

**Borough of Somerset Committee of the Whole**  
**February 13, 2017 5:00 p.m.**

Meeting was called to order by President Ruby Miller, opening with recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**Roll Call:**

Council Members: Ruby Miller; Fred Rosemeyer; Judy Pyle; Pam Ream; Sue Opp; Steve Shaulis; Gary Thomas; and Mayor Scott Walker.

Also present were the following: Borough Manager, Michele Enos; Director of Finance, Brett Peters; and Chief of Police Randy Cox.

**Announcements:**

- (a) An executive session was held at 5:00 p.m. this evening to discuss personnel issues and matters of collective bargaining.

**Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:**

- (a) None

**General Public Comments:**

- (a) No public is present.

**Policy Agenda:**

**Old Business:**

- (a) None

**New Business:**

- (a) Year to Date Financial Report – Reporting the month of January 2017 for all funds.

Mr. Peters discussed the Year to Date Financial Statements for all funds through January 2017. He mentioned, at this point, we're through 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the year. The following Funds Revenues and Expenditures are based on the month of January 2017:

General Fund: Revenues – 3.3% Expenses – 9.34%

Water Revenue Fund: Revenues – 9.47 % Expenses – 8.90%

Sewer System Operating Fund: Revenues – 8.32% Expenses – 5.53%

Mr. Peters then discussed the format of the 2-Year Financial Statements given to all present in attendance. Questions and answers about the budget were discussed.

(b) Request for Donations:

1. Somerset County Humane Society
2. Daily American 10K – 5K Fitness Challenge
3. Camp Cadet of Somerset County

Mr. Peters mentioned the packets he provided to all in attendance, gave a re-cap of what went through the Civic Affairs account, which is typically where donations go through. Literature was also provided that came with the PSAB Budget Preparation. It provides information on what is allowed, and not allowed, from a donation standpoint, per the Pennsylvania Borough Code.

Discussions were held regarding donations that were given in the past, and what will be considered in this year's budget. The Council will discuss and vote on the organizations they choose to contribute to at the next Council Meeting.

(c) Request Form Submitted by Council Member Shaulis:

1. *Where do we stand on winter expenses for Public Works?*

Mr. Peters reviewed the Financial Statements regarding the winter expenses and discussed how it's apportioned for the various winter expenses. For the whole year, it is budgeted at \$145,000.00.

2. *How are we on operators for Public Works?*

Ms. Enos explained that one employee, who was a small truck driver, retired. Also one employee, who is an operator, has been off on FMLA. It's a possibility he will also be retiring soon.

3. *Can anything be done about the stone at the intersection of Autumn Drive and Felgar Road?*

Ms. Enos explained that more research needs to be done on this. Discussions will be held on this, after the research is done, at the next Committee Meeting.

4. *Can we create an additional handicap parking space at the Public Safety Building (front semi-circle)?*

Discussions and suggestions were held on how to make this possible. Ms. Enos mentioned that certain requirements under the ADA were needed to put handicap spaces in. She suggested discussing this with the Engineers to see what viable place they would suggest could be added as an additional handicapped space, based on the requirements. This will be kept on the Agenda for the next Committee Meeting. Ms. Enos stated that she will bring the information from the Engineers back to Council then.

(d) Request Form Submitted by Council Member Thomas:

1. *New Christmas Decorations – Discussion.*

Mr. Thomas voiced his concern on how the Uptown Christmas Decorations are 15-20 years old and are in bad shape. He suggested replacing them with big snowflakes with LED lighting. He said that LED lighting would decrease the electrical expense. He also suggested going to businesses and organizations in town asking for donations to cover the expense of the new decorations.

Ms. Enos stated that with the project in Uptown regarding the electrical upgrading, they do not have the electrical capacity for more decorations at this time. She said the electrical project isn't in the design phase yet, so new decorations will not be probable this next holiday season. Mr. Peters said decorations haven't been budgeted for. It was discussed how they would try to cover the costs by donations. Ms. Enos mentioned that Christmas Lighting Decorations are eligible for the County Tourism Grant. Concern over new decorations will be kept on hold until further development.

2. *What is happening with the Local Purchasing Policy?*

Mr. Thomas feels that the Buy Local Policy is not a bad idea, but he feels the problem sometimes is that you pay premium costs for services. Discussions were held on where the Borough buys necessary materials. Mr. Thomas feels the Local Purchasing Policy should be re-visited so we may be able to expand our choices where we purchase outside the Borough, and therefore are able to cut costs. Suggestion was made to authorize the Manager and Finance Director to solicit quotations on a regular basis, if a revised policy stating this change would be put into place by Council.

