

Borough of Somerset Council Meeting
April 27th, 2020 - 5:00 p.m. – (via TELECONFERENCE)

1. Meeting Called to Order - President Ruby Miller

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call:

Council Members present: Ruby Miller; Fred Rosemeyer; Lee Hoffman; Pam Ream; Sue Opp; Steve Shaulis and Gary Thomas.

Also present: Mayor Scott Walker.

Absent: Junior Council Member Patrick Kuhn.

Also present were the following: Borough Manager, Michele Enos; Director of Finance, Brett Peters; Administrative Assistant, Roger Bailey; Chief of Police, Randy Cox; Solicitor, James Cascio; Consulting Engineers, Tom Reilly and Jake Bolby; Daily American Reporter, Matt Toth.

4. Announcements

(a) *None*

5. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

(a) **Correction to January 13th 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting** - *To reflect the number of the fire dept. calls from 45 to 145.*

Motion

Mr. Hoffman moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to approve the correction to the January 13th 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting reflecting the number of the fire departments calls from 45 to 145.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(b) **February 10th, 2020 – Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes.**

Motion

Mrs. Ream moved, Mr. Rosemeyer seconded to approve the February 10th, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(c) **February 24th, 2020 – Borough Council Meeting Minutes.**

Motion

Mr. Thomas moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to approve the February 24th, 2020 Borough Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(d) Departmental Reports - Approval of Departmental Reports for February 2020.

Motion

Mrs. Ream moved, Mr. Rosemeyer seconded to approve the Departmental Reports for February 2020.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(e) March 9th, 2020 – Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes.

Motion

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mrs. Ream seconded to approve the March 9th, 2020 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(f) Departmental Reports - Approval of Departmental Reports for March 2020.

Motion

Mr. Thomas moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to approve the Departmental Reports for March 2020.

Motion Unanimously Carried

6. Award of Bids:

(a) Bid Opening – Sanitary Sewer System Cleaning & Televising – Update from Michele and Jake.

Ms. Enos stated that advertisement to receive bids for the cleaning and televising of all the sanitary sewer lines in the Borough system was completed. Ms. Enos said that she and Mr. Bolby received the bids. Bid opening was done via teleconferencing. She disclosed that the lowest responsive bid was received from Mr. Rehab, LLC in the amount of \$438,352.10.

Ms. Enos brought out that this is a Municipal Authority Project, so it will be taken to the Municipal Authority Board for their approval for this project. For the reason that it is their infrastructure, they are the body that will have to award the bid. Ms. Enos added that the meeting with the Municipal Authority will be held via teleconferencing in the next week or two, and the Municipal Authority Board's approval will be sought so the project can move forward.

Ms. Enos added that the contractor is classified under "essential services" and has a waiver to perform the work. Because of the nature, and the length of time of this project, the

Borough is inclined to move forward with this project if the Municipal Authority Board wishes to do that.

Mr. Bolby pointed out the bid came in less than anticipated, which is good for the residents and users of the system.

7. General Public Comments:

(a) None requested.

8. Administrative Business:

(a) Communications (None)

(b) Payment of bills (March and April)

Motion

Mrs. Ream moved, Mrs. Opp seconded, to approve the payment of bills numbered 0034608 - 0034869 totaling \$955,058.28.

Motion Unanimously Carried

9. Policy Agenda:

Old Business:

(a) None

New Business:

(a) COVID-19 – To consider ratifying the Disaster Declaration that was signed into effect on March 20, 2020 by Mayor Walker.

Ms. Enos brought out that within the Borough Code, the Mayor has the authority to declare a disaster. She said that after speaking with Solicitor Cascio, it was recommended that Borough Council ratify the Disaster Declaration that was signed into effect on March 20, 2020 by Mayor Walker. Therefore, Borough Council is being asked to consider ratifying the Disaster Declaration.

Solicitor Cascio explained that this was in conjunction with the County-wide determination. Ms. Enos and Mr. Peters recently were consulted on a County-wide phone call conducted by the Somerset County Emergency Management Agency. This was part of a comprehensive response to maintain order in the Communities, Regions and State-wide areas. Discussion also included allowance for application for relief funds and revenues, along with the qualifications to receive funding.

Motion

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mrs. Ream seconded to ratify the Disaster Declaration that was signed into effect on March 20, 2020 by Mayor Walker.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(b) COVID-19 – Consider authorizing the continuation of current operations and/or any adjustments needed to comply with the Governor’s Order.

Ms. Enos stated that March 20, 2020 was the Borough’s last full day of normal operations. For transparency, she had broken-down how the five separate facilities within the Borough are operating.

Ms. Enos mentioned that some of the Borough’s Departments are deemed as “life-essential” services. They include Water Treatment, Sewer Treatment, and Water Distribution Departments.

