

FEBRUARY 6, 2023 - 6:30 PM
REGULAR MEETING OF SWOYERSVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council Vice President Christian calls the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call was taken, those present included Mr. Binkley, Mr. Brown, Mr. Christian, Mr. Lamereaux and Mr. Olejnick. Also present were Mayor Concert, Gene Breznay, Borough Manager, Dave Hampton, Street Department and Attorney Yeager, Borough Solicitor. Mr. Cwalina, Council President was noted as absent.

A motion was requested by Mr. Christian to accept the minutes from the January 3, 2023 regular meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Olejnick and seconded by Mr. Brown.

Mr. Lamereaux commented on Council receiving a letter of resignation from Kyle Castner on 1/4/23 which is now noted as part of the February 6, 2023 meeting minutes.

Monthly bills totaling \$49,376.87 were presented by Ms. O'Donnell, Council Secretary. A motion was made by Mr. Brown to approve the monthly bills and seconded by Mr. Lamereaux. Mr. Christian questioned approval of the SPCA expense (\$2,209.24) due to issues noted with SPCA not providing services as outlined in the contract. Mayor Concert feels a 30-day notice should be provided to SPCA to exit the contract as there have been issues reported with SPCA not responding to calls and also not taking in feral cats. Mr. Christian questioned what would happen with dogs. Mayor Concert shared they are taken to Blue Chip. Mr. Brown amended his original motion to approve the monthly bills with the exception of the SPCA fee until the issue is reviewed further. Payment will be held for now. Mr. Olejnick seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0 in favor.

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT

-Mr. Breznay requested a motion and vote to purchase software for the new administration computers: 3 Microsoft Office programs = \$449.97 and 7 Adobe PDF Editors (1 for Administration and 6 for the Police Department) = \$1,000.93. Payment would come from the American Rescue Plan Act. Motion made by Mr. Olejnick to purchase and seconded by Mr. Binkley. Vote was 5-0 in favor.

-Mr. Breznay requested a motion and vote for payment of \$2,176.00 to Guyette Communications for the new phone system, cloud service, equipment and installation which was required due to the recent Borough phone system failure. The payment would come from the American Rescue Plan Act. Motion made by Mr. Brown to approve and seconded by Mr. Christian. Vote was 5-0 in favor.

-Mr. Breznay requested a motion and vote to approve Paper Shredding for Borough residents for the dates of May 13, 2023 and September 16, 2023 from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Both dates and times have been confirmed with the vendor and Luzerne County Recycling Department. A motion was made by Mr. Binkley to approve and seconded by Mr. Olejnick. Vote was 5-0 in favor.

-Mr. Breznay requested a motion and vote to replace security cameras at the Borough Police Station. Cost would be \$6,750.99 for replacement of the cameras and \$1,782.42 for a new building alarm system with the same company that is currently used. The payment would come from the American Rescue Plan Act. A motion was made by Mr. Brown to approve and seconded by Mr. Binkley. Vote was 5-0 in favor.

Mr. Binkley question how much money remains with the American Rescue Act funds that the Borough received. Mr. Breznay shared there is approximately \$325,000 remaining prior to expenses outlined in the Manager's Report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance: Mr. Lamereaux presented the December 2022 Treasure's Report. **General Fund:** beginning checkbook balance: \$69,578.45; transfers & revenue for the month: \$130,394.71; Expenses & Transfers for the month: \$166,955.67; ending checkbook balance: \$33,017.49. **Liquid Fuels:** beginning checkbook balance: \$194.12; transfers and revenue for month: \$7,600.33; expenses and transfers for the month: \$7,674.27; ending checkbook balance: \$120.18. **Sanitary/Storm Water Assessment:** beginning checkbook balance: \$9,110.72; transfers and revenue for the month: \$12,404.85; expenses and transfers for the month: \$7,827.37; ending checkbook balance: \$13,688.20. **Solid Waste Collection:** beginning checkbook balance: \$19,654.37; transfers and revenue for the month: \$30,573.27; expenses and transfers for the month: \$32,989.62; ending checkbook balance: \$17,238.02.

