

# Borough of Somerset Council Meeting

## September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 - 5:00 p.m.

1. **Meeting Called to Order** – President Ream.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Executive Session** – To discuss matters of collective bargaining and personnel.

### **Motion**

Mrs. Opp moved, seconded by Mr. Hoffman, to go into Executive Session to discuss matters of collective bargaining and personnel.

Motion Unanimously Carried  
5:09 p.m.

### **Back in Session**

5:20 p.m.

### 4. **Roll Call:**

- a) **Borough Council Members present:** *Pam Ream, Ruby Miller (via telephone), Lee Hoffman, Sue Opp, Ian Mandichak and Mario Dirienzo.*
- b) **Borough Council Member absent:** *Steve Shaulis.*
- c) **Junior Council Member present:** *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; Consulting Engineers, Tom Reilly & Jake Bolby.*
- f) **Public Attendance:** *Becca Maul, Sue Sube, Melanie Heiple, Jenny Lou Klim, Janice Forry, Rebecca Senft and Barbara Lynch.*

**5. Approval of Agenda: Consider approving the agenda as presented.**

**Motion**

Mr. Hoffman moved, Mrs. Opp seconded, to approve the agenda with the Swearing-In of two (2) Officers to the Police Department first, by Mayor Rosemeyer, followed by an Executive Session.

Motion Unanimously Carried

**6. Announcements:**

a) None

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

a) August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – Borough Council Meeting Minutes.

**Motion**

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Mandichak seconded, to approve the August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Borough Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

**8. Award of Bids:**

a) None

**9. General Public Comments:**

a) Melanie Heiple – Union Street Playground Committee to discuss a request for future funding.

Ms. Heiple explained that the Playground Committee would like to apply for a \$150,000.00 grant to build a splash pad at the playground. The 50% local match that would be required to apply is \$75,000.00. Therefore, the Committee is asking Borough Council for a commitment of \$25,000.00, for the next three years, to be able to reach the \$75,000.00 local match.

Ms. Enos recapped that during a recent meeting with the Playground Committee that was attended by a Granting Agency, herself, Mr. Bolby and Mr. Bailey, her understanding of the \$150,000.00 grant for the splash pad requires a local match of \$75,000.00. She said that the \$75,000.00 has to come from someone whether that is the Union Street Playground Committee, the Borough, or through donations.

Ms. Enos added that if the Playground Committee is funded for this project, from the time they sign a contract until the time the project is closed, it will probably be 3–4 years.

Ms. Heiple said that the Playground Committee's goal is to get the splash pad installed at the playground in 2026.

Ms. Enos mentioned that operational monies for maintenance items is something that the Borough already takes care of for the playground. The Borough pays for the water, mows the grass, takes care of the bathrooms, and takes care of safety issues.

Ms. Enos stated that there are a few things that need to happen. She said if the Playground Committee is asking Borough Council to earmark a certain amount of money for successive years, they need to know what it is for. If it is going to be matching funds for a grant, then Council has to approve of what is going to happen. The Playground Committee needs to have an overall plan in place to say what is going to be applied for, and what funds are going to be needed for matching. She said that certain Resolutions will be required in any Grant Application, and a Funding Letter that will be required from the Granting Agency that says that the Borough of Somerset commits to this amount of money for these purposes and on these terms.

Ms. Enos said that Council has to be very transparent on what they are applying for. Before a Resolution is created, it has to be defined in there what we're applying for, how the funds are going to be used, and what match is required, because the Granting Agency is going to want that in their hands. Before Borough Council commits to anything, they need to see what the Playground Committee is applying for.

Ms. Enos mentioned that Council is heading into budget talks in October. She asked the Playground Committee to get the plans to Council as soon as they can so Council will know what the commitment is, and they can plan for that commitment, if this is something Council wants to move forward with.

The Playground Committee mentioned other ideas they would like to have done for the playgrounds aesthetics. They also would like to set up playground information tables at various Community Events.

It was also mentioned, that to apply for this grant, a Public Forum Event was suggested to get the public involved to ask for their suggestions for the playground.

