

# Borough of Somerset Council Meeting

## October 26th, 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; Pam Ream; Sue Opp; Steve Shaulis and Gary Thomas

Absent: Council Member Lee Hoffman

Also present: Mayor Scott Walker.

Also absent: Junior Council Member Sierra Urban

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

### Public Attendance:

a) None

### 4. Announcements

a) None

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

a) September 28th, 2020 – *Borough Council Meeting Minutes.*

#### Motion

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Rosemeyer seconded to approve the September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Borough Council Meeting Minutes.

Motion Unanimously Carried

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

#### Motion

Mr. Thomas moved, Mrs. Ream seconded to approve the Departmental Reports for September 2020.

Motion Unanimously Carried

**6. Award of Bids:**

a) *None*

**7. General Public Comments:**

a) *None requested*

**8. Administrative Business:**

a) *Communications (None)*

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

**Motion**

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mrs. Opp seconded, to approve the payment of bills for October 2020 numbered 35549 - 35696 totaling \$886,193.68.

Motion Unanimously Carried

**9. Policy Agenda:**

**Old Business:**

a) *None*

**New Business:**

a) *Somerset Area Ambulance Association – Requesting a donation for the year 2021.*

Ms. Enos brought out that this donation request is an annual request we receive from the Somerset Area Ambulance Association. They are requesting a donation for the year 2021.

She explained that in the last several years, the Borough has made an annual donation of \$4,000.00, which was distributed in increments of \$1,000.00 each quarter.

Discussion was held among Borough Council Members regarding this request.

**Motion**

Mr. Thomas moved, Mr. Rosemeyer seconded to approve a donation of \$4,000.00 for the year 2021, to be distributed in increments of \$1,000.00 each quarter, to the Somerset Area Ambulance Association.

Motion Unanimously Carried

b) *Humane Society of Somerset County – Requesting a donation for the year 2021.*

Ms. Enos explained that the Borough contributed a donation of \$500.00 to the Humane Society of Somerset County in the year 2020. They are requesting a donation for the year 2021.

**Motion**

Mrs. Opp moved, Mr. Shaulis seconded to approve a donation of \$500.00, for the year 2021, to the Humane Society of Somerset County.

Motion Carried 5 yes - 0 no – 1 abstention  
(Mr. Rosemeyer Abstained)

c) Somerset Inc. – Requesting to sponsor a one-block ice sculpture and advertisement in their program guide book for the 2021 Fire & Ice Festival. (1-Block / \$290.00) (1/4 Page Ad / \$158.00)

Ms. Enos brought out that this is something Borough Council has authorized in the past. Somerset Inc.’s deadline will be approaching sometime in December for this request.

**Motion**

Mr. Rosemeyer moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to sponsor a one-block ice sculpture and advertisement in Somerset Inc.’s program guide book for the 2021 Fire & Ice Festival. Prices being \$290.00 for one-block of ice, and \$158.00 for a 1/4 Page Ad.

Motion Unanimously Carried

d) Resolution No. 2020-10 – Consider authorizing the deposit of Commonwealth monies into various Borough Pension Plans.

Ms. Enos explained that this needs to be done annually through Resolution form. She said that we receive monies from the Commonwealth for Borough Pension Plans.

Ms. Enos disclosed that the total amount of the Commonwealths Allocation is \$231,420.16. \$56,514.16 is deposited into the Non-Uniformed Collective Bargaining Pension Plan. The remaining amount of \$174,906.00 is deposited into the Police Pension Plan.

**Motion**

Mrs. Ream moved, Mrs. Opp seconded to authorize Resolution No. 2020-10. This authorizes the deposit of the Commonwealth monies into various Borough Pension Plans.

Motion Unanimously Carried

**Resolution No. 2020 - 10**

***WHEREAS***, the Borough of Somerset has received a direct deposit from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania dated September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in the amount of Two Hundred Thirty One Thousand, Four Hundred Twenty and 16/100 (\$231,420.16) Dollars, representing the Commonwealth’s allocation from the General Municipal Pension State Aid Program, and;

**WHEREAS**, Act 205 of 1984 provides that pension allocations must be deposited in the Municipal Pension Plan within thirty (30) days of receipt by the Municipal Treasurer, and;

**WHEREAS**, the governing body must determine by Resolution the amount to be distributed into its various plans;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Fifty Six Thousand Five Hundred Fourteen and 16/100 (\$56,514.16) Dollars be allocated to the Non-Uniformed Collective Bargaining Pension Plan; and One Hundred Seventy Four Thousand Nine Hundred Six and 00/100 (\$174,906.00) Dollars be allocated to the Police Pension Plan.