Liaison Officer: Mr. Christian requested a motion and vote to increase the hourly rate of the Part-Time Fire Truck Drivers by \$1.50 per hour/effective retro back to January 1, 2023 and to have any items damaged during the course of duty replaced. Motion made by Mr. Binkley to approve and seconded by Mr. Brown. Vote was 5-0.

Police Department: Mr. Brown read the police report for January 2023 which included a summary of Crossing Guard hours. There was a total of 137 service calls, 4 vehicle accidents and one (1) school crossing guard duty. Fees collected totaled \$768.16. A motion was made by Mr. Brown to place monies in the appropriate funds and seconded by Mr. Olejnick. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

-Mr. Brown made a motion to approve hiring the top three (3) candidates (Daniel Roper, Kevin Walkowiak, and Mia Vera) from the Swoyersville Civil Service Commission list pending successful results of additional testing/checks. Motion was seconded by Mr. Olejnick. Vote was 5-0 in favor.

-Mr. Brown made a motion to promote Sergeant Josh Wolinsky to the rank of Chief of Police for Swoyersville Borough with pay increase retroactive back to January 1, 2023. Motion was seconded by Mr. Binkley. Vote was 5-0.

-Mr. Brown made a motion to promote John Owens to Acting Sergeant for Swoyersville Borough and pending passing his test to Sergeant. Motion was seconded by Mr. Christian. Vote was 5-0 in favor.

At this time, Mayor Concert administered the Oath of Office to Swoyersville Borough Chief of Police, Josh Wolinsky. Council members congratulated Mr. Wolinsky on the promotion and thanked him for his service.

Street Department: Mr. Olejnick questioned the status of the alley vacating/subdivision process for Sidney Street to Creek Street. Mr. Breznay, Borough Manager shared that the Penn Eastern surveyor determined, after evaluating the area, that an alley does not exist. Attorney Yeager requested copies of the documents to include as part of minutes/records that support the finding for future reference if issues would arise again with a request to vacate/subdivide that area by residents.

Fire Department: No report given.

Recreation Board: Mr. Binkley made a motion to remove three members from the Recreation Board. The Board had received their resignations previously from Jasie Hunter, Shyann Church and James Gill. Motion was seconded by Mr. Christian. Vote was 5-0.

-Mr. Binkley requested a motion and vote to advertise to replace three (3) Swoyersville Recreation Board positions. A motion was made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Lamereaux. Vote was 5-0 in favor. The deadline for a letter of interest would be 2/15/23. Letters can be emailed to Gene Breznay, Borough Manager or dropped off at the Borough Building.

-Mr. Binkley shared that the Recreation Board is holding a special meeting on 2/22/23 to review the current bylaws and will make recommendations for any changes to Council.

-Mr. Binkley shared that the Recreation Board has created an ad hoc Special Needs Committee for the playgrounds throughout the Borough. Members can be part of the community and can join as a resident volunteer.

-Mr. Binkley informed Council that the Recreation Board will be revisiting the Field Use Agreement Form for teams using any borough owned field or playground.

-Mr. Binkley shared that the Board did reorganize their officers and committees for 2023. The new Chairperson is Syrena Reilly and the Co-Chairperson is Angeli Nause. Congratulations to both on their new roles. The next meeting of the Board is being held on 2/15/23 at the Borough Building at 6:00 pm.

-Mr. Binkley requested a motion and vote for a Resolution for a Junior Council Person position. The applicant would preferably be a high school or college student who is a resident of Swoyersville. They would shadow a council member for approximately one year. There is a resolution crafted for this position that was proved to Gene Breznay, Borough Manager. The position is sponsored by the PA Association of Boroughs. A motion was made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Lamereaux. Vote was 5-0 in favor. Mr. Binkley will work with Mr. Breznay to coordinate the resolution.

-Mr. Binkley discussed the development of a Borough mobile app that can be combined with a text alert system that can be used to send out notifications about things like snow removal and also allow access to contact numbers, ordinances, file comments/complaints, etc. This type of platform is being evaluated to make things easier for Swoyersville Residents.