#### **10. Administrative Business:**

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

#### **Motion:**

Mr. Mandichak moved, Mrs. Opp seconded, to approve the payment of bills for the month of September 2024 numbered 42177– 42291 totaling \$1,543,045.04.

Motion Unanimously Carried

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

**Motion**

Mr. Hoffman moved, Mr. Dirienzo seconded, to approve the Departmental Reports for the month of August 2024.

Motion Unanimously Carried

**11. Policy Agenda:**

**Old Business:**

a) None

**New Business:**

a) Swearing-In – Mayor Rosemeyer to swear-in Officers Mark Kasterko and Shannon Earhart as new part-time Police Officers and add them to the roster.

Mayor Rosemeyer read the “Oath-of-Office” for Police Officers to Officers Mark Kasterko and Shannon Earhart as part of their Swearing-in as new part-time Police Officers of Somerset Borough Police Department.

Chief Appel introduced both Officers to Borough Council, and mentioned their professional backgrounds.

Officers Mark Kasterko and Shannon Earhart introduced their family members in the audience who were in attendance to support them.

b) Red Ribbon Week – Mayor Rosemeyer to present the proclamation to Rebecca Mull in support of Red Ribbon Week.

Mayor Rosemeyer read the Proclamation for “Red Ribbon Week” which will be October 21<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

Rebecca Mull disclosed that this year’s theme for “Red Ribbon Week’ is “Life is a Movie Film Drug Free”. All of the contests will be based around this theme.

They will once again be sponsoring a poster, digital video and essay contest at all of the Somerset County Schools.

All are invited to the “Red Ribbon” Rally on Friday October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Somerset Church of the Brethren where the winners of the contest will be recognized along with the kick-off of “Red Ribbon Week”.

There will also be a “Red Ribbon” 5K on Saturday October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at Somerset High School at 9:00 a.m. It is \$15.00 to participate. All school districts and local families that have kids or students can sign up for free.

Ms. Maul said that they are continuing the “Spread the Red” Campaign where they are asking local businesses to provide some type of special that week. The goal this year is to have one participating business in every school district.

All information will be on the Somerset County Drug Free Community Facebook page.

# *Proclamation*

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*October 21<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> 2024*

- WHEREAS,** Communities across our nation have been plagued by the numerous problems associated with substance use; and
  - WHEREAS,** Substance abuse is specifically damaging to one of our most valuable resources, our children; and
  - WHEREAS,** The Red Ribbon Campaign is the oldest and largest drug prevention program in the nation, reaching millions of young people during Red Ribbon Week; and
  - WHEREAS,** Red Ribbon Week will be celebrated in every community from October 21 through October 31, 2024; and
  - WHEREAS,** UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Twin Lakes, and Somerset County Drug-Free Communities, and Adagio Health are sponsoring the Red Ribbon Week Campaign, whose mission is to present a unified and visible commitment toward the creation of a drug- and nicotine-free America, and
  - WHEREAS,** The Red Ribbon symbolizes a personal commitment to a drug- and tobacco-free lifestyle; and
  - WHEREAS,** Citizens of Somerset Borough are encouraged to join these efforts and unite to take a visible stand against drugs and nicotine by wearing a red ribbon and committing to quit or refusing to start using tobacco products; and
  - WHEREAS,** The Council and Mayor of the Borough of Somerset encourage its citizens to support the Red Ribbon Campaign of “Life is a Movie, Film Drug Free”.
- NOW, Therefore,** be it resolved that we, the Council and Mayor of the Borough of Somerset, in unison with the Somerset County Drug and Alcohol prevention providers, do hereby proclaim the week of October 21 through 31, 2024 as Red Ribbon Week and encourage its citizens to participate in drug and tobacco education and prevention activities to make a visible show of support for our strong commitment to a tobacco-free community.

**Be it further resolved that the Borough of Somerset encourages all citizens to pledge: "The Choice for Me, Drug and Tobacco Free!"**

Signed this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September 2024

c) Forest Technology Program – Discussion concerning participating in this program with the Somerset Technology Center for property owned by the Borough in Jefferson Township.

