. "The authority has a good history. Local consumers are board members who care about the customers."

In other business:

■ Stanger reported that nearly all the work at Room at the Rock has been completed. Borough engineer John Rusnak will be inspecting the property to determine if it meets specifications.

■ Council accepted a bid from Crocker Paving, Slippery Rock, for \$496 for a patch on West Cooper Street.

■ Council awarded Wiest Asphalt Products and Paving a contract of \$116,340.25 to pave Elm Street and to bring all the handicapped ramps along Elm into compliance with the most recent requirements of PennDOT.

■ Council adopted the Northwest Butler County Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan. This plan is an amendment to the Northwest Butler County Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. The five municipalities - Brady Township, Slippery Rock Borough, Slippery Rock Township, West Liberty Borough and Worth Township - have been working on the plan for about 18 months.