

Borough of Somerset Council Meeting

July 29th, 2024 - 5:00 p.m.

1. **Meeting Called to Order** – President Ream.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Roll Call:**

a) **Borough Council Members present:** *Pam Ream, Ruby Miller (via telephone), Lee Hoffman, Sue Opp and Steve Shaulis.*

b) **Borough Council Member absent:** *Ian Mandichak.*

c) **Junior Council Member absent:** *Robert Grega.*

d) **Also present:** *Mayor Fred Rosemeyer.*

e) **Also present were the following:** *Borough Manager, Michele Enos; Director of Finance, Brett Peters; Administrative Assistant, Roger Bailey; Municipal Authority Manager, Jessica Sizemore; Solicitors, James Cascio & Allyson Lonas and Consulting Engineer, Jake Bolby.*

f) **Public Attendance:** *Rick Stegman, Anne Stegman, Janice Forry, Rebecca Senft and Melanie Heiple.*

4. **Approval of Agenda:** *Consider approving the Agenda as presented.*

Motion

Mr. Shaulis moved, Mr. Hoffman seconded, to approve Agenda as presented.

5. **Announcements:**

a) *None*

6. **Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)**

a) *June 24th, 2024 – Borough Council Meeting Minutes.*

Motion

Mr. Hoffman moved, Mr. Shaulis seconded, to approve the June 24th, 2024 Borough Council Meeting Minutes.

7. Award of Bids:

a) None

8. General Public Comments:

a) Rick Stegman – *Addressing Council concerning a proposed sidewalk along W. Main Street from Meyran to Colby Avenue.*

Mr. Stegman said that he spoke to Ms. Enos about his proposal approximately 3 years ago. He expressed that his proposal would be an improvement for the community.

He said that where W. Main Street heads out of town, he lives on a connecting street called Brubaker Street. He said people living there have young children with strollers and cannot walk very far. To walk a dog, people have to walk on W. Main Street through grassy yards, and people's driveways, just to connect over to Colby Avenue in order to walk on the sidewalks there. An approximate 321-foot sidewalk would be needed on W. Main Street from Meyran Avenue to Colby Avenue to connect the two streets.

Mr. Stegman said that the benefits of a sidewalk in this area would be that it would connect over 20 households to the community, connect young families with strollers, connect families with dogs to the city, make Somerset a more livable city, and increase business for Somerset, which would mean more revenue. He said that families could walk to festivals and ease the parking burden. He expressed that it would be a great investment.

Ms. Enos noted, that when previously discussing this with Mr. Stegman, she mentioned that the Borough would be looking at different sidewalk grant opportunities that they could potentially apply for. The Borough would have to work with the State because it is their State right-of-way.

Ms. Enos reiterated that they want to connect to Colby Avenue, where the residents are, so they can have access to the sidewalks that way. She mentioned that not having sidewalks in different areas of the Borough is not uncommon.

Ms. Enos noted that Mr. Stegman wanted to approach Council and ask for their continued support of his request, and continue to search for grant opportunities.

Mr. Bolby mentioned that last year the state's Multi-Modal Grant Application Program opened in January.

Upon request from Mr. Stegman, Ms. Enos said that the Borough would be happy to get his proposal on the list for a grant application when it opens up next year.

Mr. Bolby mentioned that, from start to finish, it is about a 2-year process until word comes back whether the request was granted or not.

9. Administrative Business:

- a) Communications – (none)
- b) Payment of Bills – Month of July 2024.

Motion:

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Hoffman seconded, to approve the payment of bills for the month of July 2024 numbered 41899 - 42023 totaling \$1,921,424,60.

Motion Unanimously Carried

- c) Department Reports – Consider approving the Departmental Reports for the month of June 2024.

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mrs. Miller seconded, to approve the Departmental Reports for the month of June 2024.

Motion Unanimously Carried

10. Policy Agenda:

Old Business:

- a) None

New Business:

- a) Swearing-In – Mayor Rosemeyer to swear in Officer Good as a new part-time Police Officer.

Mayor Rosemeyer performed the swearing-in of Officer Good as a new part-time Police Officer for the Somerset Borough Police Department.

Next, Officer Good introduced himself and his family to Borough Council and then briefed them about his 30-year background as a Police Officer. He also mentioned other Community activities in which he is involved.

Borough Council welcomed Officer Good to the Police Department.