Ms. Enos said that the Borough owns almost 700 acres of property in Jefferson Township that surrounds our Water Treatment Plant area. This presents an opportunity for the Technology Center to have more of a hands-on program for their students.

An Instructor at the Technology Center, named Michael Glover, is a Licensed Forester. He would like to have access to this acreage owned by the Borough to cut down trees in multiple stages over multiple years.

Mr. Glover is a Licensed Forester, so if the Borough wants to do a select cut in that area, a survey can be done. The Borough, could in turn, receive money back from the felled trees. Mr. Glover can develop a plan for the bidding out of those services, and in the meantime, he is teaching his class on-field.

The Technology Center is not asking for anything whatsoever, and it will not cost the Borough anything. This would be for training purposes, but it would also act as a partnership with the Borough for the felled trees.

Ms. Enos added that if Council wanted to engage in further discussion about this subject, or authorize Management to move forward with this, the Borough's Attorneys can look into developing a more formal agreement to protect both parties' interests.

*As a whole, Borough Council authorized Management to move forward with this plan.*

d) Mary S. Biesecker Public Library Board – Consider the resignation of Annette Isgan from the Library Board of Directors.

**Motion**

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Hoffman seconded, to accept the resignation of Annette Isgan from the Library Board of Directors.

Motion Unanimously Carried

e) Mary S. Biesecker Public Library Board – Consider the appointment of Sarah Pile to serve the unexpired term on the Library Board of Directors.

**Motion**

Mrs. Ream moved, Mr. Mandichak seconded, to approve the appointment of Sarah Pile to serve the unexpired term on the Library Board of Directors.

Motion Unanimously Carried

f) Zoning Hearing Board – Consider appointing Mr. James Kibler to serve a five-year term on our Zoning Hearing Board.

Ms. Enos mentioned that there were two vacancies on our Zoning Hearing Board. One was filled a month ago. This will fill the other vacancy, which will then complete our five-member Zoning Hearing Board.

**Motion**

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Dirienzo seconded, to appoint Mr. James Kibler to serve a five-year term on our Zoning Hearing Board.

Motion Unanimously Carried

g) Special Labor Counsel – Consider the appointment of Attorney David Andrews as Special Labor Counsel for purposes of collective bargaining and special personnel matters.

**Motion**

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Dirienzo seconded, to appoint Attorney David Andrews as Special Labor Counsel for purposes of collective bargaining and special personnel matters.

Motion Unanimously Carried

**Committee Business/Reports:**

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

Ms. Enos mentioned that she, Chief Appel and Mayor Rosemeyer are moving forward with the Civil Service testing. All part-time Police Officers have the opportunity to apply for the Civil Service testing for full-time positions. This will start at the end of October.

Applications will have to be submitted, and then the physical and written testing will be held on the same day. Oral examinations will follow, depending on successful completion of the physical and written testing.

She added that prior to the end of this year, we should have a list of eligibles that we can move forward and budget properly for 2025.

i) Finance Report – Given by Brett Peters.

Mr. Peters provided Borough Council with the Financial Report through August 2024 earlier in the month. He mentioned that we are 8/12<sup>th</sup> of the way through the year or 66.67%.

**General Fund:**

Revenues – 91.54%

Expenses - 76.84%

**Water Fund:**

Revenues – 67.00%

Expenses – 66.02%

**Sewer Fund:**

Revenues – 68.95%

Expenses – 70.65%

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

Mrs. Sizemore said that for the Lead and Copper Inventory, there are 2,100 out of 2,833 customer service lines inventoried. 29 of the 459 services, on the system side, are currently inventoried.

There were 424 services that were replaced as part of the replacement project. We have not completed the meter pit activation, and removal of inside meter, as that is a Borough project. We are in the process of getting those scheduled and completed.

We are in the final stages of reviewing our data export, which will be submitted to DEP, with our consultant through the accelerator project.

