

**CHAMBER OF BOROUGH COUNCIL
Shoemakersville Borough**

November 8, 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 7:01 p.m.

In attendance: Amy Botwright – Vice President, Michael Grim, Dana Randazzo, Dana Smith, Tara Kennedy-Kline, Joseph Wertz, Jr., Dustin Remp – Mayor, David Kee – Engineer – leaves at 7:46 p.m., Keith Mooney – Solicitor – leaves at 7:27 p.m., Paul Gruber – Borough Manager & Codes, Gary Methax – Public Works Supervisor, Brandon Nabar – Junior Council Person, and Melissa Wagner – Secretary/Treasurer.

Absent from the meeting: Chris Kline - President

Code Enforcement – Mr. Gruber

- **Permits & Notices:** Most of the items on the report have been resolved. Two new notices were sent last month.

Solicitor’s Report – Solicitor Mooney

- **2024 Tax Ordinance:** Has reviewed the draft tax ordinance.
- **Zoning:** Has reviewed several zoning matters with the borough manager.
- **Sheetz:** No word has been received from Sheetz regarding the maintenance agreement.

Engineer’s Report – Mr. Kee

- **2023 Road Maintenance Project:** As the contractor has completed the punch list items, ARRO recommends final payment for the project.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to approve the payment of \$52,934.56 to Martin Paving. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Growing Greener Grant:** The work on the bioswale is complete. The contractor will revisit in the spring to reseed as needed and to address any E&S controls.
- **LSA Grant for Borough Hall ADA Improvements:** A resolution is required for the grant. The work includes ADA modifications to the borough office, at an estimated cost of \$238,780. There is no match for the grant. Council should designate who can sign the associated paperwork.

Fire Chief’s Report – Chief Wagner

Chief Wagner references his email regarding future funding for the fire company. He did not include the social club’s financials on the report, as the club is separate from the fire company. He discusses the importance of funding for the department. Ms. Kennedy-Kline and Vice President Botwright would like to have seen more detailed financial information with that initial paperwork.

Malcolm Smith, the fire company's accountant, is in attendance to submit and discuss a financial summary for the last 10 months of operations for the fire company. While the fire company does conduct fund drives, over the last 4 years the organization has been operating at a net loss of anywhere from \$92,000 - \$314,000 over that time.

Vice President Botwright states that the new financial information submitted is what she had initially requested, and will be reviewed and discussed by Council.

Mayor's Report – Mayor Remp

Mayor Remp reviews the September PA State Police Report, noting 78 incidents.

Mayor Remp thanks the volunteers that helped cross pedestrians during Trick-or-Treat. He thanks Mr. Gruber for use of the safety vests.

There are 9 Hometown Heroes banners to be hung.

The next Neighborhood Watch Program meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 18 at the borough office.

Secretary's Report/Correspondence – Ms. Wagner

The borough office will be closed from November 20-24, 2023.

Operator/Manager's Report - Mr. Gruber

Mr. Gruber asks Council to reach out to Mr. Mohn for good wishes, as he takes his sewer plant operator exam on November 14.

The pool and park have been winterized.

Junior Council Person's Report – Mr. Nabar

Mr. Nabar discusses his project Know Your Local, where he will be interviewing borough officials and employees. He has obtained a website domain for the project and has created 3 social media pages on which to post the podcasts/interviews, which he would also like to have on the borough's Facebook page and website. He feels this would bring an awareness and level of interest to the younger generation.

He would like to eventually branch out to cover all municipalities in the county, as he feels it is important for the public to understand what each job/duty entails. This could potentially increase the number of registered voters who participate in the elections.

Mr. Grim asks Mr. Nabar to explain his other duties with the borough, which includes data entry input for the ArcGIS, which is a tracking system for the borough's assets.

Property/Streets/Sanitation – Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith asks for further information regarding the LSA grant, with Ms. Kennedy-Kline reporting that the non-matching grant is for ADA repairs to the borough office location, so that the building can be approved as a polling location.

