

**CHAMBER OF BOROUGH COUNCIL  
Shoemakersville Borough**

**December 5, 2023**

Vice President Botwright called the monthly meeting of the Shoemakersville Borough Council to order in the Shoemakersville Borough Office, 846 Main St. Shoemakersville, PA at 7:02 p.m.

**In attendance:** Chris Kline - President, Michael Grim, Dana Randazzo, Dana Smith, Tara Kennedy-Kline, Joseph Wertz, Jr., David Kee – Engineer, Keith Mooney – Solicitor, Paul Gruber – Borough Manager & Codes, Brandon Nabar – Junior Council Person, and Melissa Wagner – Secretary/Treasurer.

Absent from the meeting: Amy Botwright -Vice President, Dustin Remp - Mayor

**Code Enforcement – Mr. Gruber**

- **Permits & Notices:** Mr. Gruber has been working with Billy Blankenbiller on the rebuilding of the apartments at 146 Main St.

**Solicitor’s Report – Solicitor Mooney**

- **2024 Tax Ordinance:** The tax ordinance has been advertised and is ready for adoption.
- **Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement:** Council will discuss moving forward with the agreement and associated resolution once Perry Township has provided feedback.

**Engineer’s Report – Mr. Kee**

- **Headworks & Solids Handling:** Pennvest is withholding final payment until PADEP approves the construction. The final payment amount due to EECE is \$107,398.90. Mr. Kee and Council discuss paying the contractor vs. waiting for the Pennvest funds to be deposited into the borough’s account. Council chooses to hold payment at this time.
- **Growing Greener Grant:** As the contractor has completed the bioswale with minor punch list items, ARRO recommends final payment be made to the contractor.

\*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to approve final payment application #1 to Construction Masters Services for \$48,500, contingent upon completion of the punch list items and the engineer’s approval. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously,

**Fire Chief’s Report – Chief Wagner**

After leaving the last Council meeting, Chief Wagner was under the belief that the 2024 fire company donation would be \$30,000 + the .5 mill tax increase and asks why that was changed. Ms. Kennedy-Kline reports that while Council did discuss the .5 mill increase during budget workshops, the amount would subsidize the \$30,000 donation and not be in addition to it. Council discusses their individual interpretations of the .5 mill increase and how it relates to the donation. Solicitor Mooney states that the .5 mill increase must be used for fire services, but that Council has the option to amend the budget throughout the year.

Chief Wagner references his October 10 email, reiterating that the borough must supply fire suppression to the borough and financial support for operations. He and President Kline discuss ways to reduce costs.

Michael Hoffert, Deputy Chief, (did not sign in) reports that the fire company was greatly impacted by COVID in 2020. Fundraising expenses increased, in an attempt to recuperate lost income. Mr. Wertz asks why the income from fundraising dropped drastically after COVID.

Chief Wagner asks for each Council's members interpretation of the donation allotment for 2024. President Kline: \$30,000 donation + .5 mill (variable component), Mr. Smith: \$30,000 + .5 mill, Ms. Kennedy-Kline: \$30,000, Mr. Wertz: refuses to answer until Chief Wagner answers his previous questions regarding fire company expenses, Ms. Randazzo: \$30,000 and speak with Council on the next step, Mr. Grim: \$30,000, speak with Council, and look into fire company funding options.

President Kline offers to assist the fire company, but feels that options for the fire company accountant be reviewed. He and Chief Wagner discuss the increase in accounting expenses in 2021, with Chief Wagner citing the hiring of a manager, additional employees and the addition of accounts as reasons for the increase.

Chief Wagner plays 3 sections of a recording of the November 21 meeting related to the fire company's 2024 donation; 2 sections being while he was present at that meeting, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> section of Council discussing their different understandings of the donation amount after he left the meeting.

### **Mayor's Report – Mayor Remp**

Mr. Gruber reports that all Hometown Heroes banners have been hung. The banner for Harold Geschwindt still needs to be moved.

### **Secretary's Report/Correspondence – Ms. Wagner**

The borough office will be closing at 1:00 p.m. on December 7 and will be closed from December 21-26.

### **Operator/Manager's Report - Mr. Gruber**

Mr. Gruber has reviewed the current phone and internet charges for Verizon, AT&T and Comcast, and has received a quote from Comcast for phone and internet services, with an estimated yearly savings of \$6,643. There would be no phone at the borough garage or park, the phone for the pool would remain under Verizon for the 911 services and the internet speed at the borough office would increase. After the 3-year contract expires, Mr. Gruber would once again negotiate pricing. Council will further discuss at the workshop meeting, as the deadline for the offer is December 22.

Mr. Gruber and Council discuss the 2024 No Nonsense Neutering contract, noting that 7 of the 10 vouches for 2023 have been used.

