

## **Council Meeting**

**June 22, 2009 – 7:30 p.m.**

The Somerset Borough Council meeting was held this date, called to order by President Mary Ann Smith. Meeting opened with recitation of the Pledge to the Flag.

### **Present:**

Mary Ann Smith, President, Paul Urbain, Hank Parke, Ruby Miller, Fred Rosemeyer, Council Members. Michele Enos, Assistant to the Borough Manager; Brett Peters, Director of Finance; George Svirsko, Director of Public Works; Tom Reilly, Consulting Engineer; Randy Cox, Chief of Police; William Meyer, Mayor. (Sign-in sheet on file)

### **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Mr. Rosemeyer moved to approve the minutes of the previous Council Meeting of May 26, 2009 – motion seconded by Mr. Parke.

Unanimously Carried.

### **General Public Comments**

Gary Thomas, Somerset Fire Chief, said they are concerned about the condition of the siren on Harrison Avenue. They want to use it for emergencies, and it would be heard throughout most of Somerset. They questioned whether a Homeland Security grant might be available for the siren, and expressed concern that it be in good working order in case of need. He will discuss this with the Manager.

He updated Council on work being done on the council room at the Safety Building. They discussed the interior door, bidding (no response was received), and window coverings. One roll of covering installed was of poor quality, and they are now in the process of searching for a professional grade film with UV ray protection.

Nancy Bittner, representing residents of Clover Hill Road, said they are requesting to have a 25-mph speed limit placed on Clover Hill Road. They have noticed excessive speeding. Chief Cox said he examined the area and three signs are posted, but not in compliance with PennDOT regulations. He explained that under the Vehicle Code, the Borough has the right to post this sign without a PennDOT traffic study since it is not a State highway. The Borough can post 25, 35 or 55-mph signs but he recommends 25-mph since the code also allows for a 10-mph grace. This should be given to the Solicitor so that the zone established by the signs is covered by ordinance or resolution.

Mr. Parke moved to approve their request and refer it to Solicitor Dirienzo – Mr. Rosemeyer seconded. At this point Mr. Cox suggested that since it is a residential

area with no sidewalks, it has all classics of warranting a 25-mph zone, and recommended including Forrest Avenue and McKinley Drive. In this way all of the intersecting streets are the same speed.

Mr. Park moved to include Clover Hill Road, McKinley Drive, and Forrest Avenue in his motion - Mr. Rosemeyer seconded the motion.

Unanimously Carried.

Mrs. Miller stated that Colby Avenue is not posted and that traffic is using this road to reach Route 31, with too much speeding. Mr. Cox said he would like to make every residential street in the Borough that is not a State highway, 25-mph, though it would become expensive to do all at once. A schedule could be set up.

Mr. Park then amended his motion to authorize the Solicitor to prepare an ordinance designating Forrest Avenue, Clover Hill Road, McKinley Drive and Colby Avenue, 25-mph speed limit.

Unanimously Carried.

**Communications** (None)

### **Payment of Bills**

Mr. Parke moved, Mrs. Miller seconded to approve payment of the following bills as printed:

Check Nos. 13596 to 13744  
Total Amounts: \$614,871.06

Vote: Mr. Parke, yes; Mrs. Miller, yes; Mr. Rosemeyer, yes; Mr. Urbain, yes, Mrs. Smith, yes.

Unanimously Carried.

**Old Business** (None)

### **New Business**

Council received a request to install a stop sign at the intersection of Patton Street and Grandview Avenue. Mr. Cox said he has not monitored traffic flow at this location but is leaning against recommending this request because there is no history of any accidents occurring here. This item was tabled until next meeting.

The Turnpike Commission is requesting to name two new streets to be constructed near the toll booths. County 911 suggests having Laurel Crest Extension become "Toll Gate Road" and the Turnpike Access Waterworks Connector become

“Wetland Way”. Mrs. Smith explained that we have to eventually adopt these roads by ordinance and they need to be named, for business purposes and mapping, etc.

Mr. Rosemeyer moved to name the former Laurel Crest Extension “Toll Gate Road” – motion seconded by Mr. Urbain.

Unanimously Carried.

Mr. Park moved to name the Waterworks Connector “Marsh Road” – to be approved by County 911. Motion seconded by Mrs. Miller.

Carried.

