

## **SOMERSET BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING**

**December 16, 2013 – 7:00 p.m.**

Meeting of the Somerset Borough Council was called to order by Mrs. Ruby Miller, President, opening with recitation of the Pledge to the Flag.

### **Present:**

Present were Ruby Miller; Frank Koval; Judy Pyle; Wanda Miller; Scott Walker; and Pam Ream, Council Members, and William Meyer, Mayor.

Benedict G. Vinzani, Jr., Borough Manager; Michele Enos, Assistant to the Manager; Brett Peters, Director of Finance; George Svirsko, Director of Public Works; Tom Reilly, Consulting Engineer; John J. Dirienzo, Jr., Borough Solicitor; and Randy Cox, Chief of Police;

Mr. Vinzani recognized outgoing Council Members and the incoming Mayor, Scott Walker. Certificates of Appreciation for their years of service were presented to the following: Frank Koval; Wanda Miller; William Meyer and former member of Borough Council Paul Urbain.

President Miller thanked them for their dedication to the Borough of Somerset.

### **Swearing-in – Christina Hemminger**

The Mayor proceeded to “swear-in” part-time police officer Christina Hemminger.

### **Approval of Council Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Walker moved; Mr. Koval seconded to approve minutes of the November 25, 2013 Council Meeting.

Unanimously Carried.

### **General Public Comments**

Jerry Lyons, Somerset Fire Department, reported the following alarms answered during the past calendar year: 53 automatic alarms (34 traffic-related); 15 Haz-Mat incidents; 12 public service; 7 ambulance and police assists; 5 rescues.

Our current Fire Chief, Jim Clark, is leaving at end of the year, and Election of Officers is scheduled for next week.

**Payment of Bills**

Mr. Koval moved; Mrs. Pyle seconded to pay the following bills:

Check Numbers 23032 to 23148      Total Amount: \$257,442.92

Unanimously Carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Tax Rate Ordinance**

Mr. Walker moved; Mrs. Ream seconded, to adopt the Tax Rate Ordinance for year 2014:

- General Purposes: 13.79 mills
- Biesecker Public Library: .666 mills
- Somerset Fire Department: .444 mills
- Total: 14.9 mills

Unanimously Carried.

**Act 511 Taxes**

- Earned Income Tax: ½%
- Real Estate Transfer Tax: ½%
- Local Services Tax: \$47.00
- Mercantile/Business privilege Tax: ½ mill

**Motion**

Mrs. Pyle moved; Ms. Miller seconded to re-enact the Act 511 taxes for year 2014, at current rates.

Unanimously Carried.

**Year 2014 Final Budgets**

Mr. Walker moved; Mr. Koval seconded to adopt the final General, Water, Sewer and various accounts Budgets for year 2014, with no increase in Real Estate Tax or water /sewer rates.

Unanimously Carried.

## **Berlin Borough Request**

Concerning Berlin Borough's request for us to provide building inspection services, Mr. Vinzani said he would like to present certain facts to Council before any action is taken. Mrs. Ruby Miller added that there are also other issues that need to be researched.

### **Motion**

Mrs. Pyle moved to have Manager Vinzani obtain additional information on this issue – motion seconded by Mr. Koval.

Unanimously Carried.

## **Appointments to Boards/Commissions**

Motions for re-appointment of persons whose terms are expiring on Somerset Borough's various Boards and Commissions:

Moved by Ms. Miller to re-appoint William Kuhlman to a 5-year term with the Municipal Authority of the Borough of Somerset – seconded by Mrs. Pyle.

Unanimously Carried.

Moved by Mr. Walker to re-appoint William Lehman and Ted Deskevich to 4-year terms each on the Somerset Borough Planning Commission – motion seconded by Mr. Koval.

Unanimously Carried.

Moved by Mrs. Ream to re-appoint Timothy Resh and David Halverson to 3-year terms on the Zoning Hearing Board – motion seconded by Mrs. Pyle.

Unanimously Carried.

Mr. Walker moved to re-appoint Samuel Saylor to a 6-year term with the Civil Service Commission – motion seconded by Ms. Miller.

Unanimously Carried.

Ms. Miller moved to re-appoint Delmas Hutzel to a 1-year term on the Somerset Borough Vacancy Board – motion seconded by Mrs. Pyle.

Unanimously Carried.

### **Manager's Report**

Mr. Vinzani presented the following:

The Redevelopment Authority administers our year 2014 CDBG monies, and we will be applying for new monies. Project suggestions must be submitted to them in January. They are required to benefit low-to-moderate income persons. We have been concentrating on code enforcements, dilapidated buildings, and sanitary sewer improvements.

The Drought Task Force met last week – all water supplies are adequate.

I attended the Daily American Open House last week.

Certification of newly/re-elected members of Council will be mailed by the Office of Voter Registration, along with an affidavit-of-residency form, which will need to be notarized.

The Organizational Meeting Memo will be distributed, containing meeting procedures. Mayor Walker will preside.

### **President's Report**

President Miller offered Best Wishes to Mayor Walker; to Mayor Meyer on his retirement, and welcomed incoming Council Members.

### **Engineer's Report**

Mr. Reilly reported that the PA DEP final inspection for the Industrial Park waterline and water tank went well.

The water tank's final bacterial sample was pulled today. If results are satisfactory we can place the tank on line next week.

## **Public Works/Equipment Committee**

Mr. Walker reported:

The Public Works Department worked with the Department of Corrections for snow removal, in town and at the Turnpike Interchange area.

They cleaned areas around the Hickory Hill water tanks and the Union Street playground, and washed walls at the Public Works garage.

They started winter waterline break repairs; repaired catch basins around Water Works Road, paved around a catch basin on Fuller Street and disconnected water/sewer service from properties demolished around South Center Avenue.

They used 700 gallons of salt brine to pre-treat roads; 300 tons of salt and 75 tons of anti-skid so far this winter.

## **Finance Committee**

Mr. Peters provided the following report of Borough finances through November, or 92 % of the year completed:

### **General Fund:**

Revenues: 102.09%

Expenses: 92.80%

### **Water Fund:**

Revenues: 137% including Penn Vest funds (97.29% excluding Penn Vest funds)

Expenses: 137% including Penn Vest funds (92.68% excluding Penn Vest expenditures)

### **Sewer Fund:**

Revenues: 88.41%

Expenses: 90.71%

## **Somerset Inc. Representative**

Mrs. Pyle informed Council that Somerset Inc. received a \$45,000 matching funds grant, which will be used towards Trinity Park.

The Somerset Office Supply building was bought, with plans to include small businesses.

There are no plans yet for the bank building that was sold near the hospital; it may be for rental.

Concerning the huge empty lot on East Main Street, she said they considered placing a second First Peoples Bank branch office there.

The Fire & Ice information will be distributed. It was mentioned that the Borough has traditionally offered free parking during this festival.

Following discussion, Mrs. Pyle moved to offer free metered parking during the Fire & Ice Festival, held January 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> – motion seconded by Mr. Walker.

Unanimously Carried.

### **Solicitor's Report**

Mr. Dirienzo offered congratulations and thanks to those retiring and to those coming on board.

Ms. Miller informed all that she is taking a Civil Service job, and expressed her appreciation to Council for their input during her 17 years as a member.

Mr. Urbain said he enjoyed his 15 years on Council and mentions that Somerset Borough has great Administration and Police Department.

Mr. Meyer expressed his thanks for all support that he received during his 16 years as Mayor.

### **Adjournment**

Wanda Miller moved to adjourn, motion seconded by Judy Pyle.

Unanimously Carried, 7:38 p.m.

---

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