

Summit Hill Borough Council
June 10, 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, Karen Ruzicka, Alan Kruslicky, Edward Kane, Marlene Basiago, Solicitor Robert Frycklund and Mayor Jeffrey Szczecina were in attendance. Lacey Gonzalez was absent.

Garbage Bid Opening – President Wargo stated that only one bid was received from Tamaqua Transfer.

1 Year – with Spring/Fall Cleanup	No Bid
1 Year – with Spring/Fall Cleanup and Annual Electronics Recycling	No Bid
2 Year – with Spring/Fall Cleanup	No Bid
2 Year – with Spring/Fall Cleanup and Annual Electronics Recycling	No Bid
3 Year – with Spring/Fall Cleanup	No Bid
3 Year – with Spring/Fall Cleanup and Annual Electronics Recycling	No Bid
4 Year – with Spring/Fall Cleanup	\$ 2,304,000.00
4 Year – with Spring/Fall Cleanup and Annual Electronics Recycling	\$ 2,368,512.00

Larry Wittig, owner of Tamaqua Transfer, explained that it is almost the same increase as it was four years ago when they bid on the contract. Summit Hill Borough is the only municipality that has electronic cleanup in their contract, which is a pretty attractive feature for the residents.

Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the 4 Year bid with Spring and Fall Cleanup and Electronics Recycling in the amount of \$2,368,512. Motion was opened for comment.

A brief discussion took place regarding the price increase and the cost per year for the residents.

No further comment was made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Mr. Wittig stated that other boroughs and townships are questioning the reason for the increase. He explained that there are things that are out of their control like the cost of what is charged at the landfill, which increases yearly. There is no competition out there anymore. Another component is the wages. In January 2023, the wages increased by 25%, which he ate most of that cost due to COVID. He personally was on the truck helping hand dig through snow to uncover the garbage that was buried. In the beginning of the contract, life is good. By the end, the water level increases, and they are about breaking even. As prices increase on their end, they are absorbing the fluctuation. He chose to not bid on the other years because by having 4 years locked in, the residents will know there will be no changes over those 4 years.

President Wargo asked if there was a larger amount of homes in a municipality, does it become more or less cost effective to service the larger area in the contract. Mr. Wittig stated that there is no difference because it is based on the number of households, limitations, tonnage, time, and effort.

Councilwoman Ruzicka asked if there was an option in the contact to extend it for an additional year. Mr. Wittig said that option is not in the contract.

Presentation

Ann Shigo, Open Space Coordinator for the Carbon County Open Space Grant Program, stated that her role is new to the county. It came out of the 2022 bond referendum to preserve working farms, wildlife habitats and open space. As part of the program, municipalities can apply for grant funding from the county. She would like to help municipalities utilize the grant funding because for the first time in the history of the county they have funding available to preserve open space. She will be organizing workshops throughout different regions of the county between multiple municipalities. The workshop will happen sometime over the summer. Looking for a point of contact for someone who would like to work on this project, or she can contact the borough secretary. Looking for someone to help schedule the workshop and at the workshop she will go over some land conservation needs, the grant program, and will look at some properties that the municipalities in the region are hoping to protect. It is about planning, so extend the invite to the Planning Commission members as well. Really just want the boroughs to try and think about how they want to grow in the municipality and what areas they want to protect and preserve.

Dawn Gorham, Director of Land Preservation and Wildlands Conservancy, stated they are working with the county to help implement the program. They also have a grant to help municipalities work on protection projects, if they have a project they would like to move forward with. They are excited to see all the municipalities at the workshop. One thing they do like to mention is that there may not be a lot of land that makes sense for open space protection but there may be something on the outskirts that they would like to work with another municipality to protect.

Floor – No comments from the floor.

Minutes – **Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Marlene Basiago to approve the meeting minutes from the May 13, 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 \$1,069 and from Carbon County was \$204.92. He mentioned that this was the largest crowd he has seen since COVID on Memorial Day. He also thanked the Summit Hill American Legion who coordinates the event and services, Ronnie Yurichack and Colton Black did an excellent job preparing the town for the weekend, Chief Woodward and his family who participate every year on his day off, the Fire Police who help direct traffic on the highway, Parade Committee, Officer Strauss and Officer Fische who switched his shift to assist Officer Strauss, the Fire Company for everything they do and Summit Hill Recreation Commission for their breakfast sandwich sale. It really was a community event, and it is something they need to work on and continue to keep it going. There will be a flag ceremony on Saturday, June 14, 2025 at the American Legion and the Annual Hootenanny will be held on Sunday, June 29, 2025. President Wargo also thanked all the parties that Mayor Szczecina mentioned on behalf of Council. He noted that he is especially thankful to Fire Company who had to respond to an accident right before the parade started. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the mayor's report for the month of May 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

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

UCC, Code Enforcement and Rental Inspection Reports – President Wargo mentioned that the rental inspections will be starting in a few weeks and once they start, they will see more information on the reports

from Lehigh Engineering. He also thanked Dana Digilio for all her hard work to get the program up and running. She has done a fantastic job with everything so far. **Motion was made by Edward Kane and seconded by Marlene Basiago to accept the UCC and Code Enforcement report for the month of May 2025.** Motion was opened for comment. Motion carried unanimously by Council. President Wargo asked Ms. Digilio if she had an idea of how many applications have been returned for the rental program. She said about 65% has been returned.