- b) Municipal Authority Board – It is recommending to create an entry-level GIS Position that will be in charge of mapping and other related duties. (Update from Jess)

Mrs. Sizemore expressed that if Council would like to wait until this position can be incorporated into the budget next year, it can wait.

Borough Council stated that they would prefer to wait until that time since this position is not a budgeted position for this year.

- c) Council Member Vacancy – Consider the letter of interest from Mr. Dirienzo concerning the vacancy on Borough Council due to the resignation of James Clark.

Mrs. Ream mentioned that they had a letter of interest from Mario Dirienzo and spoke about his background to Council. She expressed that he would be a good fit for Borough Council.

Motion

Mrs. Ream moved, Mrs. Opp seconded, to appoint Mr. Mario Dirienzo to fill the vacancy on Borough Council.

Motion Unanimously Carried

- d) Zoning Hearing Board Vacancy – Consider appointing Mr. Michael Wilson to serve as a member of our Zoning Hearing Board to fill a vacancy.

Mrs. Ream mentioned that Mr. Wilson had submitted a letter of interest for this position and spoke about his background to Council.

Motion

Mrs. Ream moved, Mr. Shaulis seconded, to appoint Mr. Michael Wilson to fill a vacancy on our Zoning Hearing Board.

Motion Unanimously Carried

- e) Subdivision Request from Robin Knepper – Consider referring this to our Planning Commission for review and recommendation back to Borough Council. (Property is 503 W. Union Street and 119 & 121 North Franklin Avenue).

Ms. Enos noted that this request comes to Council first. The next step is for Council to refer it to our Planning Commission for review and recommendation back to Council.

Ms. Enos said that Robin Knepper's application referred to two homes on one parcel. She is looking to subdivide the one parcel into two.

Motion

Mr. Shaulis moved, Mrs. Miller seconded, to refer this to our Planning Commission for review and recommendation back to Council.

Motion Unanimously Carried

f) Planning Commission – Consider the resignation of Mr. George Schenck, Jr. as a member of our Planning Commission.

Motion

Mr. Shaulis moved, Mr. Hoffman seconded, to accept the resignation of Mr. George Schenck, Jr. as a member of our Planning Commission.

Motion Unanimously Carried

g) Planning Commission Vacancy – Consider the resignation of Mr. George Shafer as a member of our Planning Commission.

Motion

Mr. Hoffman moved, Mr. Shaulis seconded, to accept the resignation of Mr. George Shafer as a member of our Planning Commission.

Motion Unanimously Carried

h) Certificate of Appreciation – Consider authorizing a “Certificate of Appreciation” to George Schenck and George Shafer for their decades of service.

Ms. Enos mentioned that Mr. George Shafer has been a member of the Planning Commission for Somerset Borough since 1979 and has been a continued member ever since.

Mr. George Schenck has also been a long time member of the Somerset Borough Planning Commission since 1972 and has been a consistent member on the Board ever since.

Ms. Enos noted that she would like to give both of them a “Certificate of Appreciation” for all the service they gave to Somerset Borough.

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Hoffman seconded, to authorize a “Certificate of Appreciation” to George Schenck, Jr. and George Shafer for their decades of service to the Borough of Somerset.

Motion Unanimously Carried

i) Union Street Playground Committee – Discussion concerning the letter received by Melanie Heiple requesting Council’s support to seek grant funding for a splash pad and other related items.

Mrs. Heiple said that the Playground Committee’s next goal is to raise money for a splash pad for the playground. They received an estimate for the splash pad, and also received ideas

on what to do regarding a new fence, upgrades to the bathrooms, and removing the wading pool.

Mrs. Heiple also asked the Borough Council to submit for grant funding on the playground's behalf.

Ms. Enos & Mrs. Ream explained to Ms. Heiple the different steps the Playground Committee would have to take before grant funding could be sought after, and what is involved in doing this.

Recent vandalism at the playground was also mentioned, and how it will be handled. Also, installing new lighting at the playground was discussed.

It was mentioned that the Borough is working on removing the old swings at the playground.

j) Police Department Position – Discussion concerning an administrative position in our Police Department.

Ms. Enos stated that this would be a motion for the creation of an administrative position for Assistant to our Police Chief. It is a part-time position.

She said that the Contract for this position was reviewed by Borough Council in Executive Session, and will be made available after Council approves it.