Mrs. Sizemore said that we will be required to send out notices to all the customers that are “unknown.” The letter will state that that we are still inventorying services, and at this time, cannot say for sure whether their services is not comprised of lead. This letter is to go out by November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. She added that, in the meantime, we will still continue to work on the progress of our inventorying.

Mrs. Sizemore reiterated that all customer information is available online on the Boroughs website.

Mrs. Sizemore also mentioned that EADS has provided us with a draft study and proposed rate structure for the Stormwater Study which will be implemented in January 2025. Reviewing this information with Borough Council and the Municipal Authority was suggested by Mrs. Sizemore.

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

Mrs. Ream mentioned that meetings have been held at UPMC Somerset Hospital with UPMC Police. The hospital’s regional leader is Jeff Fisher, a retired PSP who oversees McKeesport. She said that they are very complementary of Somerset Borough Police Officers, noting that they get the best response from them than from any other areas they are at.

Mrs. Ream also mentioned that the hospital is going to plan for weapon incidences, which covers “active shooter”.

*l) Somerset Inc. Report – Given by Lee Hoffman.*

Mr. Hoffman mentioned that ongoing projects continue. He also noted that “Light Up Night” and “Fire & Ice” are right around the corner.

Mr. Hoffman disclosed that two new businesses will be opening in the Borough within the month. They are “Chubby Chipmunk”, an extension of “Fat Squirrel” in Jennerstown, and “Brewed Awakening Cafe.”

Mr. Hoffman also expressed his gratitude regarding the Games of Skill Zoning Ordinance. He said that there were two that popped up and were dealt with swiftly. He said that there have been complaints before Ordinances were enforced, so it was good to see those taken care of.

*m) PSAB Report – Given by Fred Rosemeyer.*

Mayor Rosemeyer mentioned that the PSAB Conference will be held in two weeks in Lancaster, PA. Next month, the County Borough’s Association will hold their meeting.

*n) Somerset Volunteer Fire Dept. Report*

*Borough Council received the Fire Dept. Report prior to the Council Meeting.*

*o) 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 Columbia Gas is doing their restoration this week. They are doing milling & overlay on the State roads. The week prior, Faccianno the Contractor for the Borough, was doing Center Avenue.

**GENERAL:**

**1) Center Ave. Sidewalk:**

Mr. Bolby said that there are a few minor items, such as line stripping and a couple of electrical components, that need to be taken care of on Center Avenue, then that project should be complete.

The waterline contractor is back in town taking care of “punch-list” items, which are “odds and ends” and a variety of items that either weren’t accomplished, or were not accomplished in compliance with the contract that they are being held to.

You will see a mixture of how they are approaching restoration, or being directed to excavate out where there are just weeds and re-doing that part. In other spots where there is a little bit of grass, they are being asked to fill in those bare spots so the grass will come back in.

There are other roadway-type items they need to take care of, as well. They started on the west end of town and are working their way back towards town.

Mr. Bolby noted that they are writing down everything the contractor does. He added that we are still under warranty, so monies are being held back until all punch-items are taken care of.

It was also mentioned that the restoration work that was done on the sidewalks by three different contractors was fabulous.

### **SEWER:**

Mr. Bolby mentioned that the Sewer Project is still under review with DEP. We are waiting to hear back from them. As soon as we do hear back, we can move forward.

#### *p) Mayor's Report – Given by Mayor Rosemeyer.*

Mayor Rosemeyer thanked Borough Council for taking their time to allow the Police Department to show them their new police vehicles before the Council Meeting. He noted that Scott has done a lot of unique things to the vehicles.

Mayor Rosemeyer also noted that two individuals were interviewed last week. They are hoping to hire two more part-time Police Officers.

Mayor Rosemeyer also mentioned the upcoming Civil Service testing. He said that those planning on taking the test will be provided with test preparation materials. Every Officer that applies will get a copy of this booklet to study. They will have the opportunity to review all the Civil Service information prior to testing.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

### **Motion**

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

Motion Unanimously Carried  
6:28 p.m.

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Michele A. Enos, Borough Manager/ Secretary