

Borough of Somerset Council Meeting

November 25th, 2019 7:00 p.m.

1. Meeting Called to Order - President Ruby Miller

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call:

Council Members present: Ruby Miller; Fred Rosemeyer; Judy Pyle; Pam Ream; Sue Opp; Steve Shaulis, Gary Thomas.

Present: Mayor Scott Walker.

Also present: Junior Council Member Patrick Kuhn.

Also present were the following: Borough Manager, Michele Enos; Director of Finance, Brett Peters; Chief of Police, Randy Cox; Solicitor, James Cascio; Consulting Engineers, Tom Reilly and Jake Bolby.

4. Announcements:

(a) *None*

5. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

(a) ***October 14th, 2019 – Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes.***

Motion

Mr. Shaulis moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to approve the October 14th, 2019 Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(b) ***October 28th, 2019 – Special Budget Meeting Minutes.***

Motion

Mrs. Ream moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to approve October 28th, 2019 Special Budget Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(c) ***October 28th, 2019 – Borough Council Meeting Minutes.***

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Rosemeyer seconded to approve October 28th, 2019 Borough Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(d) Departmental Reports - Approval of Departmental Reports for October 2019.

Motion

Mr. Shaulis moved, Mrs. Ream seconded to approve the Departmental Reports for October 2019.

Motion Unanimously Carried

6. Award of Bids:

(a) None

7. General Public Comments:

(a) Mr. David Seifert, from Somerset Borough, expressed his concern to Borough Council regarding the vacant church in the Brierwood Area which has been abandoned for approximately one year. He stated this is a concern for the other residents in the Brierwood Area, as well.

8. Administrative Business:

(a) Communications (None)

(b) Payment of bills:

Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Thomas seconded, to approve the payment of bills numbered 34020 - 34159 totaling \$532,702.41.

Motion Unanimously Carried

9. Policy Agenda:

Old Business:

(a) None

New Business:

(a) Police Officers Commendation and Oaths of Office – Presentation by Chief Cox and Mayor Walker.

Officers David Thomas and Joseph Clement recited the Oath of Office, and were officially “sworn in” by Mayor Walker as officers in the Somerset Borough Police Department.

The Officers introduced themselves to Borough Council and disclosed their professional and personal backgrounds.

Officers Thomas and Clement were warmly welcomed by Borough Council to the Somerset Borough Police Department.

Mayor Walker also presented certificates of commendation to Officer Pile, Officer Scott Zelek, and Officer Justin Evans for their exemplary service to the Somerset Borough Police Department and Community.

The Officers, likewise, disclosed their professional and personal backgrounds to members of Borough Council.

Mayor Walker presented a letter of recognition, by Resolution, from the Somerset County Board of Commissioners to Officer Justin Evans for his dedication and exemplary service to the community.

Chief Cox added that he wanted to personally give commendation to the Officers, and their families, for all of their sacrifice and dedication they give to the Somerset Borough Police Department. He stated that everything the Officers are being recognized for was by their own initiative and hard work. Chief Cox expressed that he appreciated all that the Officers and their families do for the demands of the job.

On late arrival to the meeting, Officer Grus was also presented a certificate of commendation from Mayor Walker for his hard-working dedication and service to the Community.

(b) 2020 Tentative Budgets – Consider adopting the tentative budgets for the year 2020.

Mr. Peters said that after reviewing the 2020 Budget, with its Capital Request Items that were approved at previous meetings, the next step in the budget process is to adopt a tentative budget.

Mr. Peters mentioned that there is not a Real-Estate Tax increase or Water Rate increase in this budget. However, there is a .10 cent rate increase in the Sewer Fund.

Ms. Enos added that the Budget was reviewed by the Municipal Authority, and it is their recommendation to increase the Sewer rate by .10 cents/per 100 gallons of water, effective January 1st, 2020.

Motion

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mrs., Opp seconded, to adopt the tentative budgets for the year 2020.

Motion Unanimously Carried

Motion

Mr. Shaulis moved, Mr. Rosemeyer seconded, to accept the increase in the Sewer Rate to .10 cents/per 100 gallons of water, effective January 1st, 2020.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(c) Resolution No. 2019-13 – Consider designating the firm of Friedline, Pipon & Company to audit our 2019 Accounts.