\*A motion is made by Ms. Kennedy-Kline to approve the No Nonsense Neutering contract for 2024 at a cost not to exceed \$250. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Junior Council Person's Report – Mr. Nabar**

President Kline suggests Mr. Nabar reach out to Pat Daly with Perry Township regarding the Know Your Local project.

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

### **Sewer – Mr. Wertz**

President Kline offers his assistance for the replacement of the new switches on the clarifiers.

### **Water – President Kline**

President Kline reports that Suburban Labs tested the water on November 7 at the water plant and New Era Logistics and that all requirements were met.

**Parks & Recreation – Ms. Kennedy-Kline**

\*A motion is made by Ms. Kennedy-Kline to approve the purchase of park signage for no skateboarding on the stage, benches, tables and playground equipment. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Kennedy-Kline discusses the purchase of a sound system for the park. President Kline reports that approximately \$750 for budgeted park repair expenses was not spent.

\*A motion is made by Ms. Kennedy-Kline to approve the purchase of an event sound system at a cost not to exceed \$350. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Kennedy-Kline reports that Christmas in the Park will take place on December 16, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., with 4 of the 6 time slots already being filled.

Ms. Kennedy-Kline notes that the Santa mailbox is out in front of the borough office and that if a response is requested, children should include a return envelope.

**Law/Planning/Zoning – Mr. Wertz** – nothing to report

**Employee Relations – President Kline**

Mr. Mohn should soon receive the results of his sewer plant operator’s exam. Mr. Methax is awaiting the results of his Category 24 pesticide exam.

**Approvals/Finance/Pension – Vice President Botwright**

\*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to approve the minutes for November 21, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Grim. Motion carried unanimously.

\*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to approve the bills payable for December 5, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously.

\*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to adopt the 2024 budget as published. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously.

\*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to adopt Ordinance 465-2023 setting the 2024 real estate tax rate at 7 mills. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously.

\*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to adopt Resolution 162-2023 setting the 2024 refuse rate at \$95/quarter. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously.

\*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to adopt Resolution 163-2023 setting the employee contributions for the non-uniform pension plan at 0%. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously.

\*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to advertise the 2024 meeting list. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Council discusses the August and November monthly meeting dates, deciding upon Tuesday, August 6 and Wednesday, November 6. Motion carried unanimously.

**Community Outreach – Ms. Randazzo**

Keystone Military Families is looking for volunteers for the food distribution event on Saturday, December 16.

**New Business**

**Public Comment**

**Jim Heckman (806 Main St.):** Asks why Council approved a fire code official on an as needed basis at a prior meeting. President Kline explains that the position would be utilized as a back-up in case Chief Wagner was unavailable. Chief Wagner discusses his working relationship with the borough code enforcement officer.

**Richard Geschwindt (603 Reber St.):** Asks how much the real estate tax increased, with President Kline noting .5 mills.

Mr. Geschwindt asks if the leaves on Reber St. will be picked up, with Mr. Gruber reporting that the leaves will be picked up as weather permits, and also notes that borough staff is currently down one employee. Mr. Gruber notes that signs will be posted and residents will be made aware of the day.

Mr. Geschwindt asks how much a copy of the zoning ordinance would be, with Ms. Wagner stating that she is unsure of the cost at this time.

**Mark Paine (25 Main St.):** Mr. Paine discusses Mr. Gruber's report regarding the phone systems. President Kline and Chief Wagner report that 911 services can obtain a close location for any calls made from a cell phone. Mr. Gruber would like the landline to remain at the borough pool for emergency services.

Mr. Paine asks if the heavy cracks at the south end of town could be addressed, with Mr. Gruber stating that crack sealing for the year is complete, but that there are plans for more sealing next year.

**Matt Tobias (9 W. Noble Ave.):** When he left the November 21 Council meeting, he was under the impression that the fire company would be receiving \$30,000 in addition to the .5 mill tax increase. He discusses the difficulty in fundraising and having a balanced work/home/fire company life.

President Kline and Chief Wagner discuss fire company fundraisers and the net income received. President Kline suggests the fire company look at other potential fundraisers or ways to promote them. Ms. Kennedy-Kline notes that the .5 mill increase would not eliminate the fire company's need to continue fundraising. Fundraising and volunteering are further discussed. David Rubright should be contacted for anyone wishing to volunteer at the fire company. Ms. Kennedy-Kline confirms that her accountant will reach out to Chief Wagner to potentially provide accounting assistance. President Kline locates the fire company's account's phone number and will contact him with any questions.

Ms. Randazzo feels that the last few minutes of discussion have been productive. Mr. Grim refers to Vice President Botwright's email noting that the borough's general fund is being drained and that while the tax base and percentage of calls does not support increasing the borough's contribution, a one-time donation could be considered if the fire company were to ask for a contribution for something specific.

**Jonathan Yeager (101 E. Noble Ave.):** Is present in support of the fire company and has been grateful for their assistance when needed in the past.

**Old Business** – nothing to report

A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Melissa Wagner - Secretary/Treasurer