**ADOPTED** this 26th day of October 2020.

e) Waste Water Treatment Plant - We will be reviewing the "Public Outreach" letter being sent to all sewer customers about the projects associated with our Corrective Action Plan.

Ms. Enos said that this is something that was reviewed with the Municipal Authority. As owners of the infrastructure, the Corrective Action Plan is being overseen by the Municipal Authority.

Ms. Enos explained that the Municipal Authority Board has been making decisions based on Capital Projects associated with this Corrective Action Plan, which involves the Wastewater Treatment Plant being hydraulically overloaded. Included in the Corrective Action Plan, is providing public notice, outreach and education to our residents regarding this.

She explained that, initially, the Municipal Authority wanted the Borough to hold public meetings. Due to the corona virus, DEP suggested sending letters to all users in the system, a method that would be approved by them, as part of the Corrective Action Plan. Ms. Enos said that on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 the Borough will be certifying the letters at the Post Office to be mailed out to every user of the Sanitary Sewer System. She added that there will be periodic updates to these letters in the future.

*Ms. Enos reviewed the "Sanitary Sewer Customer Notification/Outreach" letters with Borough Council, for all users of the Sanitary Sewer System, as part of the Public Education and Outreach Program.*

Ms. Enos disclosed that a meeting with Somerset Township Municipal Authority was recently held in order to review the Borough's Corrective Action Plan. She explained that any of Somerset Township's lines that discharge into the Borough's Wastewater Treatment Plant, will require them to have to take the same Corrective Action Plan measures as the Borough. She said that further conversation will be held with Somerset Township regarding their plan and how they will handle it. Ms. Enos added that the Borough will have to incorporate the Townships' plan with the Borough's plan.

Ms. Enos also noted that DEP has released 20 new sewer tap connections as part of this Corrective Action Plan. The sewer taps need to be purchased prior to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020,

even if they will not be utilized until next year's construction season. The public has been notified of this, and the sewer taps are being purchased. She brought out that we had a list of individuals who were requesting sewer taps when the Borough was on a sewer tap ban. Ms. Enos added that Somerset Township will also be submitting a list of individuals interested in purchasing sewer taps.

Ms. Enos said that we can request more sewer taps next year. This request for additional sewer taps is made on a year to year basis. Ms. Enos added that if all of the Borough's 20 sewer taps are not purchased this year, the leftover sewer taps cannot be rolled over into 2021. A new request for another 20 sewer taps will have to be made in 2021.

Mr. Bolby brought out that having the sewer tap ban lifted was included in the Corrective Action Plan. As a result, development can continue in the Borough again.

Mr. Bolby also expressed that the public needs to be aware that they will be seeing Crews throughout the streets in the Borough performing the Cleaning & Televising work. This will continue into the year 2022.

*f) Tier III – Public Notification – We will be reviewing the “Public Notification” letter to all water customers to inform them of sampling requirements in the water distribution system.*

Ms. Enos disclosed that included with the “Sanitary Sewer Customers Notification/Outreach” letters sent to all customers, is a “Tier III - Public Notice” letter.

She explained that our Water Distribution Department has water sampling responsibilities, as does the Borough's other departments. The “Tier III” letter refers to a quarterly water sample that is taken on a pre-determined schedule, at a pre-determined location, in the lines of our water distribution system.

Ms. Enos brought out that on July 12, 2019, quarterly testing was to be done at the pre-determined site. During that same week, the Borough had three main water transmission line breaks on North Center Avenue. Due to these multiple main water line water breaks, the samples were not collected until July 22, 2019. Ms. Enos stated that when this oversight was discovered, the Water Distribution Department immediately told her, took the samples and notified DEP as required.

