

**CHAMBER OF BOROUGH COUNCIL
Shoemakersville Borough**

May 6, 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 7:03 p.m.

In attendance: Chris Kline – President, Amy Botwright – Vice President, Michael Grim, Tara Kennedy-Kline, Dana Randazzo, Dana Smith, Joseph Wertz, Jr., Dustin Remp – Mayor, David Kee – Engineer, Chip Haws – Solicitor, Paul Gruber – Borough Manager & Codes, Brandon Nabar – Junior Council Person, Gary Methax – Public Works Supervisor and Melissa Wagner – Secretary/Treasurer.

Code Enforcement – Mr. Gruber

- **Permits & Notices:** Notices were sent last month for high grass and weeds, with more letters to be prepared this week. Permits were issued to install a fence and for an emergency street repair.

Solicitor’s Report – Solicitor Haws

- **Hamburg Street Sweeper Agreement:** The agreement is ready to be signed. A copy of the borough’s certificate of insurance could be provided to Hamburg.

Engineer’s Report – Mr. Kee

- **LSA Grant for Borough Hall ADA Improvements:** The point file was received from the surveyor and the plans are being updated by ARRO. They continue to work on the grading. The 30% plan may be at 50% or more by the June monthly meeting.

Fire Chief’s Report Chief Wagner: There are no questions on the April call report. Vice President Botwright asks if a burn ban would be likely for the area, with Chief Wagner responding that he does not foresee a ban being put in place.

Secretary’s Report/Correspondence – Ms. Wagner

The borough office will be closed on May 21-23 & 26.

Mayor’s Report – Mayor Remp

Mayor Remp reviews the 85 PA State Police calls listed on the April report.

As there have been no new applications received for Hometown Heroes banners, **Vice President Botwright will review and post the information on social media.**

The Neighborhood Watch members walked around during the yard sale, with Mayor Remp compiling a list of 14 Hometown Heroes banners that need adjustments. The next Neighborhood Watch Program meeting will be on May 28 at 7:00 p.m. in the borough office.

Manager’s Report – Mr. Gruber

A letter was sent to Dustin Folk and F&C Industries regarding the need for a Stormwater Management Permit for work that was completed on their property at 398 Main St.

Mr. Gruber presents the road repair quotes from Folk Paving and Sloan Paving. Ms. Kennedy-Kline notes that Folk Paving is installing 5” of base, with Sloan Paving only installing 4” of base and asks if there is a borough ordinance that requires a specified base depth. **Mr. Gruber will review the ordinances.**

Mr. Gruber and Council discuss the quotes from R&R Auto Group and Kinley Auto Group for a new truck to replace the Ford with the lift gate. Mr. Wertz asks how many vehicles are available for use if the vehicle to be replaced becomes out of service, with Mr. Methax stating there are 4 trucks; 2 dump trucks, the Chevy utility body and the 2022 Ford. Mr. Gruber reports that staff has made as many in-house repairs to the current truck as possible and feels that a new truck is warranted. Prices have slightly increased over the last few months. As Council requests dealer information regarding financing, **Mr. Gruber will reach out to both groups to inquire about financing, as well as to possibly negotiate reduced truck pricing.** Solicitor Haws notes that the truck could be traded in or be sold on Municibid. Mr. Gruber reports that R&R Auto Group would take the truck as a trade-in but Kinley would not. Both vendors are through COSTARS.

Mr. Gruber reports that he and Mr. Mohn are working on templates to present at the monthly meetings that would show costs for chemicals, labor, energy, repairs, etc., for both water and sewer plant operations.

Mr. Gruber was asked to request Council’s consideration for employees to have the following federally observed holidays as paid time off: Martin Luther King Day, Juneteenth, Columbus Day, Veteran’s Day and Inauguration Day. President Kline provides a chart comparing the borough employees’ paid holidays to other municipalities. The committee will further review the chart & request and provide feedback.

Mr. Gruber discusses the employees’ concerns with the required additional overtime for the pre-season pool testing which needs to be completed. In addition to the weekend testing, staff also needs to test the pool at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Mr. Wertz asks how the preseason testing was previously handled, with Mr. Gruber and Mr. Methax stating that the testing was not completed by the road crew. Vice President Botwright reports that in the past, she volunteered to fill in with the testing when previous road crew members were unavailable. Mr. Methax amassed 10 hours of overtime this past weekend for the testing. As the pool is prepped one week earlier this season, additional testing has been needed. Ms. Kennedy-Kline suggests asking the pool managers to aid in the pre-season testing, in an effort to reduce labor costs. Vice President Botwright reports that one manager would not be available, but she will reach out to the second manager for his availability. Mr. Grim and President Kline discuss the operation of the proposed controller.

Mr. Gruber thanks Dustin Folk for taking care of the Little League field until July 4, 2025.

