

**CHAMBER OF BOROUGH COUNCIL
Shoemakersville Borough**

August 5, 2025

President Kline called the monthly meeting of the Shoemakersville Borough Council to order in the Shoemakersville Borough Office, 846 Main St. Shoemakersville, PA at 7:00 p.m.

In attendance: Chris Kline – President, Amy Botwright – Vice President, Michael Grim, Tara Kennedy-Kline, Dana Randazzo, Dana Smith, Joseph Wertz, Jr., David Kee – Engineer – leaves at 8:25 p.m., Chip Haws – Solicitor – leaves at 7:33 p.m., Paul Gruber – Borough Manager & Codes and Melissa Wagner – Secretary/Treasurer.

Absent from the meeting: Dustin Remp – Mayor

Code Enforcement – Mr. Gruber

- **Permits & Notices:** A leaking oil tank matter is being addressed. This was previously reviewed with the fire company. Several enforcement matters have been forwarded to the District Justice. Mr. Gruber is not aware of when the new restaurant will be opening.

Solicitor’s Report – Solicitor Haws – nothing to report

Engineer’s Report – Mr. Kee

- **LSA Grant for Borough Hall ADA Improvements:** Mr. Kee and Mr. Gruber met with the Elections Board at the office regarding the improvements plan. While the representatives raised minimal concerns with the plans, they did recommend raising the planter box in front of the building to reduce any tripping hazard. Mr. Kee asks if Council wishes to repair the strip of asphalt along the side of the building as part of the project, as sections of the area are breaking apart. Mr. Kee and Council discuss the area and the possibility of utilizing colored stone instead of asphalt or concrete.

The grant will be awarded sometime between September and November of this year.

- **Blankenbiller Stormwater Permit:** ARRO has reviewed the stormwater management plot plan and report. The stormwater plan appears adequate and meets the stormwater ordinance for small projects. The plan proposes a rain garden to be installed for drainage, with any overflow traveling onto 2nd St. Mr. Kee and Council discuss the project. The next step would be to send notice of the plan meeting the stormwater ordinance guidelines, along with the creation of an O&M Agreement.

Mr. Wertz feels that due to the impervious coverage on the lot, Mr. Blankenbiller may need either a zoning variance or waiver. Mr. Kee notes that the impervious area would cover the building and the stone & paved driveways; anything that would not infiltrate. A gravel driveway with stone over grass would be considered impervious, as the area compacts over time. Mr. Grim asks how gravel would be considered impervious and references when Tractor Supply wanted to pave their stone lot but were told they could not, as the asphalt was considered impervious. Mr. Kee notes of the minor differences in the C-Factors between stone and asphalt that would need to be accounted for. Council discusses the property, with Vice President Botwright reviewing the zoning ordinance and map, stating that the area appears to be in an R-3 District, which allows for up to 40% lot coverage for a single-family semi-detached dwelling. Council and Mr. Kee further discuss the matter. **Mr. Gruber will visit the site, take measurements and calculate the coverage area to determine if a zoning violation exists.**

- **Bell Warehouse:** A revised land development plan was submitted and is being reviewed.

Fire Chief's Report - Chief Wagner

There were 50 calls in July. Chief Wagner submits financial data from the fire company's accounting firm, noting that 2026 budget requests will be forthcoming. He references a fire tax. Vice President Botwright asks if the financial data can be sent electronically as well, with Chief Wagner being uncertain if the information is available in an electronic format.

Secretary's Report/Correspondence – Ms. Wagner

The borough office will be closed on August 20-22 and 29.

Ms. Wagner asks Council to sign the plans for the Bell project that were approved at the June workshop.

Manager's Report – Mr. Gruber

Mr. Gruber asks how Council wishes to proceed if Dustin Folk does not apply for a stormwater management permit for his property at 398 Main St. by the deadline of August 14, 2025. **A planning committee member will reach out to Mr. Folk.**

Mr. Gruber reports that the three recently excavated dig sites on Pine St. need to be patched prior to the oil & chip project. He submits a proposal from Folk Paving. AMS is looking to begin the road project during the 3rd week in August.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to approve the Folk Paving proposal dated 8/1/2025 for patches on Pine St. for a cost of \$1,840. Seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Gruber briefly discusses the recent meeting with the Elections Board. Dr. Gravish was also present and received a copy of the plans.

Mr. Gruber notes of a PA DEP inspection at the sewer plant in July, due to odor complaints from a neighbor. There were no violations reported. Odors were generated in the morning when the digester blowers were turned back on, as they were being turned off overnight to save on electric costs. PA DEP recommended that the blowers remain on 24 hrs/day. The other cause of the odor is from the occasional decanting of the digestors. Mr. Gruber and President Kline discuss the blowers at the plant and the continuous need for air flow, with Mr. Wertz asking if the blowers could be placed on a rotating schedule. Mr. Gruber suggests waiting to hear about the LSA grant awards before making any changes. He and Mr. Mohn previously discussed shutting down one of the VLRs, to have an empty unit for high flows.

PA DEP will be at the water plant for an inspection on August 7.

