

Summit Hill Borough Council
September 9, 2025, 6:00 p.m. Borough Hall

The regular scheduled meeting of the Summit Hill Borough Council was held at the above time and place with President David Wargo presiding.

Roll Call – President David Wargo, Vice President Joseph Weber, Lacey Gonzalez, Karen Ruzicka, Alan Kruslicky, Edward Kane, Marlene Basiago, Solicitor Robert Frycklund and Mayor Jeffrey Szczecina were in attendance.

Floor –

1. Pat Williams, 313 East White Street, questioned the status of the piles of concrete on the unit block of East Ludlow Street that has been laying there for months. They fixed the sidewalk but never got rid of the stuff they dug up. Kira Steber informed everyone that Ralph Hummel has spoken to both property owners regarding this matter. The owner is aware of it and when they came back to clean it up, there was a dumpster parked in front of the pile so they could not clean it up. The dumpster has been removed, they will clean up the pile, and the pallet of concrete mix is to repair other areas at the property. Ms. Williams also mentioned the property at 335 East Hazard Street. Ms. Steber stated that they were cited, then moved the stuff from between the houses to the backyard, was told about cleaning up the backyard and moved everything back between the houses. President Wargo asked Chief Woodward to look at the property.

Minutes – **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Joseph Weber to approve the meeting minutes from the August 11, 2025 Council meeting.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Mayor's Report – Mayor Szczecina reported the total collected from the District Justice was \$213.93 and from Carbon County was \$162.16. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to accept the mayor's report for the month of August 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Police Report – Chief Woodward read the monthly report. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Edward Kane to accept the Police report for the month of August 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Planning and Zoning – **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to accept the Planning and Zoning report for the month of August 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

UCC, Code Enforcement and Rental Inspection Reports – **Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Marlene Basiago to accept the UCC and Code Enforcement report for the month of August 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council. President Wargo noted that they are about 85% on the returns.

Work Leader Report – **Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept the Work Leader report for the month of August 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Tax Collector Report – Nathan Halenar, Tax Collector submitted his Tax Collector Report for the month of August 2025. Total collected was \$142.00 in Occupation Taxes, \$81.50 in Per Capita Taxes, \$4,047.83 in Real Estate Taxes and a commission of \$128.14. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Lacey Gonzalez to accept the Tax Collector Report for the month of August 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report – Portnoff submitted their Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of August 2025. Total collected was \$6,697.41 in Delinquent Real Estate Taxes. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of August 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Wage Tax Report – Berkheimer submitted their Wage Tax Report for the month of August 2025. Total EIT submitted was \$55,122.48 with a commission of \$1,083.90 and postage charges of \$27.72. Total LST submitted was \$1,561.24 with a commission of \$32.01 and postage charges of \$9.88. Total DLT submitted was \$289.25 in delinquent Occupation Assessment Tax and \$148.50 in Per Capita Tax. **Motion was made by Josph Weber and seconded by Lacey Gonzalez to accept the Wage Tax report for the month of August 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Delinquent Garbage Collection Report – Report not received at this time.

Receipts – Total receipts received for the month of August 2025 were \$158,330.79. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to accept the Receipts for the month of August 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Bills – General Fund \$98,867.84, Local Services Tax \$41.89, Community Center \$445.62, Street Lighting \$4,487.21, Sanitation Account \$29,130.93, Rental Property Account \$655.63, and Liquid Fuels Account \$2,721.20. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Josph Weber to pay the bills from August 13 – September 9, 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Committee Reports

Streets –

1. Councilman Kruslicky informed Council that the new truck is ready for delivery. The total cost is \$124,722 and they need to discuss the finances. He prepared a spreadsheet to compare the total costs of putting \$10,000 or \$20,000 down on the vehicle. He recommends putting \$20,000 down and getting a loan with JTNB for 84 months. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to put \$20,000 down on the Ford F-550 and finance the rest with a loan from Jim Thorpe Neighborhood Bank for 84 months at an interest rate of 5.49% with payments to be made from Liquid Fuels.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
2. Councilman Kruslicky would like to put the old dump truck on Municibid for sale. **Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to put the 2004 Ford F-550 dump truck on Municibid to sell.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
3. Councilman Kruslicky also asked that they get supplies to undercoat the new vehicle to protect it and the frame from the salt.