President Kline asks for an update on the Blankenbiller stormwater violation, with Mr. Gruber stating that Mr. Blankenbiller was given an extension and has contacted an engineer and lawyer for assistance.

Junior Council Person’s Report

President Kline completed a PSAB form that would recognize Mr. Nabar’s participation as being a JCP. He would like to take a photo of everyone after the meeting, to send to PSAB, along with the form. The photo would be featured in a future monthly PSAB publication. Mr. Nabar thanks Council and notes his time as a JCP has been a learning experience.

Property/Streets/Sanitation – Mr. Smith

Mr. Wertz confirms with Mr. Gruber and Mr. Methax that there have been no leaks with the repaired roof at the borough garage. He asks Mr. Methax for any immediate needs, with Mr. Methax citing a new truck as being critical. Mr. Methax notes that the abandoned side of the garage continues to leak.

Mr. Wertz notes of his concerns with the growing expenses related to the new truck, the garage repairs and the employees request for additional holiday pay. He and Mr. Smith discuss the next step for the garage being a review of the structural engineer’s report to possibly address the noted deficiencies.

Sewer – Mr. Wertz

Mr. Wertz and Vice President Botwright have been working on finance related issues, such as sewer and water rates, as well as completing the 2022 PTMA reconciliation. They will be spending additional hours next month to complete the 2023 PTMA reconciliation.

Water – President Kline

President Kline reports that Suburban Testing Labs tested the water on April 1 at the Kwik Shoppe and the sewer plant, with all requirements being met.

Ms. Randazzo discusses her experience with cloudy and discolored water on April 29, noting that neighbors and other residents had muddy water as well. She had reached out first to Mr. Wertz, then Mr. Gruber for guidance. Mr. Gruber discovered that the water at the office was dirty as well. He and Mr. Methax flushed several hydrants in the south end of town. Mr. Gruber does not know why the valve work that was completed at 5th & Pine Sts. earlier that day contributed to the water disruption or why only certain areas had the issue. Mr. Gruber describes an event with Well #6 that occurred earlier today, whereby at the water plant, the water from Well #6 immediately turned muddy with no warning. He shut down the well and drained the line from the plant to the well. He then closed that valve, opened another valve, then ran the pump to discharge to the back of the wellhouse. He further explains the process taken to clear the line. Mr. Mohn had informed Mr. Gruber that this occurred a number of years ago. Mr. Gruber agrees with Ms. Randazzo's suggestion then whenever there is work scheduled to take place within the water system, that a post be made on social media and the website, informing residents that they may experience a potential water disturbance due to the work. Mr. Smith explains his experience with the water in his home, noting that water disturbances have decreased over the last few years. President Kline and Ms. Kennedy-Kline feel that perhaps a plug broke or cracked, which could have caused the manganese and iron to mix with the water.

Mr. Gruber discusses a resident's concern of their high water bill. Mr. Methax went to the home and determined that the meter was reading 2.5 gallons for every 1 gallon that passed through. The resident stated that this has been an issue for several years. The most recent bill could be adjusted, as the meter was proved to be faulty, but it would be difficult to tell how prior bills were affected.

President Kline discusses the water meter replacement data from Mr. Gruber's report. Mr. Gruber reports that letters were hand-delivered to those residents with manual meters that have not yet scheduled an appointment to have them replaced. He asks for the next step with the residents that do not respond to the recently delivered notices, with President Kline stating that they would receive a shut-off notice for the non-compliance.

Parks & Recreation – Ms. Kennedy-Kline

Ms. Kennedy-Kline reports that the Children's Fair will be on Saturday, June 7 with the parade beginning at 10:00 a.m.

*A motion is made by Ms. Kennedy-Kline to approve the donation of bikes for Children's Fair at a cost not to exceed \$500. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Ms. Kennedy-Kline to approve the rental of 2 Port-a-Potties for Children's Fair at a cost not to exceed \$300. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. President Kline asks if the rental is needed, with Ms. Kennedy-Kline stating that the additional facilities are beneficial. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Ms. Kennedy-Kline to hire the 2025 pool and park staff at the rates noted on the presented list. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Mr. Grim asks why Mr. Foreman's pay rate increased, with Vice President Botwright reporting that last year he was hired to help out in the snack bar, but discovered that more of his presence is needed to better run the snack bar and assist the staff. Motion carried unanimously.

Council and Mr. Gruber discuss the controller quote from Main Line. Ms. Kennedy-Kline notes that the unit would save on chemical use and reduce labor costs.