Ms. Enos brought out that each year we have to designate a CPA to audit our accounts. This is done by Resolution.

RESOLUTION No. 2019-13

WHEREAS, The Borough of Somerset has by ordinance established the use of Certified Public Accountants to audit Borough Accounts, and;

NOW THEREFORE, We, the Council and Mayor of the Borough of Somerset designate Friedline, Pipon & Company to audit Borough Accounts for the year 2019.

ADOPTED this 25th day of November 2019.

Motion

Mrs. Ream moved, Mrs. Opp seconded, to designate the firm of Friedline, Pipon & Company to audit our 2019 Accounts.

Motion Unanimously Carried

(d) EPA Brownfield Grant Application - Consider authorizing \$7,500.00 for the cost in making application for this assessment grant.

Ms. Enos explained that they are doing strategic planning with the Somerset County Economic Development Council, along with the Redevelopment Authority of Somerset County, to look at some blighted properties and ways to potentially address some of these properties.

She said that Brownfield Grant is an opportunity for us to partner as a coalition with the Somerset County Economic Development Council and the Redevelopment Authority of Somerset County. The Borough is able to apply for a maximum amount of \$600,000.00.

Ms. Enos stated that if we were to receive this Brownfield Grant, we will be able to identify industrial and commercial properties in Somerset Borough that are blighted properties. The grant would help assess environmental issues surrounding these properties. She added that \$180,000.00 of this grant funding would be considered for “re-use” plans.

Ms. Enos brought out that the problem with some of the commercial and industrial structures is that before you would obtain any type of grant money, the assessment of the buildings is what is most important.

She pointed out that the grant application is due in December of 2019. She added that the Economic Development Council has supported this financially, as well.

Ms. Enos mentioned that the Borough's portion of this would be \$7,500.00 to make application for this potential grant. She added that it is not a local match of any kind.

Ms. Enos expressed that she would recommend this, and that it could be kept within the 2020 budget.

She brought out that this would be a good opportunity for us to move forward with some of these blighted properties and determine a "re-use".

Motion

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mrs. Pyle seconded, to authorize \$7,500 to be used for the cost in making application for the EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant.

Motion Unanimously Carried

Mr. Rosemeyer stated that the recent Somerset County Boroughs Association Meeting in Windber, PA was well attended with 52 in attendance.

He brought out that the PSAB President, representatives from 13 different County Boroughs, the County Commissioners; and Somerset County Row Officers were also in attendance.

Mr. Rosemeyer mentioned a speaker there who discussed the upcoming Census, and how important it is for Boroughs, Counties, as well as the State and Federal governments.

Mr. Thomas added how important the accuracy of the Census needs to be so that Somerset Borough is able to get monies from grants and other funding available to the Boroughs.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that individuals are also being sought after to work in taking the Census.

He stated that the process will begin in January 2020. By March 2020, the Census Count will begin. Completion has to be done by the first part of April 2020.

Mrs. Pyle brought out that the Historical Signs are at a standstill.

Regarding Trinity Park, Somerset Inc. is waiting for a larger grant that is forthcoming.

Mrs. Pyle added that Somerset Inc.'s office renovation is still underway.

Mrs. Pyle brought out that UPMC, Riggs Industries and Somerset Trust Company each donated \$50,000.00 to match the NPP Grant.

She also mentioned that "Light-Up Night" will be held on November 30th, 2019, and "Fire & Ice" will be held January 17th-19th, 2020.

Mrs. Pyle also mentioned the \$5,000.00 in grant monies for Uptown Façade Improvements. She disclosed that there is a business that received it, while another is applying for it.

10. Executive Session – To discuss Collective Bargaining with AFSCME Union, Personnel Issues and Potential Litigation.

Motion

Mr. Thomas moved, seconded by Mrs. Opp to go into Executive Session to discuss Collective Bargaining with AFSCME Union, Personnel Issues and Potential Litigation.

Motion Unanimously Carried
7:35 p.m.

Back in Session

8:02 P.M.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion

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

Motion Unanimously Carried
8:02 p.m.

Michele A. Enos, Borough Manager/ Secretary