

The Borough of Somerset Council Meeting

February 24th, 2025 - 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, Steve Shaulis, Ian Mandichak and Mario Dirienzo.

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

c) **Also present were the following:** Borough Manager, Michele Enos; Administrative Assistant, Roger Bailey; Police Chief, Rich Appel; Municipal Authority Manager, Jessica Sizemore; Solicitor, James Cascio; Consulting Engineers, Tom Reilly and Jake Bolby.

d) **Public Attendance:** Matthew Kalp, Steve Peck and Alec Bittner.

4. **Approval of Agenda:** Consider approving the agenda as presented with one change being that the Executive Session will be at the beginning of the Council Meeting instead of at the end.

Motion

Mr. Dirienzo moved, Mr. Mandichak seconded, to approve the agenda as presented with one change being that the Executive Session will be at the beginning of the Council Meeting instead of at the end.

Motion Unanimously Carried

5. **Announcements:**

a) An executive session was held Thursday, February 13th at 4:00 p.m. for the purpose of Collective Bargaining, Potential Litigation, and Contract Agreements.

b) **Executive Session:** To discuss matters of collective bargaining and potential litigation.

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, seconded by Mr. Dirienzo, to go into Executive Session to discuss matters of collective bargaining and potential litigation.

Motion Unanimously Carried

5:05 p.m.

Back in Session

6:20 p.m.

6. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

a) January 27th, 2024 – *Borough Council Meeting Minutes.*

Motion

Mr. Shaulis moved, Mr. Hoffman seconded, to approve the January 27th, 2024 Borough Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

7. Award of Bids:

a) None

8. General Public Comments:

a) Melanie Heiple – *Representing the Union Street Playground Committee.*

Ms. Heiple reviewed the ideas and plans the Union Street Playground Committee are working on for the playground this summer.

Ms. Enos mentioned that discussion regarding the Playground Committee’s request to utilize CDGB funding for playground improvements is on the Agenda for this meeting. She noted that the CDGB funding that is applicable for playground improvements is currently unknown. Ms. Enos said that they are waiting for this information as to what can and what cannot be funded through CDGB funding. She added that Council needs to know this information prior to any playground improvements and their approval.

Mrs. Ream added that as soon as Ms. Heiple has the Committee’s plans solidified, Borough Council will need to discuss the plans before approving any changes to the playground.

b) Alec Bittner – *(Borough Resident)*

Mr. Bittner went before Council to voice his concern with the poor condition of the sidewalks in front of his business.

He was informed that this area is already being evaluated to be corrected.

9. Administrative Business:

- a) Communications – (none)
- b) Payment of Bills – Month of February 2025.

Motion:

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Mandichak seconded, to approve the payment of bills for the month of February 2025 numbered 42833 – 42963 totaling \$585,640.38.

Motion Unanimously Carried

- c) Department Reports – Consider approving the Departmental Reports for the month of January 2025.

Motion

Mr. Mandichak moved, Mr. Hoffman seconded, to approve the Departmental Reports for the month of January 2025.

Motion Unanimously Carried

10. Policy Agenda:

Old Business:

- a) None

New Business:

- a) Bulk Water Sales – Consider approving the updated Rules and Regulations for the Sale of Bulk Water as submitted by our Municipal Authority.

Ms. Enos said that from the current rate structure, we are catching up on bulk water rates to meet the current criteria.

She said that the water rates have also been reviewed by the Municipal Authority. It is being recommended that Borough Council also approve the adjustments in the rates for bulk water sales.

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Shaulis seconded, to approve the updated Rules and Regulations for the sale of bulk water as submitted by our Municipal Authority.

Motion Unanimously Carried

b) Tax Claim Bureau/Private Sale – Consider authorizing a “no objection” to the offer of Somerset County Redevelopment Authority to purchase property owned by Robert Mahler. (Lot on the 300 block of S. Edgewood Avenue)

Ms. Enos mentioned that this is just a lot, and Council has done this in the past. She added that Council has to approve a “no objection” for the Redevelopment Authority to purchase this property. It is being recommended that Borough Council approve this.

Motion

Mr. Dirienzo moved, Mrs. Opp seconded, to authorize a “no objection” to the offer of Somerset County Redevelopment Authority to purchase the property on the 300 block of S. Edgewood Avenue.

Motion Unanimously Carried

c) Tax Claim Bureau/Private Sale – Consider authorizing a “no objection” to the offer of John G. Coleman to purchase property owned by Kenneth P. Brewer of 345 West Fairview Street.

Ms. Enos this is also a “no objection” offer to the sale of property.

