

April 5, 2021 6:30 PM

REGULAR MEETING OF SWOYERSVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council President Keating calls the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call was taken, those present included Mr. Christian, Mr. Cwalina, Mr. Menta, Mr. Olejnick and Mr. Keating. Also noted as present were Mayor Concert, Attorney Yeager, Borough Solicitor and Gene Breznay, Borough Manager and Rob Koval, Street Department. Councilman Cwalina and Councilman Brown were noted as absent. Mr. Keating extended wishes for a speedy recovery for Mr. Brown who was recently injured in a fall.

A motion was requested by Mr. Keating to accept the minutes from the March 1, 2021 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Olejnick and seconded by Mr. Menta. Vote was 4-0 in favor.

Monthly bills totaling \$42,150.17 were presented by Ms. O'Donnell, Council Secretary. A motion for approval of the monthly bills was made by Mr. Menta and seconded by Mr. Olejnick. Vote was 4-0 in favor.

BOROUGH COORDINATOR REPORT

- Mr. Breznay presented an update on the County Block Grant (2020) bids for street paving and an update on the LSA (Casino) Grant applications. It is anticipated that the Borough will receive an answer in May 2021 regarding the status of the County Block Grant. It is also noted that the awarding of the LSA (Casino) Grant application has been postponed to May 2021.

- Mr. Breznay questioned if there is an update as to when Borough Council meetings will be open to limited public attendance? Mr. Keating announced that open Borough Council meetings with a limited attendance of 10 (ten) residents will occur with the May 2021 meeting. Attendance will be on a first come first serve basis with residents being able to pre-register to attend online or by calling the Borough. Residents will be rotated according to the spot held in line so that all residents have an opportunity to attend a meeting. The first 10 residents will attend the May meeting, the next 10 residents on the list will attend the June meeting, etc. CDC guidelines regarding masks and social distancing will be required for attendees.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance: Mr. Christian presented the February 2021 Finance Report. **General Fund:** beginning checkbook balance: \$21,167.15; transfers & revenue for the month: \$166,146.08; Expenses & Transfers for the month: \$97,643.24; ending checkbook balance: \$89,669.99. **Liquid Fuels:** beginning checkbook balance: \$200.27; transfers and revenue for month: \$19,900.41; expenses and transfers for the month: \$19,927.41; ending checkbook balance: \$173.27. **Solid Waste Collection:** beginning checkbook balance: \$55,695.59; transfers and revenue for the month: \$33,028.15; expenses and transfers for the month: \$62,057.88; ending checkbook balance: \$26,665.86. **Sanitary/Storm Water Assessment:** beginning

checkbook balance: \$9,276.91; transfers and revenue for the month: \$613.73; expenses and transfers for the month: \$2,314.97; ending checkbook balance: \$7,575.67.

Liaison Officer: Mr. Christian presented a letter on behalf of Mike Galanda, Zoning Officer requesting approval of a subdivision for the property located at the corner of Main Street and Warsaw Street. It was noted that the Swoyersville Borough Planning Commission met on 3/29/21 to discuss the subdivision and voted to approve it. A motion was made by Mr. Christian to approve the subdivision and seconded by Mr. Olejnick. Vote was 4-0 in favor.

- Mr. Christian shared that with the discussion of dug outs at Roosevelt Field at last month's meeting, Charles Romanchick from the Legion Baseball presented a proposed estimate of \$1,216.71 for materials to build a dug out. Mr. Romanchick does have some to install the dug outs with overhead protection and would also be looking for volunteers to help. Mr. Christian recommended that the funds come out of the Recreation Board Fund. A motion was made by Mr. Menta to approve the proposal and for funds to come out of the Recreation Board Fund. Motion was seconded by Mr. Olejnick. Vote was 4-0 in favor. Mayor Concert shared that the design for the dug outs will need to be reviewed and approved by the engineer to ensure that the construction is safe.

- Mr. Christian shared he was approached by a resident from Mountain Street regarding a pile of wood along the road on the sidewalk. Mike Galanda will be notified to look at the issue.

