

Somerset Borough Council Meeting
January 25, 2010 – 7:30 p.m.

The Somerset Borough Council Meeting was called to order by Ruby Miller, President.

Present: Ruby Miller, Frank Koval, Fred Rosemeyer, Wanda Miller, Scott Walker, William Meyer, Mayor; Ben Vinzani Jr., Borough Manager; Michele Enos, Assistant to the Manager; Brett Peters, Director of Finance; George Svirsko, Director of Public Works; Randy Cox, Chief of Police; and John Dirienzo, Borough Solicitor. (Sign-in sheet is on file.)

Meeting opened with recitation of the Pledge to the Flag.

Previous Meeting

Mr. Koval moved to approve minutes of the previous Council meeting of December 21, 2009, noting a correction under “public works committee” which should read “public safety committee” – seconded by Mrs. Wanda Miller. Motion Unanimously Carried.

Mr. Koval moved to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2010 Organizational Meeting, seconded by Mr. Rosemeyer. Motion Unanimously Carried.

General Public Comments

(a) Residents of Ankeny Avenue

Photos were presented by Mary Raymond, explaining that they have a problem with the way that their road is being plowed. She said it is causing the road to become narrower and needs to be plowed closer to the curb. Mr. Vinzani said he could send a survey to all residents on the block, asking their opinion and giving them options. Ms. Raymond said most indicated they prefer to stay on one side of the street so that the driver can exit the vehicle. She said there are concerns regarding ambulance and fire department access. Those with off-street parking would not be affected. They discussed signs – cars are parking up to the intersection causing obstruction for motorists. The sign concerning no parking near corners was removed. Mrs. R. Miller thanked the residents for their comments and said these items will be addressed in the survey for Council’s action.

(b) Jerry Lyons, Somerset Fire Department

Mr. Lyons reported that they had a demanding day, with seven alarms, four for flooded basements. He mentioned the need to address the door at end of the fire hall. The frame is defective and sometimes will not completely close, causing the hall to be unsecured overnight. The department has voted to place a card reader system on this door but it must be repaired first. He reported that the new fire truck should arrive in February, 2010.

Administrative Business

(a) Communications – (none)

(b) Bill payment

Mr. Koval moved to pay the following bills as printed, seconded by Mr. Walker:

Check Nos. 14818 to 14986 Total: \$395,068.94

Vote: Mrs. W. Miller, yes; Mr. Koval, yes; Mrs. R. Miller, yes; Mr. Rosemeyer, yes; Mr. Walker, yes. Motion Unanimously Carried.

Old Business

Mr. Vinzani said the School District sent the following in response to our letter: *“Please be advised that at the January 11, 2010 regular meeting, the Somerset Area School District Board of Directors passed a motion instructing the administration to inform you that the District has no interest in pursuing a request to PennDOT to create a School Zone on South Franklin Avenue.”* Mr. Vinzani said part of PennDOT’s criteria was to have the School District fill out a form for us to submit, and indicate that they have no interest in pursuing this. Mrs. R. Miller asked if we still do the crosswalks – he replied we painted the crosswalks but they need to be repainted, a separate issue from creating the School Zone.

New Business

(a) Proclamation

Mr. Rosemeyer said we are presenting the following Proclamation to the Guild of American Papercutters National Museum:

WHEREAS, the 20th day of March, 2010 will mark the grand opening of the Guild of American Papercutters National Museum in Somerset, Pennsylvania, and;

WHEREAS, the establishment of its National Museum is in partnership with Laurel Arts at the home of the Phillip Dressler Center for Arts in Somerset, and;

WHEREAS, this American Museum is devoted to the art form of papercutting, which is an ancient art dating from the 5th Century in China, spreading for centuries and adapting culturally throughout the world, and;

WHEREAS, recognizing the Museum’s value as an art attraction and as an educational destination for Somerset County residents and tourists, we hereby extend our sincerest wishes for success.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Ruby W. Miller, along with the Mayor and members of Somerset Borough Council, do hereby welcome you by proclaiming January 25, 2010 to be “The Guild of American Papercutters” day in the Borough of Somerset.