Ms. Enos explained that the “Tier III” letter is to inform the customers that the samples were taken outside of the seven-day window that DEP allots. She said that nothing was wrong with the water or the samples at that time. All the water samples came back within safe drinking water standards, but DEP requires that the public be informed that the samples were taken late.

Ms. Enos said that the “Tier” III letter explains that no action was needed, and the drinking water was not in jeopardy.

She disclosed that the water samples could have been taken three days before, the day of, or three days after the July 12<sup>th</sup> date. She reiterated that the same week the Borough had the three main transmission water lines break, the sampling was overlooked. She added that

this has never happened in the Borough before in all the years we have been doing water sampling.

Ms. Enos stated that she sent the “Tier III” letter to DEP, and they approved the Public Announcement as written. This letter will accompany the Corrective Action Plan letters that are going out on Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

*g) 2012 Dodge Charger – Chief Cox is requesting to purchase a 2012 Dodge Charger in the amount of \$6,500.00.*

Chief Cox mentioned that last year he planned to ask for a new Police cruiser. In the interest of the budget, he decided to wait one more year.

He disclosed that he came across a 2012 Dodge Charger, with a police package, from the Carnegie Mellon University Police Department with only 36,000 miles. The asking price is \$6,500.00. He said it would replace a 2006 Crown Victoria, which will not pass inspection in 2021 without major work being done to it.

Chief Cox pointed out that this wasn’t approved in the Capital Budget for this year, and there is no spendable money left in this year’s Capital Budget. As a result, the purchase price would be coming from the Police Departments Operating Budget which is currently approximately 2% over budget. With the cruiser’s purchase, the Police Department will be over-budget by the end of this year.

Chief Cox brought out that this vehicle will not be out on patrol, but will be used for Officers going to training and Court. They can use it as a transport vehicle, because it presently has a cage inside. Plus, there is a lot of equipment coming with the cruiser. He added that the Police Department also has enough spare parts for the upkeep of this vehicle, which will help minimize costs. He also mentioned that the cruiser will also need a small paint job to change the color coding on it.

Chief Cox requested Borough Council’s approval to purchase the 2012 Dodge Charger.

**Motion**

Mrs. Opp moved, Mrs. Ream seconded to approve the purchase a 2012 Dodge Charger in the amount of \$6,500.00 for the Somerset Borough Police Department.

Motion Unanimously Carried

Mr. Bolby brought out that the Digester Cleaning Project is complete and went smoothly. He added that the Operators at the Wastewater Treatment Plant are pleased.

Mr. Peters distributed Preliminary Budget Documents to Borough Council. He requested that Borough Council review the documents before the next Committee of the Whole Meeting where Budgets for 2021 will be discussed.

Mr. Peters highlighted the “General Fund Summary” in the Preliminary Budget Documents. He said that the numbers on the Summary does not reflect any Capital Requests for 2021, only the “day-to-day” operational budget. He said that, without a tax increase, he is projecting that the Budget will be with a \$79,000.00 deficit *before* any Capital considerations whatsoever. He noted that discussions with Borough Council will be held regarding whether that means a tax increase or reduction of some services to get to a balanced budget.

Ms. Enos stated that last year we used our Capital Reserves to make up the budget deficit that we proposed. She also expressed that when discussions are held regarding the budget with Borough Council, we can concentrate if there are areas we can cut or discuss what other options Council can consider.

Ms. Enos added that she and Mr. Peters will be meeting with the Staff to see where they can pair down some costs in their departments, and potentially go over some options that Borough Council can consider.

Mr. Peters reiterated that the Preliminary Budget Documents are the first draft, for discussion purposes only, that the other Departments haven’t considered yet. A meeting will be held with the Staff and Mr. Bolby.

**10. Executive Session** – To discuss labor negotiations involving the TEAMSTERS Union.

**Motion**

Mrs. Opp moved, seconded by Mrs. Ream to go into Executive Session to discuss labor negotiations involving the TEAMSTERS Union.

Motion Unanimously Carried  
5:38 p.m.

**Back in Public Session**

6:10 p.m.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion**

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

Motion Unanimously Carried  
6:10 p.m.

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Michele A. Enos, Borough Manager/ Secretary