- Mr. Christian made a motion to advertise for the Recreation Board to be reactivated & reopened for members. The motion was seconded by Mr. Menta. Vote was 4-0 in favor.

- Mr. Christian shared he was approached by a resident of Poland Street regarding the condition of the ground where a gas line was installed to his home. There was gravel placed and it is starting to sink. Mr. Breznay shared he was aware of the concern and that that the gravel will be removed and will be replaced with topsoil.

Street Department: Mr. Olejnick shared that Jeff Zupko, Street Department Supervisor is requesting approval to advertise for summer help. Mr. Olejnick made a motion to advertise to hire 2 (two) summer help positions at \$10.00 per hour. Motion was seconded by Mr. Christian. Vote was 4-0 in favor.

- Mr. Olejnick shared with Council that the Street Department is currently experiencing some issues with uniforms. Rob Koval, Street Department, informed Council that since going with the new company only two out of the five employees currently working have full uniforms (shirt/pant). Issues with correct sizing and clothing sent for cleaning not being returned to employee were also noted. Employees are wearing their own clothing many times due to the issues. The question of an allowance for clothing with still staying with a "uniform" was presented. Both the Street Department and Gene Breznay, Borough Manager have reached out to the vendor in attempts to resolve the issue. Council recommends reaching out to the vendor one more time with a set deadline for resolution of the issues discussed. The Street Department has contacted Keefer's to obtain estimate of costs for employees to purchase their own "uniforms".

-Mr. Olejnick followed up on an issue previously discussed regarding the condition of the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority property on Railroad Street. Nothing has been done to clean up the area. Mr. Breznay will reach out again to the Authority with the concern. Mayor Concert shared that Mike Galanda, Zoning Officer did send the Authority a letter requesting them to clean up the railroad tracks.

Police Department: Mr. Menta read the police report for March 2021 which included a summary of Crossing Guard hours. There was a total of 212 service calls, 4 vehicle accidents and 1 Borough ordinance violations. Fees collected totaled \$265.65. A motion was made by Mr. Menta to place monies in the appropriate fund and seconded by Mr. Olejnick. The vote was 4-0 in favor.

Fire Department: No report at this meeting. Mr. Keating did share a suggestion made by Mayor Council that Council get together with both Fire Companies to get a better understanding of the future of our Fire Companies to include issues they may have and what their future goals are. Mayor Concert was asked to coordinate a meeting and include to include Mr. Cwalina.

Mayor Concert: Mayor Concert

- Mayor Concert extended a thank you to Officer Wolinsky for helping him with a trash cleanup along the back road which took several hours.
- Mayor Concert shared that Saturday, April 24th, is the opening day of Little League. The rain date is set for Sunday, April 25th. A parade will begin at 10:00 am at Roosevelt Field.
- Mayor Concert shared that Sunday, April 11, 2021, weather permitting, he will be hosting "Story Time with The Mayor" at 12:00 noon in the Borough Parking lot. Parents must stay with their children. There will be a few guest readers. A thank you was extended to the Little Library for keeping it stocked with books.
- Mayor Concert announced that the Memorial Day Parade will be on May 31st and will start at 10am.
- Mayor Concert shared the Annual Community Yard Sale is scheduled for Saturday, June 5, 2021, 9am until 2pm. Residents interested in participating can email their address to Swoyersvillemayor@gmail.com.
- Mayor Concert announced that on Sunday, June 6, 2021, the "Mayor Concert's Polka on the Corner" featuring the John Stevens Polka Band will be traveling through Swoyersville performing about 4 songs at several corners. Approximate times will be announced in May. Thank you to Chervy Coal Co. & Lawncare for being the 1st sponsor for this event. Additional sponsors would be greatly appreciated.
- Mayor Concert will be hosting a cleanup at all 3 parks in the Borough in May 2021. Clean up will involve painting, planting flowers and more. The exact date will be set shortly.
- Mayor Concert, as Mayor and Kiwanis Club Member, will be hosting a free hotdog and soda give-a-way on Friday, May 14, 2021 down at the ballpark.
- Mayor Concert will be holding the Strawberry Social (with ice cream) in June.
- Mayor Concert shared an idea about approaching the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority about the possibility of taking over the railroad property if they cannot keep up with maintaining it and creating a "trail along the rail" for residents to walk.
- Mayor Concert presented a question to the Street Department surrounding single streaming which involves throwing everything together which costs the Borough \$55/ton where if co-mingled or