Recreation Committee –

1. Councilwoman Basiago mentioned that she was speaking to the borough workers about putting mulch in the park and renting a skid steer with a Harley rake. The cost would be around \$6,000. Councilwoman Ruzicka asked if Lansford or Coaldale Boroughs have a skid steer that can be used. Councilwoman Basiago said they need to dig out the grass in Bill Black Park to be replaced with mulch and they are looking at about 2 triaxles of mulch for all the parks. Councilwoman Gonzalez asked the timeframe that she is requesting. Councilwoman Basiago stated that she gave her suggestions in April, and nothing has

been done. Councilwoman Gonzalez said this is a big amount to be asking for at this time and recommended discussing it at budget time so they can plan for it. They may need to discuss putting mills on for the upgrades to the parks.

2. Councilwoman asked for a status update on the park list that she provided. Councilman Kruslicky stated that it was discussed at last month's meeting, and the list was provided to everyone.
3. Councilwoman Gonzalez mentioned that she and Ms. Steber are going to be working on budget items in QuickBooks and getting it set up to be able to run reports so that Council can be updated monthly or quarterly. This way there will not be any more questions about whether funds are available or not.
4. Councilwoman Basiago mentioned that yoga will be starting back up on 9/11/25 so the weight class will be moving back to Wednesdays.

Special Purpose Parking – Councilwoman Basiago stated that they received a request from Heather Paton, Paton's Pet Grooming, for a 15-minute parking sign for the business because her customers are having difficulty finding a parking space near the business. **Motion was made by Marlen Basiago and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to approve a special purpose parking sign for Paton's Pet Grooming at 11 West White Street.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Lacey Gonzalez to accept the Committee Reports for the month of August 2025. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Communications –

- Request from Kevin Steber, Safety Officer and President of the Diligence Fire Co. #1, asking that certain street be listed as No Parking and blocked off beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 4, 2025, for the dedication and fire truck parade. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Ruzicka to approve the request from the Diligence Fire Co. No. 1 to mark the requested areas/street as No Parking starting at 9:00 a.m. until the times listed on the request for the dedication on October 4, 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to accept communications for from August 12 – September 9, 2025. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Old Business -

1. President Wargo said that he was given the ordinance that Jim Thopre has for short-term rentals and he rewrote it with the notes that they had from the August ordinance meeting. They do need to add that they cannot apply for a short-term rental license unless they have the proper zoning approval. It was also brought to his attention about Section 9, A:15, that it should read that each owner shall maintain at least \$300,000 in liability insurance on "each" short-term rental. He also mentioned that there was a lot of discussion about the number of vehicles for overnight guests as well as day guests, as listed under Section 11, A:7. The only thing he did was add (b) which states there shall be one off-street parking space per bedroom not counting the first bedroom. There was a brief discussion about the number of off-street parking spaces. Councilwoman Ruzicka stated that they decided the requirement would be one off-street parking space per bedroom and day visits on the street. Councilwoman Gonzalez mentioned that under Section 11, A:12 they decided that the use of open fire/fire pits are prohibited. Leave it at that and do not add anything about charcoal grills or other devices. She also mentioned Section 17, B, regarding fines. Did they want it to be \$1,000 per day or offense. Solicitor Frycklund stated that it says not more than \$1,000

per day. Council asked Solicitor Frycklund to make the requested changes and have it ready for the October meeting.

2. Council discussed the Amusement Tax Ordinance. Councilwoman Basiago asked if they feel it is important to put an interest penalty on people who do not buy permits. Solicitor Frycklund explained that in Section 6 states that the Magistrate can assess a penalty. Once there is a judgement, that statutory rate of interest is 6%. Councilwoman Basiago asked how successful they have been at the magistrate. Solicitor Frycklund stated that once there is a judgement the judge does not have to place interest on it, it accrues. Mayor Szczecina added that these are all addressed in the rules of criminal procedures in court. It is a criminal offense not a civil one. It states what a judge is allowed to do and what happens if they do not pay. It is all part of the criminal justice system. Vice President Weber asked if someone buys a property and does not apply for permits, can they shut them down. Solicitor Frycklund said they would cite them and go to court. President Wargo asked if they could shut them down until permits are obtained. Solicitor Frycklund explained that it will be hard to enforce it if they continue to operate. You cannot impose an injunction. That is the function of the courts.

