

**CHAMBER OF BOROUGH COUNCIL
Shoemakersville Borough**

April 15, 2025

President Kline called the workshop of the Shoemakersville Borough Council to order in the Shoemakersville Borough Office, 846 Main St., Shoemakersville, PA at 7:11 p.m.

In attendance: Chris Kline – President, Amy Botwright – Vice President, Tara Kennedy-Kline, Dana Randazzo, Joseph Wertz Jr. and Gary Methax – Public Works Supervisor

Absent from the meeting: Michael Grim, Dana Smith, Dustin Remp – Mayor and Paul Gruber – Manager & Codes

Fire Chief's Report – Chief Wagner

Asks about agenda item 6 (3), with Mr. Wertz stating this would be for Shoemakersville to reach out to other municipalities to determine how they provide fire service within their jurisdictions and to potentially begin discussions for a district. Chief Wagner asks if this is similar to Greenfields and notes an amount of \$300,000.00/yr. Mr. Wertz is unsure, as the questions have not yet been asked.

Manager's Report – Mr. Gruber

President Kline reports that debris needs to be cleaned from the southern portion of 4th & Pine Sts.

Mr. Gruber is currently on vacation from April 12 through April 21.

President Kline notes that the as-builts have been received from Tractor Supply. Outstanding items include the hydraulic calculations for the sprinkler system and the re-hinging of the gate that exits the garden center. Mr. Methax reports that the gate has been fixed. Mr. Wertz asks if Mr. Methax has any information regarding the outcome of the meeting at Tractor Supply, with Mr. Methax reporting that the necessary gate repair and the receipt of the as-builts needing to be delivered was discussed at the meeting.

Property/Streets/Sanitation – Mr. Smith

Ms. Kennedy-Kline is waiting to hear back on any bid submissions for the road project. President Kline notes that Mr. Gruber is scheduled to receive information from Sloan Paving. Mr. Wertz reports that the bid opening is May 1, stating that Mr. Gruber reported that no bids have been received to date.

Sewer – Mr. Wertz

Mr. Wertz and Vice President Botwright previously spent 4 hours discussing water and sewer rates. He notes the sewer fund is well funded and feels that the sewer rates could potentially be lowered from \$100/qu. to \$90/qu. plus \$5/1,000 gallons, after a predetermined gallonage. This would create a slight increase in sewer income. Sewer rates are being funded by minimum usages.

Water – President Kline

Mr. Wertz reports that the water account is being funded more by the \$13/1,000 gallon charge as opposed to the minimum charge. He provides a sample rate sheet starting with a \$15/1,000 gallon charge, then providing for a reduced charge per 1,000 gallons as usage increases. Mr. Wertz reviews the rate sheet. This rate structure would recognize the expense of maintaining hydrants and water service to properties, then charging according to usage. Ms. Kennedy-Kline asks how many customers would be affected by the high usage discount, with Mr. Wertz approximating 20 accounts. Mr. Wertz and Vice President Botwright discuss the calculations. President Kline would like to see additional calculations before any consideration

for a rate change would be made. Mr. Wertz states that this would be a mid-term change for water rates, potentially as early as next quarter. He believes prior Council developed too much capacity and now the borough is not selling enough water in order to cover production costs. Council discusses water capacity and usage. Vice President Botwright reports that when the rate structure is applied to the current billings, an additional \$30,000 in yearly revenue is projected, without significant increases in most bills. Mr. Wertz and President Kline discuss additional calculations to be compiled. Water usage and billing for borough owned properties is discussed.

Parks & Recreation – Ms. Kennedy-Kline

Vice President Botwright reports that Perry Twp. agreed to pay a donation so township residents will have the same rates as borough residents. Senior rates will be adjusted, while all other rates will remain the same.

Family Rates:	Shoemakersville & Perry: \$250	Outside: \$325
Pair Rates:	Shoemakersville & Perry: \$190	Outside: \$250
Single Rates:	Shoemakersville & Perry: \$150	Outside: \$190
Senior Rates:	Shoemakersville & Perry: \$40	Outside: \$75

*A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to approve the pool rates for 2025. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously.

Children’s Fair is June 7, with the theme “Candyland.” The parade will be starting at 10:00 a.m.

Law/Planning/Zoning – Mr. Wertz

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to authorize Borough Council, the Borough Council President and Borough Secretary to sign the minor subdivision plans for Shoemakersville Plaza. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously.

Employee Relations – President Kline – nothing to report

Approvals/Finance/Pension – Vice President Botwright

*A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to approve the minutes for April 1, 2025. Seconded by Ms. Randazzo. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to approve the bills payable for April 15, 2025. Seconded by Ms. Randazzo. Motion carried unanimously.

Council discusses the combined costs to clean out at the 4th & Pine Sts. intersection. Mr. Methax reports that there will be a fuel surcharge for the stone delivery.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to approve a not to exceed cost of \$1,200 for the hard costs for the 4th & Pine Sts. cleanout. Seconded by Vice President Botwright. Motion carried unanimously

Community Outreach – Ms. Randazzo

The Community Yard Sale is May 3 from 7:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Ms. Randazzo and Ms. Kennedy-Kline discuss advertising methods to increase awareness for events.

New Business

Public Comment

Matt Tobias (Shoemakersville Fire Co.): Apologizes to Council for his behavior at the last meeting. He was feeling frustrated at what he perceived to be a lack of support for the fire company.