The Proclamation was signed by Borough Council President, expressing their thanks for bringing this to Somerset. All were encouraged to visit the gallery works in hopes of having the arts become a valued resource.

(b) Speed Limit Ordinance

Mr. Vinzani said the Speed Limit Ordinance has been prepared for adoption for the Brierwood/Hickory Hill areas. Chief Cox said he prefers to not see citations issued for the first day, but would rather have patrols present and issue a warning to violators until residents become accustomed to the speed limit signs. The flashing solar powered signs will be installed and the ordinance will be signed tonight, effective immediately upon its enactment.

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mr. Walker seconded to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO. 1337

AN ORDINANCE OF SOMERSET BOROUGH ESTABLISHING A SPEED LIMIT OF TWENTY-FIVE (25) MILES PER HOUR FOR MOTOR VEHICLES ON CERTAIN ROADWAYS WITHIN SOMERSET BOROUGH.

Motion Unanimously Carried.

(c) Pension Ordinance Amendments

Mrs. W. Miller moved, Mr. Rosemeyer seconded to adopt the following Ordinance:

ORDINANCE NO. 1338

AMENDMENT TO THE SOMERSET BOROUGH GENERAL BOROUGH EMPLOYEES PENSION PLAN

Motion Unanimously Carried.

(d) Resolution - Purging

Mr. Vinzani said this Resolution is done as often as necessary, in accordance with the Commonwealth's Record Retention Act.

Mr. Koval moved, Mrs. W. Miller seconded to adopt the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION NO. 2010-03

Whereas, the Borough of Somerset adopted Resolution No. 87-02 on April 27, 1987 providing for the destruction of certain papers in accordance with the Retention and Disposition Schedule for Records of Pennsylvania Municipalities and;

WHEREAS, The Somerset Borough Administration wishes to dispose of some of its records in accordance with this Resolution;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the following items be authorized for purging:

2002 Billing Register Journal (Water/Sewer Office)
2002 Postal Mailing Form for Water/Sewer Bills, Form #3602

2002 Water Office Correspondence
2002 Receipt Books
2002 Municipal Lien Letters
2002 Water/Sewer Work Orders
2002 Water Leak Letters.
2002 Somerset Township Miscellaneous Quarterly Accruals
2002 Swimming Pool Adjustments
2002 Complaints
2002 Owner/Renter Final Sheets
2002 Month End Reports
2002 Annual Water Report Paperwork
2002 Meter Pit Readings
2002 Accident Reports (Police Dept.)
2005 Impound Forms
2000 Stolen Vehicle Forms
2001 and 2002 Property Release Forms
2004 and 2005 Abandoned Vehicle Notification Letters
2008 Abuse Petitions
1999 Trespass Letters
2004 Letters In/Out
2003, 2004, 2005 Warning/Repair Forms
2005 Parade Permits
2003 Vehicle Calibrations
2005 Borough Permits
2008 Records of Deposit and Receipts (Parking Meter Attendant)
2008 Paid Parking Tickets
2008 Paid Parking Permit Applications
2008 Receipts Ledger for Parking Tickets and Permit Parking (Residential)
2008 License Information from Harrisburg (diskettes and copies)

Motion Unanimously Carried.

(e) PennDOT Right-of-Way Acquisition

Mr. Vinzani said the Authority and Council has been approached by PennDOT asking to acquire property or right-of-way in Jefferson Township for a bridge project. The offer is \$1,200 for .16 acres of right-of-way, and .04 acres of temporary easement owned by the Borough. Our Municipal Authority acted to accept PennDOT's offer for their property and we need to consider the same for the property that is in the Borough's name. The property borders a creek and he said he feels that there should be no adverse conditions created by their taking of this property.

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mr. Koval seconded to approve PennDOT's request for a right-of-way in conjunction with a bridge replacement project along Duck Pond Road in Jefferson Township. Motion Unanimously Carried.