newspaper/cardboard is separated from cans/bottles the cost would only be \$25/ton. Mayor Concert questioned why it was not being separated. Rob Koval shared a few reasons, one being the lack of manpower (Dept is down one employee due to injury), the time involved to do it along with the resulting need to make 4-5 trips to the recycling center. Mr. Olejnick made a motion to advertise for a temporary part time worker at \$13.00/hour until the injured employee returns. The motion was seconded by Mr. Menta. The vote was 4-0 in favor.

- Mayor Concert asked if there is a way that the Basketball Courts can be refinished/repainted. Council requested that the Street Department obtain estimates on what the cost to refinish/repaint the courts would be and to present at the May 2021 meeting.

- Mayor Concert presented a letter from Ryan Binkley requesting speed limit signs be evaluated for several roads within Ward 2. Mr. Binkley, on behalf of residents of Ward 2, shared concerns regarding speeding. Residents would like 25 mph speed limit signs placed on several streets within the Ward. A request was also made for Playground Signs. Mr. Keating shared that Council is currently and has been during the past several months looking at several areas/streets within the Borough in regard to speed limit signs & SLOW stenciling. The Street Department was requested to check to see if the Borough has any "playground/children at play" signs. Speed limit signs will be considered for any areas where violations are noted. The police department is working to monitor & maintain speed limits within the Borough. Chief Castner explained setting & enforcing of speed limits within the Borough. Chief Castner will meet with Mr. Binkley to discuss his concerns further.

Attorney Yeager: Attorney Yeager acknowledged two pieces of correspondence received by his office from Gene Breznay. Attorney Yeager advised Council & the individual(s) submitting the correspondence that the letters were reviewed and conversations were held with the Chief of Police. The concerns will be addressed & a meeting will be held with the District Attorney's Office to determine what the appropriate action or remedy would be.

Old & New Business:

- Mr. Christian requested follow up on the property issue presented at the last meeting. Mayor Concert shared that Mike Galanda, Zoning Officer, did meet with the property owner regarding the need to move the shed/structure that was too close to the home and to clean up the property, both to which the owner agreed to do. Mr. Christian requested that Chief Castner follow up with the issue as residents of Steeple Chase are concerned about it.

- Mr. Breznay presented a bid for the police vehicle that is no longer operable. The bid starting rate was set at \$1500. A bid of \$2,855.00 was received from Bay Ridge Motors Incorporated, Staten Island, NY with a 10% down payment received as required. A motion was made by Mr. Menta to accept the bid of \$2,855.00 and was seconded by Mr. Christian. The vote was 4-0 in favor.

- Mayor Concert shared that he is receiving a lot of complaints from residents about the water being brown throughout the Borough. Mayor Concert requested Mr. Breznay to check with the Water Company to see what the issue may be. Any information obtained will be posted on the Borough's face book page.

- Chief Castner shared with Council that a previous approved request for a handicap parking sign placement on Diamond Street was unable to be occur due to an additional approval of "No Parking" signs being placed on the same street. With this, the resident submitted a second request to have the handicap sign approved in lieu of the no parking which was denied. A third request was made to place the sign

across the street from the resident's home. This could not be considered due to an existing garage & access way to the road. The resident then asked to have the sign placed across the street but up to the right of the access way. After reviewing the issue further with Mr. Breznay it was noted that an applicant that has a driveway can receive a handicap spot if the spot would be closer to the resident's front door than the driveway. In this case, the resident's driveway is closer to the resident's front door than where the handicap parking site would be located across the street. With this, it is recommended that the request to place the sign across the street not be approved. Council agreed with the recommendation. Chief Castner will meet with resident to discuss decision.

