

# **Borough of Somerset Council Meeting**

## **September 28th, 2020 - 5:00 p.m.**

### **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.

Also present were the following: Borough Manager, Michele Enos; Director of Finance, Brett Peters; Solicitor, James Cascio; Consulting Engineer Jake Bolby.

### **Public Attendance:**

1. Rebecca Mull

### **4. Announcements**

a) Water Flushing Program – Will begin Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 through Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

b) Leaf Collection Program – Will be the week of October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

### **5. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:**

a) August 24th, 2020 – **Borough Council Meeting Minutes.**

#### **Motion**

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to approve the August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Borough Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

b) Departmental Reports – *Departmental Reports for August 2020.*

#### **Motion**

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

Motion Unanimously Carried

**6. Award of Bids:**

a) None

**7. General Public Comments:**

a) Becca Mull – To discuss Red Ribbon Week.

*(Mayor Walker read and declared the Proclamation in support of Red Ribbon Week, October 23<sup>rd</sup> – October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, to all in attendance)*

# *Proclamation*

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*October 23<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> 2020*

**WHEREAS**, The Borough of Somerset values the health and safety of all its citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, substance abuse is particularly damaging to one of our most valuable resources, our children, and a contributing factor in the three leading causes of death for teenagers – accidents, homicides, and suicides; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the goal of Red Ribbon Week and the Borough of Somerset to involve families, schools businesses, churches, law enforcement agencies and service organizations in all aspects of this campaign and establish an atmosphere that supports awareness, education and on-going initiatives to prevent illegal drug use, and

**WHEREAS**, the Red Ribbon Week Campaign theme, “Be Happy; Be Brave; Be Drug Free ”, promotes family and individual responsibilities for living healthy, drug-free lifestyles, without illegal drugs or the illegal use of legal drugs,

**Therefore, Be It Proclaimed:** I, Scott A. Walker, serving as Mayor of the Borough of Somerset do hereby proclaim October 23<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 as Red Ribbon Week in the Borough of Somerset.

Signed this 28<sup>th</sup> day of September 2020

Ms. Becca Mull, the Manager of Prevention and Education at Twin Lakes Center, and the Director of Somerset County Drug-Free Communities, explained that each year “Red Ribbon Week” is celebrated in the last full week of October. This year it will be celebrated October 26-30 within the School District.

Ms. Mull said, in previous years, contests and other events have been held during this week, but sadly, this year it will be different due to Covid regulations. As a result, none of these will be held this year. Instead, students are still being encouraged to make posters, essays and videos based around the theme.

Red bows will still be placed throughout town. Schools and businesses are also being encouraged to participate in Red Ribbon Week by participating with their bulletin boards and activities, as well.

Ms. Mull stated that regardless of Red Ribbon Week looking a little bit different this year, it is still hoped that the message resonates of being “drug-free” and making healthy choices.

Ms. Mull also mentioned that something different this year will be a “Lunch & Learns” Zoom Event that will be planned every Wednesday in October. She brought out that these virtual sessions will be filled with a great deal of information regarding addiction resources in the County. Also discussed will be how to talk to your kids about drug use. She said that other topics that are incredibly relevant will also be discussed.

Ms. Mull encouraged Council Members to display red ribbons outside their businesses, houses, etc.

She closed by thanking Borough Council for allowing her to participate in the Council Meeting to share the importance of Red Ribbon Week.

## **8. Administrative Business:**

*a) Communications (None)*

*b) Payment of Bills – Month of September 2020.*

## **Motion**

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mrs. Opp seconded, to approve the payment of bills for September 2020 numbered 35397 - 35548 totaling \$870,575.01.

Motion Unanimously Carried

## **9. Policy Agenda:**

### **Old Business:**

*a) None*

### **New Business:**

- a) Junior Council Person – Consider the appointment of Sierra Urban to serve as Junior Council Person for the 2020 – 2021 school year.

Mr. Rosemeyer mentioned that the part Ms. Urban plays as a Junior Volunteer Fire Fighter made her stand out at Somerset High School. As a result, she was chosen to represent Somerset Borough as the Junior Council Person for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

Mr. Rosemeyer congratulated Ms. Urban, and thanked her and her family, for their service to the Community by being part of the Somerset Volunteer Fire Department.

- b) Oath of Office – Official swearing-in of Sierra Urban as Junior Council Person for the 2020-2021 school year.

Mr. Rosemeyer officiated the swearing-in of Sierra Urban as Junior Council Person for the 2020-2021 school year.

- c) Mary S. Biesecker Public Library – Consider the recommendation to re-appoint Mrs. Marsha Dykstra to the Board of Directors for a 3-year term.

### **Motion**

Mrs. Ream moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to re-appoint Mrs. Marsha Dykstra to the Board of Directors for a 3-year term at the Mary S. Biesecker Public Library.

Motion Unanimously Carried

- d) Mary S. Biesecker Public Library – Consider the recommendation to Attorney Megan Will to the Board of Directors for a 3-year term.

### **Motion**

Mrs. Ream moved, Mr. Rosemeyer seconded to re-appoint Attorney Megan Will to the Board of Directors for a 3-year term at the Mary S. Biesecker Public Library.

Motion Unanimously Carried

- e) Mary S. Biesecker Public Library – Consider the recommendation to re-appoint Mrs. Mona Herrell to the Board of Directors for a 3-year term.