Property/Streets/Sanitation – Mr. Smith – nothing to report

Sewer – Mr. Wertz

Mr. Wertz discusses the domestic water being utilized at the sewer plant and reports that if PTMA were billed for the consumption, the annual bill would amount to \$100,000. Mr. Kee discusses his preliminary findings of using process water instead of domestic water at the plant, reporting that the purchase and installation of new pumps & piping and a WQM permit from DEP would cost around \$50,000. The Return on Investment would be 6 months, at the cost of the water, chlorine and electric usage.

Mr. Kee will provide contact information to Mr. Gruber on a municipality that is using process water at their sewer plant. Mr. Wertz feels that if process water is used at the plant, just wells #1 and #3 would be able to

supply the borough with water. President Kline would like to compare the ROI based off of revenue to the ROI based off of costs. Resident Alan Hartman is present and asks if river water could be utilized at the plant, with President Kline stating that it would not be possible without permits from DEP and numerous regulatory changes having to be made.

Water – President Kline

President Kline reports that Suburban Testing Labs tested the water on July 1 at Bell Trucking and the water plant, with all requirements being met.

Council discusses the DeTurk Ag Operation notice from the Berks Co. Planning Commission, with President Kline reporting that the borough was notified of the project in Tilden Twp., as the township is a part of the same source water protection area as the borough. The project will be poultry houses, which will have concrete basins. A retention pond will be installed for stormwater management. Ms. Kennedy-Kline reports that according to the notice, Tilden Twp. is to notify the borough of the township meeting date when the project will appear on their agenda.

Parks & Recreation – Ms. Kennedy-Kline

Barry Isett & Co. will be at the August workshop to review the Park Master Site Plan.

Vice President Botwright reports that Doggie Dip Day will be on September 6 from 10-3. The Berks Lehigh Canine Unit will be using the pool on September 10 to train their dogs.

Law/Planning/Zoning – Mr. Wertz

Mr. Wertz will contact Mr. Folk regarding the storm water matter.

Employee Relations – President Kline

Vice President Botwright requests an executive session later in the meeting.

Approvals/Finance/Pension – Vice President Botwright

*A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to approve the minutes for July 15, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to approve the bills payable for August 5, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried by a vote of 6 yes to 1 abstain, with Vice President Botwright abstaining.

Vice President Botwright reports that Northern Berks EMS submitted their funding proposal for 2026, which will be reviewed during the budget workshops.

Vice President Botwright made notes in the EMS survey that was forwarded by Mr. Gruber from the Center for Excellence in Local Government. President Kline reports that the survey questions were requesting very detailed information.

Community Outreach – Ms. Randazzo

The Community Yard Sale will be on September 20 from 7-1 and will be posted on various social media outlets.

New Business

Public Comment

Richard Geschwindt (603 Reber St.): Asks if the diner has received all of the required borough permits, with Mr. Gruber reporting that all borough permits were issued.

Mr. Gruber will forward a copy of the PA State Police report to Mr. Geschwindt.

Mr. Gruber confirms with Mr. Geschwindt that the leaking oil tank noted in the code enforcement report is on a residential property.

Mr. Geschwindt asks for an update on the strip mall, with Lance Adam reporting that the developer received the Highway Occupancy Permit for the traffic light and federal grants for the connecting road. He is unsure when the project will break ground.

Mark Paine (25 Main St.): Discusses the recent bicycle accident in the borough and notes of the request for any video of the incident. He asks Mr. Grim if there is an update on the community program where Neighborhood Watch members could receive a discount on Ring cameras. After numerous attempts, Mr. Grim has not received any response from Amazon. Resident Jim Hermansader is present and provides an update on the teenage boy involved in the accident. Possible camera footage of the accident area is discussed.

Mr. Paine feels the cost of improvements in the Park Master Site Plan is expensive and does not believe borough tax payers should be burdened with the expense, as a large portion of park users are from outside of the borough. Ms. Kennedy-Kline reports that updates are needed as the park has drainage, electrical, construction and foundation issues, as well as unsafe equipment that cannot be used. Vice President Botwright notes that the plan is essentially a wish list of improvements and that all items may not be completed. The project would be broken into sections and could span over a 20-year period.

Jim Hermansader (707 Main St.): Reports that there are no stops signs in either direction at Park and 7th Sts. and feels that the “Stop” painted on the roadway at the intersection is not adequate. Vice President Botwright states there is limited space for the signs to be installed and that previous signage was knocked down. Mr. Gruber will review PennDOT guidelines for stop sign placement.

Rusty Wagner (233 Salem Church Rd.): References earlier discussion on impervious and pervious areas and does not feel that all stone areas should be considered impervious, as his experience with certain types of modified stone allows for water to pass through. He feels the Tractor Supply lot and any stone driveway in the borough would be considered impervious. Mr. Kee discusses how dirt and stone can compact over time to create an impervious area as defined in the ordinance, which states that stone surfaces used for vehicle parking and movement shall be considered impervious. President Kline asks if this is typical of how other municipalities address the issue, with Mr. Kee reporting that stone is often considered impervious.

Executive Session

Council recesses into executive session at 8:12 p.m. for employee relations. Regular session reconvened at 9:12 p.m.

A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Melissa Wagner - Secretary/Treasurer