As there are funds left in the budget for roadwork, Mr. Wertz asked Mr. Gruber to obtain quotes for additional asphalt paving.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to approve the Folk Paving proposal of \$11,860 for the resurfacing of 279 sq yards on 7th St. Seconded by Ms. Kennedy-Kline. Motion carried unanimously.

Sewer – Mr. Wertz – nothing to report

Water – President Kline

Mr. Wertz reports that Suburban Labs tested the water at the sewer plant on October 3 and the Kwik Shoppe on October 10 and that all requirements were met.

Parks & Recreation – Ms. Kennedy-Kline – nothing to report

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 Mr. Wertz to approve the minutes for October 17, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Randazzo. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to approve the bills payable for November 8, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Randazzo. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to adopt Resolution 159-2023 adopting the updated Berks County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Seconded by Ms. Randazzo. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to adopt Resolution 160-2023 naming Klacik & Associates as auditor for the 2023 borough records. Seconded by Ms. Randazzo. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to adopt Resolution 161-2023 applying for the LSA grant prepared by ARRO and to authorize the Borough Manager and Council Vice President to be signatories. Seconded by Ms. Randazzo. Mr. Grim asks for the grant amount, with Vice President Botwright reporting \$238,780 with no match. Mr. Kee notes of the breakdown of costs in the engineer's report. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to advertise the 2024 budget. Seconded by Ms. Randazzo. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to authorize the finance committee to prepare an investment strategy and to open accounts subject to final approval by Council. Seconded by Ms. Randazzo. Mr. Smith asks for further information, with Mr. Wertz reporting that the current interest rate on the accounts is 1.5%. The borough could receive 5% or more if the funds were being invested. Motion carried unanimously.

*A motion is made by Mr. Wertz to approve Vincent J. Di Martini, with ARRO Consulting, as the assistant code enforcement officer and designated fire code official, on a per hour, as needed basis. Seconded by Ms. Randazzo. As Chief Wagner has concerns on the motion, Vice President Botwright tables the motion.

Chief Wagner asks why the fire code official approval is being made, as he feels the borough should first adopt a fire code, NFPA 1, before anything could be enforced. Mr. Wertz notes that a property maintenance code is in place and that his understanding is that the position can be assigned.

The two discuss the position and what may be required of such. Ms. Kennedy-Kline notes that tax payer funds are not initially being spent, as this is on an as needed basis.

*Vice President Botwright brings the previous motion back to the table. Second still stands. Motion carried by a vote of 5 yes to 1 no, with Mr. Smith voting opposed.

Community Outreach – Ms. Randazzo

The winter newsletters have been printed and mailed. Ms. Randazzo discusses options for advertisers.

New Business

Public Comment

Mark Paine (25 Main St.): Requests a copy of the 2024 budget. Copies will be available for inspection at the borough office later in the week.

Mr. Paine references the engineer's report noting that the 2023 road project is complete. He asks why the intersection at E. Noble Ave. and Main St. was not addressed. Vice President Botwright reports that the area in questions is owned by PennDOT and is a part of their project list.

Gary Billman (730 Main St.): The motorcycle group on Main St. had cones in the street and motorcycles parked far out into the roadway at their recent event, which made traffic difficult to safely pass by. He was almost hit. Mr. Gruber will speak with the group.

Richard Geschwindt (603 Reber St.): Asks for information regarding the Sheetz matter discussed earlier in the meeting. Mr. Gruber reports that Sheetz is requesting the return of their letters of credit, but that they still have not completed some necessary project paperwork. The paperwork is to be given to the borough before the letters will be returned.

Mr. Geschwindt asks how long yard waste pickup will continue, with Ms. Wagner noting that the last day of pick up is November 30, with the service starting back up in April.

Mr. Geschwindt would like to confirm the hydrant flushing dates, which are November 13-15.

Thomas Walters Jr. (216 7th St.): Asks Council to consider a fire tax. Vice President Botwright notes that a .5 mill tax increase is part of the budget plan.

Old Business – nothing to report

A motion is made by Mr. Smith to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Wertz. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Melissa Wagner - Secretary/Treasurer