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Hoffman seconded, to approve the administrative position, and appoint Mr. Steve Borosky to the position, with all the contract language that Council reviewed.

Motion Unanimously Carried

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mrs. Ream seconded, to assign Kevin Huzek as a part-time Detective in the Somerset Borough Police Department to fill one of the vacancies.

Motion Unanimously Carried

Committee Business/Reports:

k) Borough Manager's Report – Given by Michele Enos.

Ms. Enos mentioned that "National Night Out" will be held on Tuesday, August 13th, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

l) Finance Report – Given by Brett Peters.

Mr. Peters provided Council with the Financial Report through June 2024 earlier in the month. He mentioned that we are 50% of the way through the year. He added that the Financial Report is also available on the portal for review.

General Fund:

Revenues – 78.76%

Expenses – 53.26%

Water Fund:

Revenues – 54.28%

Expenses – 51.95%

Sewer Fund:

Revenues – 53.93%

Expenses – 51.49%

m) Municipal Authority Manager’s Report – Given by Jess Sizemore.

Mrs. Sizemore had nothing additional to report.

n) President’s Report – Given by Pam Ream.

Mrs. Ream had nothing additional to report.

o) Somerset Inc. Report – Given by Lee Hoffman.

Mr. Hoffman said that the “Chalk the Block” Festival went really well this past weekend. There was a good crowd all weekend. He thanked Public Works, the Police Department and the Fire Department for all their help with the roads and everything they did to help. He added that there were 96 participants in the 5K Race.

Mr. Hoffman also noted that 7 tons of and plastic and concrete was recently removed from the Brinker Building.

p) PSAB Report – Given by Fred Rosemeyer.

Mayor Rosemeyer mentioned that a PSAB Meeting will be held on August 8th, 2024 at Bedford Springs, Bedford, PA.

q) Somerset Volunteer Fire Dept. Report – Mr. Shaulis.

Mr. Shaulis was not provided a Fire Report for review.

r) Engineer’s Report – Given by Jake Bolby.

Mr. Bolby presented the Updates to the Engineer’s Report.

WATER:

1) Water System Capital Improvement Projects:

Mr. Bolby said that they we are getting near the end of the Water Project. Between all 3 projects, they are approximately 95% complete. Mr. Bolby said that we are at the point

where we are going through the “punch list” of final items that need to be taken care of, so he encouraged Council to relay any information back to the Borough that they may receive from the public that is related to the project, or any project that was active. These things can then be added to the punch list so it’s taken care of.

Nearing the close of the project, they are trying to finish everything up to make sure it looks like existing, or better than existing, conditions. Mr. Bolby said that they have photos of pre-construction, so if there was any damage done as part of the project, they can go back and look at the photos for proof that it was in fact damaged during the course of the project.

The Water Project has done most of its State Road paving. The Gas Project will be doing its State Road paving on the projected date of mid-August.

Also, administratively, the PennVEST pay request was processed.

SEWER:

1) Assessment, Repair, and Abatement Plan (Hydraulic Overload):

Mr. Bolby said that the applications for construction permitting are in. They haven’t gotten a response back from DEP.

GENERAL:

1) Center Ave. Sidewalk:

Mr. Bolby said that Center Avenue is about 90% complete on the NE side. They are finishing up the sewer viewports. They are currently on the NW side. Restorations will follow.

Because of the funding scenarios with the pavement restoration, 2024 CDBG dollars are going into the pavement restoration of Center Avenue. We had to separately bid it because the State would not permit using 2024 dollars for the current project and contracts. There is some other paving being funded through other dollars that is included in that. So there will be a nice 2024 paving package that is going out that’s including both the Municipal and State streets. Depending on how those bids come back in, we are going to recommend a final award based on the available budget dollars.

s) Mayor’s Report – Given by Mayor Rosemeyer.

Mayor Rosemeyer mentioned that Twin Lakes appointed Shannon Fonzo to be in charge of the Somerset and Cambria facilities.

11. Executive Session – *Personnel Matters and Contract Negotiations.*

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, seconded by Mr. Hoffman, to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and contract negotiations.

Motion Unanimously Carried
5:38 p.m.

Back in Session

6:03 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion

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

Motion Unanimously Carried
6:20 p.m.

Michele A. Enos, Borough Manager/ Secretary