(f) Meal Allowance Policy

Mr. Koval moved to raise the meal allowance policy from \$30.00 to \$50.00 per day. Mr. Rosemeyer recommended keeping the policy as is for this year. Mrs. W. Miller said the state's policies fluctuate, depending upon the various counties. We can ask the PSAB for a list of prices

on different communities. The policy applies to all employees attending conferences, etc. Mr. Koval withdrew his motion, to allow for more research until next meeting, along with a cost analysis from Mr. Peters.

Committee Reports

A request was made for a proclamation honoring the Boy Scouts' 100th Anniversary Celebration to be held at the Court House on February 8, 2010.

Manager's Report

Mr. Vinzani said he and the Director of Public Works contacted residents having problems with basement storm water flooding. We received notice that the Borough is the recipient of a \$32,500.00 grant from the Department of Environmental Protection for clearance improvements along Coxes Creek.

President's Report

Mrs. R. Miller mentioned that she is pleased to see that the Police Chief's year-end report was published in the January 21st newspaper. We are attending the Chamber's classes concerning electricity pools.

Public Works Department

Mr. Walker said they are preparing a list of equipment needed, for Council's consideration at next meeting.

Public Safety Committee

Mr. Cox said they spoke about a master system for uniforms. He explained that the officers are responsible for acquiring replacements for their uniforms after their first year of service. There can be a lack of uniformity because of the different manufacturers. They brought in a uniform vendor, and he can require that officers buy a certain model of shirt or trousers. The officers can place their orders through their department, avoiding having to pay tax on the taxable items. The officers will pay using their allowance and this will restore uniformity to their appearance.

Another issue is Somerset Hospital requested assistance for having an officer starting after February 19th from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. The hospital pays for this. He said they are considering asking for another part-time officer, and will make it official after they receive more details.

Mr. Meyer said the Chief has come up with what is called a "STOP" grant, for an officer in charge of women's' abuse cases. This grant has \$32,000.00 a year for the next three years to

cover cost of this officer. He explained that they would assign a veteran to this position but would have to replace him with another officer. Mr. Cox said they are increasing the number of shifts per week and need another officer to cover the shifts but are not increasing the budget – shift increase would be covered from external income sources.

A motion was offered by Mr. Rosemeyer, seconded by Mr. Koval to approve a conditional hiring of a part time officer. Motion Unanimously Carried.

Chief Cox mentioned that adding an officer will cut down on overtime. He explained that this is a federal grant from PCCD, the STOP grant for reducing domestic violence against women. The position will be called a “domestic violence liaison officer”. The officer will participate with the Women’s Help Center, the DA’s Office and Probation Office, partners in this grant also adding positions. The officer would monitor domestic violence prosecutions, see that actions of other departments adhere to the policy and act as a review officer with county-wide jurisdiction.

In March we will be having the accreditation for our Police Department. The MOC went well – the assessment team came up with 33 recommendations to modify our files. From the 1,100 police departments in Pennsylvania there are less than 100 accredited. We are looking forward to March, and accreditation will be quite a distinction.

Finance Committee

Mr. Peters presented the year-to-date financials through the end of 2009. All funds are on track. Mr. Cox stated that the assessors were impressed with the Borough’s operation.

Somerset, Inc.

Mr. Cox addressed parking during special events. He issues special orders with instructions for the officers, and said he would like to encourage the officers to focus on illegal parking rather than timed parking during these events. He emphasized that he would not supersede any Council action established by ordinance, but would like Council to consider events that happened through the year. Mr. Dirienzo said if an event requires Council’s approval for use of the uptown, perhaps a request by Council should focus more on fire hydrants, etc. rather than metered parking; however it would have to be a large event.

Solicitor’s Report

It appears that Jefferson has decided to make its water deal with the County and is not interested in completing the deal with Somerset Borough. They discussed costs, piping, and our time spent attempting to make a workable arrangement.

Mayor's Report

Mr. Meyer mentioned the MOCK assessment stating that the law enforcement people stopped into his office to say how impressed they were with our Police Department's Facility.

Adjournment

Mr. Koval moved to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. W. Miller. Motion Unanimously Carried
- 8:26 p.m.

Benedict G. Vinzani Jr., Ph.D.
Somerset Borough Manager/Secretary