

BOROUGH OF SOUTHMONT  
148 WONDER STREET  
JOHNSTOWN, PA 15905

MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 18, 2025

---

The pledge of allegiance was conducted, and the scheduled February 18, 2025 Council meeting was called to order by Vice President Sheree Speicher 4:00 p.m.

---

**Present:** Council Members Sheree Speicher, Bob Morgan, Richard Burkert, Eugene Kupchella, Herb Ewald and Matt McVicker, Borough Manager Amanda Layton; Police Chief William B.J. Newman; Engineer Andy Kordish; Solicitor Eric Hochfeld; Mayor Anthony Keiper; Asst. Sec. Debra Riek

**Absent:** Council Member Doug Beri, Fire Chief Steve Costic

**Visitors:** Mark Lazzari, (104 Milton St.); John Klanchar (104 Dahlia St.)

**Public Comment:**

Mr. Lazzari introduced himself as the new Executive Director of the Cambria Planning Commission noting he has already met most of council through his work as a consultant for the Active Transportation Plan. Mr. Lazzari stated the Planning Commission is there to be a vehicle for technical assistance and support for municipalities and welcomed council to contact him with any needs.

Mr. John Klanchar thanked the council for reviewing his father's request regarding the garbage and sewer maintenance fees and asked council to think with their hearts more when reviewing requests and complaints from residents and not get involved in neighbor disputes.

**Minutes**

Mrs. Speicher noted a correction was needed to the minutes to change RJA to JRA. A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve the January 21, 2025 council meeting minutes with the noted change. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. Mr. Beri absent. All in favor, motion carried (6-0).

**Police Chief's Report**

The February Police Chief's report was received. Chief Newman stated the department received a total of 359 calls in the month of January, 57 calls for Southmont Borough with 4 traffic violations and 4 warrants. Chief Newman asked if the borough could post No Parking signs at the intersection of Menoher Blvd. and Luzerne Street noting vehicles including emergency personnel are having issues turning onto Luzerne due to vehicles being parked there and the roadway being narrower due to the snow. Mr. Ewald stated that there are speeding reports on some side roads that the police need to monitor. Police Chief Newman stated he is aware of the problems on Cox Street and they have stopped a few vehicles in the area already.

**Fire Company Report**

The January 2025 Fire Chief's Report was received. Mrs. Speicher reported Chief Steve Costic and Assistant Chief Jim Carbaugh met with council before the meeting to discuss their interest in hosting the

**February 18, 2025 Minutes – Page 2 of 4**

annual firemen's convention during the 2027 Jubilee. A motion was made by Herb Ewald to table the request on approval to host the annual Firemen's Convention during 2027 Jubilee to obtain further information. Motion seconded by Matthew McVicker. Mr. Beri absent. All in favor, motion carried. (6-0).

### **Engineer's Report**

Mr. Kordish introduced himself as an architect for Stiffler McGraw that has been working on the roof replacement and building upgrade plans for the Local Share Account grant noting they are moving forward with preparing specs to begin the bidding process. Mr. Ewald suggested the engineer look into an issue of water coming into the building from the exterior steps in front.

### **Zoning Officer's Report**

The January 2025 Zoning Officer's Report was received. Solicitor Hochfeld stated he spoke with the solicitor for Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency and discussed that he does not agree with their stance that charges cannot be filed against LLCs due to needing the name of an individual and not a company to pursue action. Solicitor Hochfeld stated he will follow up with how the borough can move forward with those properties.

### **Solicitor's Report**

Solicitor Hochfeld stated the borough is awaiting Judge Kiniry to issue an order regarding the fence issue at 201 Leila Street.

Solicitor Hochfeld stated he spoke with Melissa Komar at JRA regarding 174 Floyd Street and noted JRA had a contractor look at the property to come up with suggestions on other possible avenues to alleviate the excess flow issue besides replacing the under-slab lines. Solicitor Hochfeld stated the contractor felt that if the property owner built something to keep water from entering a pipe located near the front stairs of the house that could potentially solve the issue. Solicitor Hochfeld stated he sent a letter to the property owner to inform them of the potential remedy giving them a timeframe to complete the work and the borough will put them on a list to reinspect during the next wet weather event.

### **Street Commissioner Report**

The January 2025 Street Commissioner Report was received and is on file. Mr. Morgan inquired if Mr. McAdams had any ideas for a solution for the inlet at Diamond Blvd. and Olive Street that is not connected and causing water to pool. Mr. McAdams stated there is an inlet above the one that is not collected and the water is diverting around it so the plan is to build that one up to attempt to catch as much water as possible for now until the bottom inlet can be connected to a stormwater line.

