

BOROUGH OF SOUTHMONT  
148 WONDER STREET  
JOHNSTOWN, PA 15905

MINUTES FOR MARCH 18, 2024

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The pledge of allegiance was conducted, and the scheduled March 18, 2024, council meeting was called to order by President Beri at 4:00 p.m.

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**Present:** Mayor Anthony Keiper, Council Members Doug Beri, Sheree Speicher, Robert Morgan, Richard Burkert, Eugene Kupchella, Herb Ewald, Matthew McVicker, Borough Manager Amanda Layton; Street Commissioner Sam McAdams; Sgt. William "B.J." Newman, Fire Chief Steve Costic, Engineer Scott McEldowney

**Visitors:** Bob Walker (312 State Street), Larry Koval (336 Orchard Street), John A. Klanchar (104 Dahlia Street)

**Public Comments:**

Mr. Walker suggested that council have someone on staff to monitor new construction projects noting a fence has been installed at 201 Leila Street without a permit and also suggested that paving bids be advertised sooner in the year.

Mr. Koval thanked council for painting a stop bar and adding additional signage to bring more attention to the new stop sign at the intersection of Olive Street and Orchard Street.

Mr. Klanchar reported there is rebar sticking up in the right of way of the property located at the corner of Lettuce Alley and Harshberger Road owned by Francis and Judy Kelly that he feels is a hazardous situation noting he would give the borough the benefit of a few days to handle the situation.

**Minutes**

Mr. Ewald requested the February 20, 2024 minutes include mention of the brakes of the 2021 Ford plow truck that he would like to be inspected because he feels they are unsafe, which was mentioned under the Mayor's Report when Mayor Keiper read a text message that was sent to him by Mr. Ewald. A motion was made by Mr. Burkert to approve the February 20, 2024 minutes with Mr. Ewald's change. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. Motion carried (7-0).

**Police Report**

Chief Newman reported 387 calls were received for the month of February noting 72 of those calls were in Southmont Borough. Chief Newman stated there is an ongoing issue with thefts from unlocked vehicles noting residents need to lock vehicles and make sure valuables are not left in the vehicle.

**Fire Company Report**

Chief Costic reported 17 calls were received for the month of February noting 4 of those calls were in Southmont Borough. Chief Costic stated the fire company is looking to purchase two AED units for their vehicles and noted they noticed the borough building does not have a unit. Chief Costic asked if council would be willing to look into purchasing a unit for the building so that we could possibly save on the cost

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by purchasing three units at once. Chief Costic will get prices for council for the next meeting noting the estimated cost is approximately \$1,500.

Mrs. Layton stated council previously approved reimbursing the fire company for the cost of their annual audit, but missed making an amendment to the current agreement with the fire company to reflect that decision so Solicitor Hochfeld drafted an amendment for both parties to review and approve. A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve the amendment to the agreement with the Southmont Volunteer Fire Company contingent upon the approve of the Southmont Volunteer Fire Company. Motion seconded by Mr. Morgan. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

### **Engineer's Report**

Mr. McEldowney reported that Stiffler McGraw installed two flow meters on Southmont Blvd. and Helen Street on March 12<sup>th</sup> and there are fifteen reinspections left to be done from the excess flow list. Mr. McEldowney reported that a camera was run through the sanitary sewer line behind ICare along Menoher Blvd. after a report of a severe backup noting they found a major break at the edge of the ICare parking lot noting they suspect work done to the parking lot a few years ago could be the cause of the damage.

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

Mrs. Speicher reported the borough is not seeing any follow up on property maintenance violation notices that have been submitted to Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency noting the initial notices are sent out quickly, but the follow up is lacking. Solicitor Hochfeld reported he spoke with Attorney Barbin, who represents LMIA and noted he will follow up with the process of LMIA moving forward with violations. Mrs. Speicher requested Mrs. Layton look into other options for property maintenance enforcement in the meantime.

### **Solicitor's Report**

Solicitor Hochfeld reported that the borough can recoup costs associated with items such as filing liens, but are required to adopt an ordinance to adopt a schedule of attorney's fee, which he will draft for the next meeting.

Solicitor Hochfeld requested an executive session at the end of the meeting to discuss the Westmont Hilltop School District crossing guard issue.