Ms. Enos disclosed that the Treatment Plants are operating at full-time capacity. She explained that employees are on rotating cycles. For safety reasons, more than one employee will work together where it requires two or more people. It is not the same crew members working together as normal circumstances permit.

The Administrative offices at the Borough are different. However, the employees are rotating at the Administrative offices, as well. The office is handling all of our customer’s collections for water and sewer, and taking care of any type of questions regarding what we handle here administratively. The offices have continued to work this way.

The Public Works Department is similar. We are responding to our customers and our residents with any concerns. We are available for any type of emergency where we can still maintain social distancing.

In our Police Department, Chief Cox has been keeping everyone apprised. They are operating in the same fashion that our Water and Sewer Departments are operating. The Police Department is also considered “essential”, so they are operating 24/7 with probable extra crews out for different Covid-19 responses.

Somerset Borough is complying with the Governor’s “Stay at Home” Order, and only bringing out Borough workers who are “essential” service people. However, we are rotating our office workers into work to maintain the level of service, we can provide at this time, to all of our residents.

Ms. Enos also disclosed that the Borough’s answering machine message was changed to better guide our residents to the services they need, and who would be addressing those services.

She said that after a conversation with Solicitor Cascio, Borough Council is being asked to consider authorizing the continuation of our current operation and/or any adjustments that we may need to do, administratively, to comply with the Governors’ order, whatever that will be from this point into the future.

Ms. Enos stated that she would continue to keep Borough Council notified of any changes that she is aware of, or is notified of, from this point forward.

Solicitor Cascio stated that this is in addition to the Governors' order, the judgement of the Borough Management and consultation with the Police Department, which is in the best interest in the health and safety of the Borough employees and residents of the Borough.

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Thomas seconded to authorize the continuation of current operations and/or any adjustments needed to comply with the Governor's Order.

Motion Unanimously Carried

Mr. Shaulis mentioned that the Somerset Volunteer Fire Department are all practicing their social distancing. He stated that they are required to wear masks any time they enter the Fire Hall, or anytime they go on a call. They are trying to be as compliant as they can be.

Mr. Hoffman said that a lot of Somerset Inc.'s projects are "on pause" because they are considered "non-essential." They still are planning to finish Trinity Park and the Somerset Inc. office. Mr. Hoffman stated that there is still hope to have some form of "Chalk the Block" in the Borough later in the summer. He mentioned that they have a great "take out" restaurant group on Facebook to try to support the local "specials" and other things.

Mr. Rosemeyer mentioned that PSAB has cancelled their conference in June 2020. They hope to hold the PSAB Conference in Gettysburg at the Wyndham Hotel in October 2020.

He also mentioned that, for those who are interested, on Wednesday May 29th, 2020 from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. PSAB is holding a webinar on "Right - to - Know" as regards to the "Sunshine Law" and the "Right – To - Know" Law during an emergency procedure.

Mr. Rosemeyer brought out that the County Banquet has also been cancelled. They are hoping to reschedule it in September 2020. That has yet to be determined, also.

Mayor Walker mentioned that, two weeks ago, he participated in a Conference Call arranged by Bob Casey's' office with nine other Mayors in South-Western Pennsylvania with regard to the Covid-19 outbreak. He added that most of the questions that were asked of Senator Casey were more on a state level than on a national level.

Ms. Enos explained that she spoke with Morgan Simmons from Mary S. Biesecker Library, who is responsible to sign the applications for the library's Keystone Grants. Mr.

Simmons said there is an additional Keystone Grant application that is coming due. At present, its May 15th deadline has not been extended.

Mr. Simmons wanted to make Ms. Enos aware that the library would like to operate in the same fashion for this new Keystone Grant, with Somerset Borough as the applicant. The Mary S. Biesecker Library pays for all local match share. Somerset Borough is simply a “pass-through” agency for the Grant application.

Ms. Enos mentioned that a Resolution would have to be passed by Borough Council for the library to make application. She added that additional information would be sent to Borough Council concerning this, and in an official capacity, to ask Council to support it and be the applicant knowing that no local Borough monies will be spent on this.

Ms. Enos explained that Waste Management did not schedule a new “Spring Clean-Up” date for Somerset Borough until they know when the ‘stay-at-home” order would be lifted. She mentioned that it is still in the budget to be done, but no dates have been given to Somerset Borough as of yet. Ms. Enos added that she does not expect to get any dates until some of the restrictions have been lifted.

10. Executive Session – None requested.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved to adjourn, motion seconded by Mrs. Ream.

Motion Unanimously Carried
5:29 p.m.

Michele A. Enos, Borough Manager/ Secretary