Mayor Concert requested that Council receive a copy of the Recreation Board meeting minutes each month.

Attorney Yeager: Attorney Yeager shared that regarding the outstanding/pending legal issues with former Chief Castner, his recommendation would be to move to step three. A meeting will be scheduled with Attorney Dean. Council has advised the former chief what they are willing to pay. Council is not willing to pay the items that are outlined in his resignation letter.

Mayor Concert: - Mayor Concert shared that the Borough does have a contract in place with Ehrlich to aid residents that are dealing with a skunk issue. Assistance is at no cost to the resident. Residents experiencing a skunk issue can contact Gene Breznay, Borough Manager at the Borough Building Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Ehrlich will provide trapping services and then transport skunks to another area where they will be released into the wild.

-Mayor Concert shared that he has teamed up with the Hoyt Library for their million penny challenge. Anyone that would like to make a donation there is a can outside of the Mayor's office. The goal is to collect one million pennies.

-Mayor Concert shared that for the last ten years, the Hoyt Library has sent a request for donation to Swoyersville Borough; however, they have never received one. Mayor Concert is requesting a donation be considered. Mr. Olejnick made a motion to donate \$150.00 to the Hoyt Library. Motion was seconded by Mr. Christian. Vote was 5-0 in favor.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM BOROUGH COUNCIL

-Mr. Lamereaux shared a reminder that the Trailer Ordinance started yesterday, 2/5/23. Some issues have already been identified and steps were taken by the Police Department to address them.

-Mr. Lamereaux questioned the recycling guidelines that are in place, specifically the information outlines that only type #1 & #2 plastics are being accepted. Prior guidelines included #1 through #6. Mr. Lamereaux questioned what is being done with unacceptable recyclables that residents may include in their bins. He is concerned if those items are going into the landfill. Mr. Hampton will reach out to inquire and will follow up with Mr. Lamereaux.

-Mr. Christian shared that meeting was held in December with Martha Kahan, President of No Nonsense Neutering who provided recommendations on how to get the TNR (Trap, Neuter & Return) program started within Swoyersville. Nancy Nice, Chairman of the Borough's TNR Committee along with Julie Derwin provided an update on the program activities for Council & residents. It was noted that there have been many complaints on social meeting with residents sharing that they are not aware of the program/services offered. Council was asked if there was a way to get information out to the public. Mr. Christian recommended drafting what they would like to release and forward it to Gene Breznay, Borough Manager to place on the Borough Face Book page. Committee members currently have several appointments set up for neutering and vaccination services. Focus is being placed on areas within the Borough where there are colonies of feral cats. A request was made to use the Borough Building to bring traps in and offer education for committee members on how to set them up and use them. Mayor Concert also shared that another complaint seen on Face Book involves residents allowing their household cats to run free.

-Mr. Christian shared that he has received complaints regarding residents running electric wires across sidewalks to charge electric vehicles. This issue was shared with the Swoyersville Zoning Officer who is in the process evaluating the issue. Another issue involved parked trucks on Hemlock and Shoemaker which has reduced significantly after being addressed.

Mr. Christian requested a motion and vote to appoint Mr. Binkley as the Technical Liaison for Borough computers, applications, etc. Mr. Olejnick made a motion to appoint Mr. Binkley. Motion was seconded by Mr. Lamereaux. Vote was 5-0 in favor.

Mr. Christian posted a flyer on the Kiwanis Board for an upcoming Forty Fort/Swoyersville Boy Scout Blood Drive.

-Mr. Brown shared that a letter was received from Solomon (Recycling Center) informing the Borough that they just received a grant and were able to put in a new line that will be used to sort glass. With this new line they are now accepting glass and are reducing the cost to \$45.00 a ton from \$85.00 a ton. At this time, Council has agreed that glass will be accepted as a recyclable item and does not need to be separated into garbage. With this development, Mr. Brown made a motion to terminate the prior recycling guideline that glass is required to be placed in with garbage. Mr. Binkley seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0 in favor. Mayor Concert requested that recycling guidelines that are provided to residents when they purchase a recycling sticker have a notation added that glass will be accepted.