### **Motion**

Mr. Shaulis moved, Mr. Thomas seconded to re-appoint Mrs. Mona Herrell to the Board of Directors for a 3-year term at the Mary S. Biesecker Public Library.

Motion Unanimously Carried

*f) Somerset Vol. Fire Dept. – Requesting the Borough to provide grass cutting services and snow removal at their newly purchased parking lot adjacent to Barth Plumbing. (Update)*

Ms. Enos stated that she received an update from Jerry Lyons concerning this request. She said that Mr. Lyons explained that the Fire Department is asking for the Borough's snow removal services in their new parking lot *before* a scheduled event, or if it is snowing *during* an event. She added that the Fire Department would disclose the dates of any upcoming events to the Borough.

Ms. Enos mentioned that the Borough will continue to maintain the Fire Department's grass.

She noted that Borough Council could choose to do snow removal services as a donation to the Fire Department.

**Motion**

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mr. Hoffman seconded to approve the request for snow removal, as a donation to the Somerset Volunteer Fire Department for their newly purchased parking lot *only* if an event is being held there.

Motion Unanimously Carried

*g) Proposed Ordinance – Discussion concerning developing an Ordinance requiring insurance for all commercial properties within the Uptown Historic District. (Update)*

Ms. Enos stated that she has a meeting scheduled with the Borough's Insurance Agent, Dave Halverson, to discuss developing an Ordinance regarding what the Borough would have to require to be notified of proof of insurance for all commercial properties within the Uptown Historic District.

She added that a draft of the proposed Ordinance is presently being worked on, and will be brought to Borough Council for discussion when completed.

*Mayor Walker* mentioned that he received a few phone calls concerning an article in the Daily American published on September 26, 2020. The article disclosed an advertisement for a "Trump Convoy" which is to pass through Uptown Somerset on October 17, 2020 on state roads.

He said that the callers were concerned about traffic being permitted in Somerset. They stressed that they do not want additional traffic in town.

Mayor Walker expressed to Borough Council that he wanted to disclose this information in the event that they receive similar calls regarding this.

Further discussion took place among Borough Council on this subject.

*Mr. Peters* stated that he included the September Monthly Financial Report in the packets he sent to Borough Council. He added that the Annual Budget information was also included in the same packet.

Mr. Peters mentioned that adoption of the *Tentative Budget* will be discussed at the November 23, 2020 Borough Council Meeting. *The Final Budget* will be adopted at the December 28, 2020 Borough Council Meeting.

*Mr. Shaulis* read the Somerset Volunteer Fire Department Report for the month of September 2020 as follows:

Since January 2020, the Fire Department has answered 249 alarms. 92 were in Somerset Borough.

The annual Golf Tournament was held September 25<sup>th</sup>, and was a big success. There were 24 participants. The sponsorship from the Borough, and its employees, was greatly appreciated.

The Fire Department is getting ready for its annual "Cash Calendar" fundraising event. The calendars should be ready for sale by the end of October 2020.

Recently, the Department had 13,000 feet of hose pressure-tested. Also, they had their annual regular maintenance done to the "jaws-of-life" rescue tool and their rescue bags.

In October, the Fire Department will conduct a special fire-fighting training exercise at the County Fire School site.

Lastly, an evacuation drill was conducted at the Patriot Manor last week.

*Mr. Bolby* stated that there are two things active right now. The Digester Cleaning Project at the Sewage Treatment Plant is ongoing. It should be complete in approximately two weeks. Also, the Sewer Cleaning Project started today. Thus, sewer cleaning trucks, their personnel and equipment will be all throughout town until January 2022.

**10. Executive Session** – To discuss matters of potential litigation.

**Motion**

Mr. Shaulis moved, seconded by Mrs. Ream to go into Executive Session to discuss matters of potential litigation.

Motion Unanimously Carried  
5:28 p.m.

## **Back in Public Session**

6:02 p.m.

Mr. Hoffman expressed that although events are hindered from the pandemic, Somerset Inc. is still hoping to have some form of the “Fire & Ice” Festival. “Light-Up Night” is presently uncertain due to present crowd control regulations.

Mr. Hoffman brought out that Somerset Inc. is leaning towards completing some of their projects, like the Façade Program. He disclosed that they had ten applicants for this program, that were approved, and they are waiting for the contractors to be able to do the work.

Mr. Hoffman explained that Somerset Inc. would also like to have these projects complete so they can take on more of the blight problems. He added that the goal is always to try and save the buildings, but noted that some “are just too far gone”.

Mr. Hoffman also mentioned that previous owners’ family members of the Patriot Street property that was just torn down, reached out to Somerset Inc. They went to the property to salvage some of the doors, banisters and other things. Also, a washer & dryer, scrap metal, boards, bricks and cinder blocks were salvaged from the property by Mr. Hoffman and Morgan from the Library. He added that the salvaged boards and bricks may be able to be used for the façade. Mr. Hoffman added that a substantial salvage effort was done over a two-week period.

He said that Trinity Park is almost complete with only the finish work needing done.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

### **Motion**

Mr. Thomas moved to adjourn, motion seconded by Mr. Rosemeyer.

Motion Unanimously Carried

6:05 p.m.

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Michele A. Enos, Borough Manager/ Secretary