Mr. Ewald inquired about the runoff issue on Floyd Street that caused an issue with ice over the winter. Mr. McAdams stated the water is coming from a resident's driveway, so the plan is to put a concrete lip at the end of the driveway when weather permits.

### **Borough Manager Report**

The Borough Manager's report was received and is on file. Mrs. Speicher inquired about the status of 92 Thoburn Street that recently caught on fire. Mrs. Layton stated that the property owners insurance company reached out and will be sending a check to open a fire escrow account.

**Mayor's Report**

Mayor Keiper reported that he was sent a surveillance video from a resident on Cox Street showing what appeared to be a vehicle speeding down Cox Street.

**Committees:**

**Administration:** Nothing to report.

**Community Planning & Improvement:**

Mrs. Speicher questioned whether the borough is bound to complete the action items in the proposed Active Transportation Plan if it is approved. Solicitor Hochfeld stated council would not be bound to completing the action items noting they would just be approving the plan at this point and additional action would be needed to move forward with any of the action items listed. Mr. A motion was made by Mr. Ewald to approve the Active Transportation Plan. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. Mr. Beri absent. All in favor, motion carried (6-0).

**Emergency Management:** Nothing to report.

**Finance:** Nothing to report.

**GJWA:** Mr. Kupchella stated work was moving forward on the North Fork Dam renovations.

**MS4/Stormwater:** Nothing to report.

**Personnel:** Nothing to report.

**Police:** Nothing to report.

**Property Maintenance and Streets:** Mr. McVicker stated the committee will be meeting on March 11, 2025 to finalize review of the updated sidewalk ordinance so it can be approved for advertising at the March 17, 2025 monthly meeting.

**Shade Trees:** Mr. Burkert reported council approved the submission of a request to apply for funding through the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies at the January 2025 meeting that would be contingent upon approval of a grant through DCNR to complete a tree study. Mr. Burkert stated the applications are due in April so the committee will be requesting approval to submit the DCNR grant application at the next monthly meeting. Mr. Burkert stated the minimum grant request is \$50,000 and requires a twenty percent match, which is what the funding through the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies will cover.

**Business Items**

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve Resolution 2025-01, authorizing the disposition of records. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. Mr. Beri absent. All in favor, motion carried (6-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve the updated delinquent sewer maintenance policy. Mrs. Speicher inquired if the procedures to collect delinquent sewer maintenance fees be listed in order instead of giving the Borough Manager or Borough Secretary freedom to choose which action to take. Motion died for lack of a second. A motion was made by Mr. Kupchella to table the approval of the updated delinquent sewer maintenance policy. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. Mr. Beri absent. All in favor, motion carried (6-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Burkert to approve the updated delinquent garbage policy. Motion seconded by Mr. Morgan. Mr. Beri absent. All in favor, motion carried (6-0).

Mr. Morgan and Mr. McVicker left the meeting at 4:51 p.m. due to other commitments.

A motion was made by Mr. Burkert to approve ratification of payroll from January 22, 2025 through February 18, 2025 in the amount of \$16,559.89. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. Mr. Beri, Mr. Morgan and Mr. McVicker absent. Roll call: Mr. Burkert, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Ewald, and Mr. Kupchella. All in favor. Motion carried (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Ewald to approve payment of bills from January 22, 2025 through February 18, 2025 in the amount of \$136,720.62. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. Mr. Beri, Mr. Morgan and Mr. McVicker absent. Roll call: Mr. Burkert, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Ewald, and Mr. Kupchella. All in favor. Motion carried (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Burkert to approve transfers from January 22, 2025 through February 18, 2025 in the amount of \$92,962.00. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. Mr. Beri, Mr. Morgan and Mr. McVicker absent. Roll call: Mr. Burkert, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Ewald, and Mr. Kupchella. All in favor. Motion carried (4-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Burkert to approve the January 2025 treasurer's report. Motion seconded by Kupchella. Mr. Beri, Mr. Morgan and Mr. McVicker absent. All in favor, motion carried (4-0).

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Burkert for the adjournment of the February 18, 2025 meeting at 4:56 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. Mr. Beri, Mr. Morgan and Mr. McVicker absent. All in favor, motion carried (4-0).

Respectfully submitted,  
Debra Riek  
Assistant Secretary