(Mr. Rosemeyer opposed)

The President said we need to authorize the Solicitor to prepare a draft ordinance on vacant properties for Council’s consideration. They discussed the problems of vacant properties and a committee was selected to deliver input from Council.

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mr. Parke seconded that Council form a committee (Mr. Rosemeyer, Mr. Parke, with Mrs. Miller and Mr. Urbain as alternates) to decide what should be incorporated into the vacant property ordinance.

Unanimously Carried.

Mr. Urbain reported that the Finance Committee is considering establishing a meal restaurant policy for employees and members of Council. A previous policy was for employees only; this would include Council. The Finance Committee will brief Council on this matter and have the Manager prepare a policy for Council’s consideration.

Mr. Parke moved to authorize the Manager to prepare a meal allowance policy for employees and council members, considering Mr. Rosemeyer's comments based on input from State and County Policies. Mrs. Miller seconded the motion.

Unanimously Carried.

The following letter was received from the Director of the Chamber of Commerce:

*Dear Somerset Borough Council Members:*

*I would like to extend a special thanks to you, Ben and George and the crew at the Borough shed for their efforts in assisting us on our project. They have always helped us when the SCI crew comes to our building to clean up and landscape for us.*

*They have graciously provided tools, hauled away trimmings and weeds. We generally arrange this well in advance; however we were taken by surprise when the crews showed up last week without letting us*

*know in advance. I was on an education tour at the County and couldn't get back to the office quickly, so I called Ben and explained the situation. His response was "so I guess you need the stuff picked up quickly" and with that, he contacted George and his crew reacted immediately and delivered the tools. It simply took the stress out of a stressful situation and for that I want to publicly thank them.*

*The relationship with you and the Chamber and Borough is fantastic and I couldn't ask for a better partnership. The simple gesture in providing tools was an amazing help to us and goes a long way in keeping Somerset the great place that it is.*

*a The communication and interaction between our organizations goes even further in keeping our County great place to live, work and visit. Than you for all that you do.*

## **Committee, Administration, Special Reports**

### **Engineer's Report**

Mr. Reilly said the Redevelopment Authority of Somerset County will be starting the Columbia Avenue Relief Sewer Project within the next couple of weeks to address I/I issues in this area. This is a significant project and will cause some disruption. The Borough will receive bids on the Hickory Hill sewers on July 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Public Works Committee**

They discussed the Columbia Avenue Project and what effects it might have concerning access to properties, fire department, and if another street would have to be used.

### **Public Safety Committee**

Mr. Rosemeyer thanked the Chief of Police and staff for their hospitality at the local Emergency Planning Committee meeting held at the police station. Chief Cox asked to remove Officer Snyder from the part-time police roster.

Mr. Parke moved to remove Officer Chad Snyder from the Borough's part-time police roster - motion seconded by Mr. Rosemeyer.

Unanimously Carried.

Chief Cox reported that Officer Dave Deist has received a commendation from the Aggressive Driving Enforcement Project for his work in traffic safety. He is mainly responsible for being designated as a host for a \$4,000 speed-monitoring device. A brief ceremony will be held, possibly next month.

Mr. Rosemeyer inquired about the playground signs. Discussion ensued, concerning painting of a crosswalk, and benefits of the present stop signs. Mr. Cox said he will research PennDOT regulations. He suggested placing a 3-way stop sign to replace the existing stop signs, which are not backed by an ordinance. This would slow traffic both ways at Union Street. Mrs. Miller pointed out that the stop signs are covered at night and the playground is still in use after dark. Mrs. Smith said the

cones have been authorized. The stop signs would require an ordinance, subject to public advertising.

**Finance Committee**

Mr. Urbain reported that the Budget is in line, with 42% spent to date.

**Shade Tree Committee**

Mr. Parke reported that a meeting is scheduled to handle individual requests as they arrive, and they are attempting to move forward on doing a tree survey.

**Somerset Inc.**

Mr. Parke informed Council of the weekend event being held in Somerset, Rockin' in the Ridge, is an attempt to combine some of the people from the huge Johnstown event. They are looking for volunteers.

**Mayor's Report**

Mayor Meyer reported that they are having a difficult time have meetings for Public Safety due to a lack of attendance. Mrs. Smith said she will consult with the Manager concerning a replacement on the Public Safety Committee. They are trying to have the meeting every other month.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Urbain moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Parke.

Unanimously Carried.  
8:20 p.m.

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Benedict G. Vinzani, Jr., Ph.D.  
Borough Manager