*A motion is made by Ms. Kennedy-Kline to approve the Main Line quote for the BEC controller at a cost not to exceed \$4,131.94. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Mr. Wertz asks what makes this particular controller better than another, with Ms. Kennedy-Kline stating that the proposed unit has good Wi-Fi capabilities and Mr. Gruber noting that Main Line will install the controller and train staff on its operation. President Kline questions whether or not the \$1,250 service call cost is included in the quote, as the quote seems unclear. Council discusses the matter. The lead time for the controller is 3-4 weeks. Motion carried unanimously.

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

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 15, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to approve the bills payable for May 6, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to approve the Axiom Hydraulics Service Order quote of \$3,050 for repair to the effluent water filter pump at the water plant. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. President Kline asks for clarification on the work, with Mr. Gruber stating that the work is to clean out the motor and pump. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to approve the WG Malden quote of \$7,275.50 to replace a finished water meter at the water plant. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Mr. Gruber report that the labor cost may be less than what is quoted, as the price will be reduced if the borough provides the labor. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to approve and sign the Street Sweeper Agreement with Hamburg. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Vice President Botwright to approve the Exeter Supply quote of \$1,541.20 to replace the broken distribution line valve at 5th & Pine Sts. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice President Botwright and Mr. Wertz discuss the calculations they completed for adjusting water rates, submitting a summary sheet for reference. Utilizing overhead production costs, the average quarterly meter charge, including no usage, for each of the 607 water connections, should be \$138.82. The current charge is \$25. Mr. Wertz proposes a \$75 quarterly meter charge, including the first 3,000 gallons for residents and the first 5,000 gallons for commercial users. Commercial/industrial users would be defined as having 4 or more units per structure or would purely be a commercial building. Some of the lowest users will see an increase. The highest individual residential users will see a decrease. Commercial users will generally see an increase.

President Kline submits data showing how much water was used at borough owned facilities over the last few years. Council reviews the information, noting that internal billing would affect the PTMA reconciliation.

Vice President Botwright ask if a part-time crew member is needed for the upcoming season, with Mr. Methax stating that since Mr. Holbert was hired full-time, a part-time employee would not be needed.

Community Outreach – Ms. Randazzo

There was low turnout for the yard sale, as rain was anticipated. Ms. Randazzo suggests a fall yard sale. The matter will be reviewed at the May workshop, along with the idea of providing tables at the park during the sale. The table could be rented, with the fee being turned over to the Rec Board.

New Business

Public Comment

Richard Geschwindt (603 Reber St.): Asks if Well #6 needs to be replaced, with President Kline replying that there is no indication that the well should be replaced. Mr. Wertz states that the previous well driller performed an acid-based treatment to clean out the well and noted of a large fissure supplying water to the well.

Mr. Geschwindt requests an update on the strip mall, with President Kline reporting that no recent feedback has been received.

Mr. Geschwindt asks if Tractor Supply has fully complied, with Mr. Gruber reporting that they still need to supply the hydraulic calculations for the sprinkler system. They will not receive the certificate of occupancy until this is provided. Without the certificate, they are unable to rent or sell trailers.

Mark Paine (25 Main St.): Feels that the water rates discussed would affect seniors and those using the least amount of water. Mr. Wertz states that single residents would see the greatest increase. Vice President Botwright reports that 53 people would see a maximum increase of \$25-\$50 per quarter.

Mr. Paine asks if there is any documentation showing which staff members had previously completed the 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. pre-season pool testing in the past. Vice President Botwright would need to research the matter, noting that the records are only kept on file for 3 years.

Mr. Paine asks if Council members could project their voices when speaking, as it is often difficult to hear some of the discussion.

Mr. Paine commends Mr. Gruber for his work with the water system. He likes the idea of using the Code Red System to notify residents of potential water issues, as many community members do not use social media or the internet.

Mr. Paine asks if visitors would be able to comment during Council's discussion on the fire company donation, with President Kline replying that the matter will be explained later in the meeting.

Plans and wavier requests were received from Bogia Engineering for the addition at Bell Trucking. Mr. Kee reports that there is typically a 30-day review period before the hearing would take place, but that Council has 90 days from today to take action. The matter will be discussed at the June monthly meeting.

President Kline asks that Council read the letter from Hamburg Borough, requesting a donation to the Hamburg Library in 2026.

President Kline would like Council to affirm its position on the fire company contribution. This would solidify Council's intent regarding the \$30,000 donation. Vice President Botwright states the matter was already voted upon 3 times. Ms. Kennedy-Kline believes the millage increase would contribute towards the \$30,000 annual donation. Mr. Wertz does not see the benefit in the affirmation as Council unanimously adopted the budget, thereby setting the donation amount.

*A motion is made by Mr. Smith to affirm the Council position for the fire company contribution at \$30,000 as stated in the budget. Seconded by Vice President Botwright. Motion carried by a vote of 5 yes to 2 no, with Mr. Smith and President Kline voting no. Motion carried.

A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted - Melissa Wagner - Secretary/Treasurer