President Wargo was wondering about private clubs and the games of skill. Solicitor Frycklund said it is any monetary charge for entry or participation; there are no exemptions except for nonprofit. It does state that nonprofit corporations are exempt unless they have mechanical devices. President Wargo asked if they want to charge nonprofits because they struggle to make ends meet now. Solicitor Frycklund asked if there was a rational reason not to charge. Councilwoman Gonzalez mentioned that nonprofits do not own the machines, so they are not being charged the \$250 fee. Mayor Szczecina noted that it reads that the definition of mechanical amusement devices states pinball machines, pool tables, jukeboxes, video arcade, etc. will require a \$250 license for each. President Wargo said it is only games of skill that is \$250. The rest is \$50 per device. A brief discussion took place about nonprofits.

Council decided to table it for further review.

3. Council tabled the discussion of the proposal from Diversified Billing System until further information is received from MuniBilling.
4. Chief Woodward stated that Officer Pituch had reached out to someone about getting an AED for the Community Center, but he still has not heard back. Councilwoman Gonzalez stated that she will reach out to someone she knows and get a contact number.
5. **Motion was made by Josph and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to advertise the amendment to Chapter 450 – Vehicles and Traffic to amend the Winter Parking Regulations and Placing Snow on Borough Streets and/or Borough Parks.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
6. Kira Steber informed Council that she is waiting to hear back from Lehigh Engineering about the 2024 version of the International Property Maintenance Code changes. Once she does, she will pass the information on to the solicitor.
7. President Wargo gave an update on the status of borough emails.

New Business –

1. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to amend the agreement with Portnoff Law Associates to retain them to collect the Borough's delinquent garbage fee accounts and sewer transmission fee accounts.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

2. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Edward Kane to advertise Ordinance No. 05-2025 Approving the appointment of Portnoff Law Associates to include collection of Unpaid Real Estate Taxes and Municipal Claims for delinquent accounts and approve the fee schedule.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
3. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to adopt Resolution No. 06-2025 to apply for an LSA grant for portable and mobile radios on behalf of Diligence Fire Co. #1 in the amount of \$74,464.59 and to authorize President Wargo and Borough Secretary Steber as the signers for the grant.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
4. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Joseph Weber to adopt Resolution No. 07-2025 amending the re-inspection fees for Rental Properties to a cost of \$100.00.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
5. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to approve the Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) worksheets for the Summit Hill Borough and Police pension plans for 2026.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
6. Council reviewed and discussed the insurance renewal proposal for 2025-2026. President Wargo read the highlighted points provided by Kira Steber. Ms. Steber explained they are in the same position as last year. The current provider's cost is a little more than the quoted provider's cost, however, the quoted provider, EMC, does not have municipal liability which reimburses Heart & Lung benefits, and they also do not handle public officials' liability prior to the retro date. Regardless, there is still a \$20,000 increase for the year which is due to the increase in the Workers' Comp Mod. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Joseph Weber to approve the 2025-2026 insurance renewal with McKee at a cost of \$124,511.00.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
7. President Wargo said there was a concern about how things are being backed up, and it was recommended that we have an in-house back up. He spoke with Andy who explained that the overall strategy for both the Borough and Police servers are backed up daily to an offsite backup provider which is customary and happens automatically. In the event of a disaster, they can bring up the server quickly, they have a hosting environment and can move the backup onto the hosting environment. It gives them the most redundancy that there is no loss of business. At this point he does not feel the need to have an in-house backup.
8. President Wargo stated that Coaldale Borough is interested in taking the old Christmas lights, but Council never made the motion to approve it. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to offer the borough's old Christmas light to Coaldale Borough.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
9. Councilwoman Basiago would like to have students from CCTI develop a plan to have paths, tables, chairs, a gazebo, and a recreation area in Memorial Park. The wall will not be part of this because they do not have a masonry program at CCTI. There were no objections from Council.