-Mr. Binkley set a deadline of February 28, 2023 as the deadline for those interested in the Junior Council Position to submit a letter of interest.

-Mayor Concert shared that the Tax Office reopens on Saturday, February 18, 2023 with hours set for 5:30 to 8:00 pm on Tuesdays and Saturdays, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The discount period ends on Thursday, April 13, 2023. Residents can reach out to Nancy Keating at 570-718-1999 if assistance is needed.

-Mayor Concert shared that residents have been asking how they can obtain a second recycling container. Mr. Brown shared that any type of plastic container can be used. It does not only need to be a Borough recycling container.

-Mayor Concert shared that the house on Tener that was being considered for demolition is being fixed up and the new owner is working hard to repair it. Mr. Lamereaux shared that repairs that the Zoning Officer recommended are being made.

-Mayor Concert shared that complaints have been received about Warsaw Street; the traffic situation has been hectic. Chief Wolinsky will be asked to take a look at the issue.

-Mayor Concert shared the following events: Bumper Bunnies event is being held on April 8, 2023 at Roosevelt Field. Those who would like to participate can contact Mayor Concert. The little leagues are conducting sign ups. Residents can check their Face Book page out for more details. The Swoyersville Community Yard Sale will be held on Saturday, June 3, 2023. Residents can email Mayor Concert at swoyersvillemayor@gmail.com to be placed on the list. Polka On The Corner is set for May 20, 2023 at 2pm. All events held by Mayor will be placed on a hanger and placed on resident's doors in March. Volunteers interested in helping to distribute the hangers can reach out to Mayor Concert.

MEETING OPENED TO THE PUBLIC

-Mr. Rossa, 330 Slocum Street, asked if #1 - #7 plastics will be accepted with recyclables. Mr. Lamereaux shared that Mr. Hampton, Street Department, is following up to clarify exactly what is acceptable. Mr. Rossa also asked for clarification of newspaper pick up days. Mayor Concert shared that pick up, starting March 5, 2023, is scheduled for every other week (Thursday). Mr. Rossa does not agree with the schedule. Mr. Rossa also inquired about Swoyersville allowing residents to have chickens. Mr. Christian shared that Council is not aware of any requests to have chickens. Mayor Concert shared there have been discussions on social media regarding the issue. Mr. Rossa shared that the Commonwealth of PA, Dept. of Agriculture allows up to 5 chickens and would like Council to look into it. Mr. Christian requested a copy of the information that Mr. Rossa is referring to.

-Mark Nenichka, 77 Brook Street, asked if the Chip & Oil project on Main Street is being monitored by anyone? A concern exists as there are now bald spots visible all the way from 92 to Slocum Street and with street plowing chips & oil are tossed onto cars, sidewalks and front yards. Mr. Nenichka feels it is a safety hazard as water accumulates in the bald spots & ice can form which can result in accidents. Also, after the chip & oil project, there is now a greater ponding of water in front of Varsity that is flooding the roadway when there is heavy rain. Mr. Binkley shared that he had spoken to Representative Kaufer regarding this issue. There is additional work planned on the road. Mr. Binkley recommends that Mr. Nenichka reach out to Rep. Kaufer's office with concerns. Mr. Binkley will provide contact information for Rep. Kaufer's office.

-Angeli Knause, 215 Shoemaker Street, presented concerns about the current Borough face book page. It is currently acting as an individual private page and not an organization. Unless you send a friend request to the page you cannot view the live stream of meetings. The Recreation Board page is set up as a government page that does accommodate live streaming. Ms. Knause would like to see a Borough page set up where you do not have to obtain permission or like the page to access & view. Mr. Breznay will assist with looking into setting up a new government face book page.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Christian and seconded by Mr. Brown. Vote was 5-0 in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm. Next meeting will be held on March 6, at 6:30 pm.



Barb O'Donnell
Borough Council Secretary

Pete Cwalina
Council President