### **Street Commissioner's Report**

Mr. Ewald stated he was upset that the 2021 Ford plow truck has not been taken to the dealership for a recall on the brakes noting that it is a hazard for employees and residents if the brakes go out. Mr. McAdams stated the recall is for the windshield wipers not the brakes and the brakes are fine as long as the truck is driven appropriately. Mr. Beri requested that Mr. McAdams schedule an appointment to have the brakes looked over and if winter weather comes in the meantime and residents are upset they should be directed to Mr. Ewald.

### **Borough Manager Report**

Mrs. Layton reported that the unauthorized fence at 201 Leila Street has been reported to Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency and as far as she knows charges are being filed against the property owner. Mrs. Layton reported a pre-paving meeting has been scheduled with PennDOT to review the list of suggested paving so that bids could be advertised. Mrs. Layton stated that next year she would like to

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start the paving plans earlier, but the required pre-paving meeting with PennDOT is scheduled based on PennDOT's availability so she can't guarantee how early the bids can be prepared.

### **Mayor's Report**

Nothing to report

### **Committees:**

**Administration/Borough Services:** Nothing to report.

**Community Planning & Improvements:** Mr. Burkert reported that the Cambria County Planning Commission has been talking to surrounding municipalities regarding the possibility of creating a multi-municipal comprehensive plan that could assist in obtaining grants in the future.

**Emergency Management:** A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve the updates to the Emergency Operations Plan Municipal & Emergency Service Officials & Resource List. Motion seconded by Mr. Morgan. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

**Finance:** Mrs. Speicher reported she met with Mrs. Layton to review the budget to date noting everything is on track and the committee will begin meeting in July to discuss next year's budget.

**Greater Johnstown Water Authority:** Mr. Kupchella reported the North Fork Dam bridge is to be replaced noting the grants may be in place by summer and after North Fork Dam the authority will be moving onto Dalton Dam for work that needs to be done. Mr. Kupchella reported that the new water tank is being disinfected and should be in service this week and there are plans to paint the Franklin Street and Prospect tanks.

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

**Personnel:** Nothing to report.

**Police:** Nothing to report.

**Property Maintenance, Streets and Sidewalks:** Mr. McVicker reported the committee met with Mrs. Layton and the Public Works Department to review upcoming goals and will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to review the previous quarters goals and set goals for the upcoming quarter.

**Shade Tree:** Mr. Burkert reported there is a grant through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources that the borough could apply for to assist with hiring a team of professionals to go through the borough to inspect and create a plan for shade trees, but it would require a 20% match since the borough is not considered a distressed community noting he will provide more information for the finance committee to look at for next years budget. Mr. Ewald suggested planting a tree for Arbor Day in honor of the late Ronald Kautz who was a member of the Southmont Volunteer Fire Company.

### **New Business:**

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve Ordinance No. 550, updating stormwater ordinance. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

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A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve advertising bids for grass cutting of borough properties. Motion seconded by Mr. Morgan. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve Resolution 2024-01, disposition of records. Motion seconded by Mr. Morgan. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve attendance to the 2024 Cambria County Boroughs Association Spring Dinner being hosted by Ebensburg Borough and held on April 16, 2024. Motion seconded by Mr. Morgan. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

**Business Items:**

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve ratification of payroll from February 21, 2024 to March 18, 2024 in the amount of \$13,294.29. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. Roll call: Mr. Burkert, Mr. Kupchella, Mr. Ewald, Mr. Beri, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. McVicker in favor. Motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Burkert to approve payment of bills from February 21, 2024 to March 18, 2024 in the amount of \$119,086.83. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. Roll call: Mr. Burkert, Mr. Kupchella, Mr. Ewald, Mr. Beri, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. McVicker in favor. Motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve transfers from February 21, 2024 to March 18, 2024 in the amount of \$60,787.00. Motion seconded by Mr. Mr. Burkert. Roll call: Mr. Burkert, Mr. Kupchella, Mr. Ewald, Mr. Beri, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. McVicker in favor. Motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mrs. Speicher to approve the February 2024 Treasurer's Report. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve entering Executive Session at 4:47 p.m. to discuss legal and personnel issues. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. All in favor, motion carried (7-0). Executive Session ended at 4:58 p.m. and council resumed the regularly scheduled meeting.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mrs. Speicher for adjournment of the March 18, 2024, meeting at 4:58 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Layton  
Borough Manager