Mark Paine (25 Main St.): Notes that 1 ½ weeks ago his water had a strong odor and asks if anything has recently changed with production. President Kline reports that nothing has changed and that the water is tested on a daily basis. As no other complaints have been received by residents, Mr. Paine will attempt to identify the odor and the date of its occurrence. Ms. Randazzo lives near Mr. Paine and notes that about 2 weeks ago the water had an odor of chlorine. Mr. Methax mentions the water main break that occurred at 3rd & Franklin Sts. about 2 weeks ago. **President Kline will speak with Mr. Gruber about the matter when he returns from vacation.** Mr. Wertz and President Kline suggest testing a water sample. Council and Mr. Paine discuss the frequency of the odor in the water. Mr. Methax will coordinate a time with Mr. Paine to take a test kit to the property for a water sample.

Mr. Paine asks how many pool ticket holders are residents of the borough, Perry Township and outside of those 2 municipalities. Vice President Botwright reports that last year there were 176 borough passes, 126 township passes and 173 passes for outside those municipalities, and provides a breakdown of the types of passes issued. Mr. Paine asks if revenue from the passes sold covers the cost to operate the pool, with Vice President Botwright reporting that ticket sales cover ½ of the costs, with general admission, snack bar sales and pool parties contributing as wells. Vice President Botwright offers to provide a breakdown and asks what specific information he is seeking. Mr. Paine is requesting a summary of the revenue and expenses to determine if the pool can support itself. Vice President Botwright states that no pool can sustain on its own and reports that the borough budgets for a yearly loss of approximately \$5,000-\$10,000 with most municipal pools losing \$20,000-\$30,000/year. She reports that there were more repairs and maintenance to the pool last year, which contributed to the loss.

Mr. Paine asks for an update on the borough's contribution to the fire company that was discussed at the last meeting, with President Kline reporting that the matter will be further discussed when all Council members are present at a meeting.

Rusty Wagner (233 Salem Church Rd.): Refers to Council's prior discussion on water rates and is concerned with Mr. Wertz's encouragement of residents to waste water to increase revenue. Mr. Wagner discusses the water supply in Perry Township and suggests the borough look at the township supplying some water to the borough, in an effort to reduce costs. President Kline notes that the borough has briefly discussed that as an option.

Mr. Wagner and President Kline discuss the water agreement between the borough and township, with President Kline reporting that the original agreement remains in effect. However, most of the terms are moot, as the service areas named are no longer in place. Mr. Wagner asks if there is any agreement in place for the borough to obtain water from PTMA in the event of an emergency, with President Kline stating that while there is nothing in writing, the matter is being discussed. President Kline suggests a meeting between the SMA and PTMA.

Mr. Wagner discusses the Shoemakersville Fire Co. and notes that he has spoken with surrounding departments who are also facing financial hardships. President Kline asks if the other municipalities, not including Perry Twp., that the fire company responds to calls in their area contribute to the department, with Mr. Wagner reporting that no monetary contributions are received. Each fire company signs a mutual aid agreement with the surrounding departments. The agreement does not include finances. President Kline asks if each municipality listed on the monthly call report has its own department, with Mr. Wagner responding no. Some areas are combined due to the locations of the departments. Mr. Wagner and President Kline discuss municipal financing of the departments.

President Kline reports that Solicitor Haws is reviewing the SRO agreement for definitive verbiage for indemnification. Mr. Wertz references Mr. Grim's discussion at a previous meeting regarding the coverage area of the SRO. Mr. Wertz raises the idea of expanding that coverage area to include more of the borough.

President Kline believes a police service agreement would be a separate contract. Mr. Wertz previously spoke with Chief Kuklinski regarding the possibility of having a Hamburg officer provide services to the borough. Council discusses the matter. **Mr. Wertz will speak with Chief Kuklinski regarding additional details regarding fees and services provided.**

As Mr. Wertz recognizes there are funding and volunteer deficits with fire departments, he believes consolidation of fire services may be an option Council should consider. President Kline asks if all volunteer fire departments are suffering, with Mr. Wagner reporting that both fire and EMS, volunteer and paid, have seen a drastic reduction in both members and funding. The state is requiring more money and training to fulfill the same requirements with essentially less staffing. Shoemakersville Fire Co. firefighters are required to volunteer specified amounts of time for both training and fundraising. Mr. Wagner notes that while NFPA sets standards and not requirements, any deviation from those standards could pose a potential risk to any person or entity involved. President Kline asks if fire departments can join together to form a regional department. Mr. Wagner states that neighboring departments could combine, as they are separate entities. However, there would still be separate stations to cover the municipalities, in order to maintain acceptable response times. The matter of staffing and financing would still remain issues. Volunteer manpower and proximity to the stations is discussed. Ms. Kennedy-Kline discusses why people volunteer and asks what could create a feeling of comradery that would foster more volunteers to join. **Mr. Wertz will reach out to neighboring municipalities for their input.**

Mr. Wertz would like to see the time limit for public comment be enforced. President Kline will enforce the matter when there is a dispute between visitors, but does not feel the 5-minute limit would always suffice, especially if Council is taking part in the discussion. Any Council member may speak up if they feel the dialogue is going off-topic.

There being no further business, a motion is made by Ms. Kennedy-Kline to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Wagner - Secretary/Treasurer