President Wargo turned the meeting over to Vice President Weber at 7:19 p.m. due to the next item on the agenda and his involvement with the Summit Hill Miner's Heritage Center Project.

10. Vice President Weber said a discussion was had about the Miner's Heritage Center project and a possible site for the building.

Janet Watto was wondering who would be applying for the grants. Vice President Weber said it is not a borough project. Resident and Chairman of the project, David Wargo, explained that he has been working on a Miner's Heritage Attraction for the past two years, which will be an immersive tour experience to

bring people to the borough to learn about the history of our coal mining ancestry. They looked at several sites throughout the community, and this would be appropriate. The original idea was to obtain 3-5 acres to develop the whole area, unfortunately the plans fell through. They spoke with a non-profit historical foundation under the partnership with the Historical Society. It will be a separate entity to oversee the project and eventually the tourist attraction. The site they looked at was a portion, roughly 1½ - 2 acres, of the north end of the Ginder Field and put in the tourist attraction building. It would be totally funded by the foundation and there will be no cost to the taxpayers. He is part of the foundation along with a banker, some historians, and real estate developer. They have a business plan put together with at least 14-15 funding sources which include grants, foundational money, endowments, public fundraising, etc. They do have backing from State Senator Argall, Representative Heffley, Carbon County Commissioners, Carbon County Economic Development, the Blueprint Community, and the Pocono Mountain Business Bureau who will help with the promotional aspect once the attraction is open. It is an opportunity to reestablish a hub attraction in Summit Hill to help with the goal of redeveloping downtown and taking advantage of the tourists that are coming to the area. It will be an immersive experience where you walk into the museum and learn firsthand about mining coal, what it was like to be the family of the people who mined coal, what it was like to live here. This will be in Summit Hill because it is our story because Summit Hill was the birthplace of industrial revolution of America and where coal was discovered. It will also bring revenue into the borough. They do believe it is a viable project. The tourists are there, and we either try to capitalize on it or someone else will. Ms. Watto asked what happens if the project falls through. Vice President Weber said it is along way until the project would get started. Mr. Wargo said they will not have anything until there is a site, which is what he will be asking Council for tonight. If the project does not move forward, then the land will not be leased. Ms. Watto asked if the residents will have a say as to whether they want the building to be built or not on this land. Mr. Wargo explained that a public meeting was held last week just to discuss this project, which was advertised in the newspaper and on Facebook. Vice President Weber explained that Council is giving the opportunity to the organization to move forward one day into potentially leasing the land. No details have been put into place, but they need a site to move forward with the potential of the project. Councilwoman Gonzalez said the biggest risk is being taken by the Miner's Heritage Foundation. At this point in time the only risk Council is taking is that they must make sure everything is in line with that piece of property and make sure that it does not cost the borough or the taxpayers any money. Other towns will benefit from this attraction being in Summit Hill. As for us as a town, it has potential to bring people here, which is a positive reason. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Marlene Basiago to work with the Heritage Foundation to lease an area of the Ginder Field as the site for the Summit Hill Miner's Heritage Center project.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried by majority vote with David Wargo abstaining due to his involvement with the project.

Vice President Weber turned the meeting back over to President Wargo at 7:29 p.m.

11. Mayor Szczecina announced the Trick-or-Treat dates will be Thursday, October 30, 2025 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. with a rain date of Saturday, November 1, 2025 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. The reason for the date is due to complaints in the past about it being held on a Friday night during local football games.
12. Fall Cleanup Dates are October 18 and 25, 2025.
 - October 18, 2025 – East side of town along with Knepper's Trailer Ct. and East & West White Bear Dr.
 - October 25, 2025 – West side of town along with Laurel Dr. and East & West Mountaintop Road

Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to enter into an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 7:33 p.m. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to enter back into Regular Session at 7:51 p.m. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Marlen Basiago to amend the agenda to authorize the Council President to execute documentation related to litigation as discussed in executive session. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to authorize the Council President to execute documentation related to litigation as discussed in executive session. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to adjourn the meeting at 8: p.m. until the next regular meeting of the Summit Hill Borough on October 14, 2025. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

David Wargo
Council President

Kira Steber
Secretary/Treasurer