3. *What streets are we paving this year?*

4. *Discussion on a possible purchase of a "Hot Box Tar Buggy."*

*Questions 3 & 4 were tied in together and discussed as one.*

Mr. Thomas mentioned that last year no streets were paved. He also mentioned that he would like to see the Borough get a jump start on the paving process this year. Discussion was held on what streets need paved.

Ms. Enos explained that we usually wait until after winter to evaluate which roads need attention. The list from last year of bad streets that were put on hold, could be added to or subtracted from, to decide which roads will be paved this year within our budget amount. Evaluation of the streets from PennDOT is the process that has to first take place before we can bid the project. Ms. Enos stated that the State always comes ahead of the Local Municipalities, so the bigger projects are always done first.

Discussion was held regarding renting or leasing a Hot Box Tar Buggy instead of purchasing one. Ms. Enos stated that we have \$100,000.00 budgeted for the streets. If we purchase a Hot Box, we will only have \$70,000.00 to spend on paving the streets, because a Hot Box was not budgeted for this year. It was mentioned that it was a Council decision not to take from the reserve to purchase items not budgeted for.

Ms. Enos stated that she would get information regarding leasing, borrowing or getting into a rental agreement with the Township for a Hot Box. She stated that she will get back to Council with the information at the next Committee Meeting.

(e) Request Form Submitted by Mayor Walker and Chief Cox:

1. *Requesting to fill a vacancy that will be created by the resignation of a part-time officer.*

Chief Cox discussed the overtime costs that the department has had. The resignation of a part-time Police Officer should be occurring at the end of February. Chief Cox asked for approval of Council to fill the vacancy, but he explained that he would not immediately fill the position. He asked for approval of getting pre-testing done of the candidates for a possible hire in the future. He stated he thought it was economically efficient to replace that position, because we're going to go back to "racking up" paying overtime hours. He feels it would be an economically sound decision to make the hire because that appears to be what keeps our overtime costs down. It was agreed upon by the majority of Council to approve Chief Cox to start the search and testing to pre-qualify candidates for a possible available position in the future. Council did not agree upon hiring someone, at this time, until a future date.

(f) Police Staffing Survey – Discussion:

Mr. Rosemeyer stated that he contacted Ron Stern and his agency about coming in to do a study of our Police Dept. Ron Stern felt their agency would not be able to do a study to look at the overtime, or the work ratio between staff and our number of Police Officers. He mentioned that Mr. Stern talked very highly of our Police Department. Discussion was held about finding other consultants who may be able to do this too. We will need to define what our goals are, and what we want to accomplish, so the consultant would know what to come back to us with. We need to define what the problems and options are within the Department, so the consultant will be able to tell us if they offer this kind of survey. We also need to understand what Council would want to see in the survey. Until further notice, it will be kept on hold.

(g) Leann Stewart – Somerset Co. Humane Officer – Requesting Council to approve her being able to issue citations for license and rabies violations.

Chief Cox was asked by Ms. Enos to look into the Dog Law, and he reviewed his findings with Council. Ms. Stewart is already approved and certified as a Humane Society Police Officer. All this entitles her to do is investigate and arrest for violations of Crimes Code 55-11, which is cruelty to animals. Chief Cox mentioned upon looking at the Dog Law, he found out that a Municipality may appoint an Animal Control Officer. He stated that there are no prohibitions for a Humane Society Police Officer to serve as an Animal Control Officer, as long as it's for a Municipality and not the County. He stated that in a 5-year period, from 2011-2016, his officers issued 210 citations that they had come across incidentally.

318 stray dogs were picked up in this same 5-year period by our Police Officers. Chief Cox mentioned that Leann Stewart is already tasked with taking care of stray dogs, because it falls under cruelty to animals. Ms. Enos stated that Leann Stewart is requesting an offset to a salary from the Borough. Fine revenue, and payment to Ms. Stewart was discussed. Ms. Stewart requested to be heard at the next Council meeting. This issue will, therefore, be discussed further at that meeting. Chief Cox also mentioned that the Humane Society saves the Borough a lot of money with their services.

**Adjournment**

**Motion**

Mrs. Ream moved to adjourn, motion seconded by Mr. Shaulis.

Motion Unanimously Carried.  
7:20 p.m.

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Michele A. Enos, Borough Secretary