-Mr. Breznay shared with Council that there were several questions & concerns posted on the Borough Facebook page regarding the replacement/relocation of a fire hydrant on Warsaw Street. Mr. Breznay shared a letter that was received from the Pennsylvania American Water Company on March 29, 2021 that addresses the hydrant. The letter addresses a change in the status of the hydrant at 476 Warsaw Street in Swoyersville. The hydrant at that location is not a public hydrant and is not able to be used for public safety purposes. There is a storage tank in this area that is being removed in the near future. A pump station located on Owens is used to provide system pressure and provides a relatively constant pressure to the area distribution system. The private hydrant will be painted a different color in order to help the various agencies know that it is not a public hydrant. A replacement hydrant has been installed down the hill at 385 Warsaw and is now in service. The hydrant list has been updated to reflect the changes.

MEETING OPENED TO THE PUBLIC

-Ed Connor commented that if the Rec Board is revitalized, it must be independent and remain autonomous. Mr. Connor questioned if there will be 9 members on the Board. Council noted that the Rec Board is an advisory board and cannot make decisions for spending money or awarding projects on their own. Council is the only entity that can do that. Mr. Connor also asked if there is money in the Rec Fund to cover the materials cost for the dugouts.

-Several residents posted comments addressing speeding, running stop signs, etc. within the Borough. Council noted during the meeting that the Police Department has increased their monitoring activities throughout Swoyersville. The Borough continues to address these concerns with placement of speed limit signs, SLOW stenciling, etc. as appropriate and warranted. It was also noted that several resident comments were posted sharing that an increase in monitoring has been noticed within the Borough.

-A few comments were posted by residents regarding not being able to hear clearly those who do not speak with a microphone. Council acknowledged the concerns and has asked those speaking without a microphone to approach the podium.

-Bill Hooper stated it may be time to push for State Assistance to assist with recycling costs.

-Joyce Cooper requested that the Police Department patrol the Roosevelt Field area once Baseball starts again. Parking has created some difficulties as many do not obey the no parking signs and this creates difficulty with getting through the street. Chief Castner will look at the issue. Mr. Christian also shared that 911 can be called when the violation is observed.

-Mark Nenichka commented that the Borough Engineer must approve the design of dugouts at Roosevelt Field to protect the liability of the Borough. Involving the Engineer was addressed by Mayor Concert during the meeting.

-Mark Nenichka questioned if the water company has improved pressure to eliminate the tank at the top of Warsaw Street? Mr. Christian shared that he spoke to the water company and was assured that they have Engineers who evaluate these types of issues and if needed, a larger tank can be evaluated.

-Ryan Binkley questioned the status on the truck purchase discussed at the last meeting. Council shared that the truck has been ordered.

-Jerome Kuczynski thanked the road crew for doing a fantastic job cleaning and keeping our streets safe during this past winter.

-Kelsey Cunningham shared that there is a deck that has been down for three plus years and is falling over into my shared driveway.

-Christine Orlandini would like to thank the Street Department for all the work they did removing the multiple bags of garbage that she needed to put out.

-Mr. Christian thanked Mike Galanda for the work done with getting a recent subdivision approved.

-Ryan Brinkley questioned if there was any word on when a repaired sewer line that was filled with gravel on Jay Street will be repaved. Council shared that it is not clear if the issue was completely resolved and that there have been discussions between the Water Company and The Sanitary Authority as to who is responsible for the issue.

-Bill Hooper recommended Dempsey Uniform for consideration of clothing for the Street Department.

-A comment was posted requesting a 15 mile per hour speed limit sign on Tripp Street. There no cross walk at Tripp & Scott where a school bus stops. The street is very busy. Mayor Concert requested that the crosswalk painting be added to the Street Department list.

-Kelley Ceppa Conner asked if the grant application for the handicap park equipment is being held up with the other casino grants. Gene Breznay noted that the application is separate from the grants that are being held up.

-Mr. Christian complimented Mayor Concern on a great job done with the Bumper Bunny event.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Keating and seconded by Mr. Olejnick. Vote was 4-0 in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 07:42 pm. Next meeting will be held on May 3, 2021 at 6:30 pm.



Barb O'Donnell
Borough Council Secretary

William Keating
Council President