Motion

Mr. Mandichak moved, Mrs. Opp seconded, to authorize a “no objection” to the offer of John G. Coleman to purchase property owned by Kenneth P. Brewer of 345 West Fairview Street.

Motion Unanimously Carried

d) Municipal Authority Board – Consider the appointment of Attorney William Barbin to represent the Municipal Authority Board as Solicitor.

Mrs. Ream said this was previously discussed at Borough Council’s Special Meeting.

Motion

Mr. Dirienzo moved, Mrs. Opp seconded, to appoint Attorney William Barbin to represent the Municipal Authority Board as Solicitor.

Motion Unanimously Carried

e) Union Street Playground – Discussion and update on the request to utilize CDBG funding where applicable for playground improvements.

This was previously discussed among Council Members earlier in the meeting.

Committee Business/Reports:

f) Borough Manager’s Report – Given by Michele Enos.

Ms. Enos said that the sidewalk project concerns that Mr. Bittner earlier came before Council about will be looked into. Council will be notified after evaluation and information is known of what it will require.

g) Finance Report – Brett Peters

Mr. Peters submitted to Borough Council a Financial Report through January 2025. We are 1/12th of the way through the year or 8.33%.

General Fund:

Revenues – 2.66%

Expenses – 12.44%

Water Fund:

Revenues – 7.02%

Expenses – 9.38%

Sewer Fund:

Revenues – 6.72%

Expenses – 7.59%

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

Mrs. Sizemore said that she had nothing new to report.

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

Mrs. Ream mentioned the recent tragedy at UPMC Memorial Hospital in York, PA. She said that the flags at all UPMC facilities were at half-staff in honor of the Law Enforcement Officer that lost his life at UPMC Memorial Hospital.

Mrs. Ream expressed that UPMC Somerset Hospital’s staff recognizes the importance of the Somerset Borough Police Department. She added, that their response time is always exceptional.

Mrs. Ream said that, like York, PA, UPMC Somerset Hospital has seen an increase in the horrible treatment of their staff. She also mentioned that there is an overall mental health crisis because of the lack of mental health care here and in other communities.

Mrs. Ream thanked Chief Appel and the Somerset Borough Police Department’s team for all they do for the community.

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

Mr. Hoffman gave an update on the Brinker Building. Construction is moving along.

He mentioned that “Chalk the Block” planning is underway. It will be held this year on July 26th – 27th.

Mr. Hoffman noted that the Farmer’s Market will once again take place this year like it did last year.

k) PSAB Report – Given by Fred Rosemeyer.

Mayor Rosemeyer mentioned that PSAB will not start meeting until the spring.

Mayor Rosemeyer also noted that one of the Somerset Borough Police Officer's will receive the highest honor possible for first responders, the Carnegie Hero Award, at one of the County Borough's Association Meeting. Notices and invitations will be sent out.

l) Somerset Volunteer Fire Dept. Report – Given by Steve Shaulis.

Mr. Shaulis said that in the last week, there were 19 fire calls for the Somerset Fire Department. Friedens Fire Department had 6 fire calls. He mentioned that between the two fire companies, which is now officially known as the Somerset Regional Volunteer Fire Department, there was a total of 25 calls.

Mr. Shaulis said that the two Fire Departments are approximately 2 months into the merger, and everything is going well.

Discussion is being held between the two Departments about fund raising and how to space it out between both Departments. He added that the Somerset Fire Department recently held a Glow Bingo at the Friedens Fire Department and it was a tremendous fund raiser for them.

m) Engineer's Report – Given by Jake Bolby.

Mr. Bolby presented the updates to the Engineer's Report.

WATER/GENERAL: Center Ave. Sidewalk Project

Mr. Bolby said that the warranty items are still on the radar. They will be looked at once the weather breaks at the Center Avenue Project and the Water Project.

SEWER:

Mr. Bolby said we they will be looking at the application being reviewed by PennVEST in April 2025. More updates will follow.

n) Mayor's Report – Given by Mayor Rosemeyer.

Mayor Rosemeyer announced that Chief Appel was appointed to the Somerset County Emergency Planning Committee last week. He expressed that they are pleased and proud that he is now a part of the Planning Committee for County and State emergencies.

Mayor Rosemeyer mentioned the House Bill 2265, which is Act 131. It increases the pay for Council Members and the Mayor. He said that if an Ordinance is passed this year, it would not take effect until the Borough's budget in 2026.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved to adjourn; motion seconded by Mr. Dirienzo.

Motion Unanimously Carried

6:02 p.m.

Michele A. Enos, Borough Manager/ Secretary