Work Leader Report – President Wargo stated that not only to the Borough workers put a lot of time into the town for the parade on Memorial Day, but they also came out around 5-6:00 in the morning on Memorial Day to check the town and the flags to make sure nothing was missed and that everything is in order for the day. He said they appreciate all the hard work they put in. Ms. Steber added that they also do all this the morning of, on their own time; they do not mark time down for it. President Wargo noted that they now have a Shared Services Report on the last page of the report. **Motion was made by Edward Kane and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to accept the Work Leader report for the month of May 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 May 2025. Total collected was \$3,655.40 in Occupation Taxes, \$2,665.60 in Per Capita Taxes, \$573,872.39 in Real Estate Taxes and a commission of \$17,364.79. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to accept the Tax Collector Report for the month of May 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report – President Wargo said that they received correspondence from Portnoff offering to extend their services to include the collection of delinquent utility accounts, such as trash, water, and stormwater fees. Councilwoman Basiago would like to see what Portnoff can do with the collections for trash. Vice President Weber asked if they provided a fee schedule. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Joseph Weber to set up a meeting with Portnoff to discuss their services for collecting delinquent sanitation bills.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council. Portnoff submitted their Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of May 2025. Total collected was \$43.09 in Delinquent Real Estate Taxes. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to accept the Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of May 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 May 2025. Total EIT submitted was \$63,046.42 with a commission of \$1,090.70 and postage charges of \$47.36. Total LST submitted was \$3,203.37 with a commission of \$65.67 and no postage charges. Total DLT submitted was \$286.00 in delinquent Occupation Assessment Tax and \$192.50 in Per Capita Tax. **Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Marlene Basiago to accept the Wage Tax report for the month of May 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Delinquent Garbage Collection Report – Creditech submitted their Delinquent Garbage Collection Report for the month of April and May 2025. Collections for April 2025 from Creditech were \$1,260, from the Borough was \$993, commission of \$486.75 with a total owed to the Borough of \$773.25. Collections for May 2025 from Creditech were \$270, from the Borough was \$1,578, commission of \$429 with a total balance due to Creditech in the amount of \$159. **Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept the Delinquent Garbage Collection report for the month of April and May 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Receipts – Total receipts received for the month of May 2025 were \$565,927.30. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the Receipts for the month of May 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Bills – General Fund \$112,584.60, Local Services Tax \$65.67, Community Center \$773.87, Street Lighting \$4,470.66, Sanitation Account \$31,426.20, Liquid Fuels Account \$1,659.44 and Rental Property Account \$2,406.67. Councilwoman Basiago asked if the Borough has a contract for the rate or are they paying directly to PPL. Ms. Steber explained that we do have contracted rates with a company, but they still pay PPL directly. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by David Wargo to pay the bills from May 14 – June 10, 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Committee Reports

Recreation Committee –

1. Councilwoman Basiago reported that the Recreation Commission sold breakfast sandwiches before the parade on Memorial Day.
2. Councilwoman Basiago provided a list of suggestions for repairs at various parks in town. She recommended that Council give the ok for Ronnie and Colton to work on the projects because they are in desperate need. Another issue is the garbage at the Ginder. The cans are filled numerous times a week and the garbage is blowing down Walter Street. Also, garbage cans were sitting out on the street for two to three weeks. One blew down Walter Street and a resident had to return it. Ms. Steber said that the garbagemen are supposed to be emptying them weekly with the regular garbage collection, which it states in the contract. Councilwoman Ruzicka said that weekly is not enough, and it should be done at least twice a week. President Wargo asked Councilman Kruslicky to go over the list with the borough workers to get things addressed and report back next month. Councilman Kruslicky asked if the Recreation Commission will be buying the mulch for the parks. Councilwoman Basiago was not sure. She stated that all parks need mulch but not as much as last year. Bill Black Park needs sand, the old gazebo needs to be painted, aluminum was never put on the new gazebo, the paint on the rides is deteriorating, there are rusted areas around them. Do we paint the rides or do we let them rot. The volleyball net is torn and has one string going across. Ms. Steber said neither the volleyball nor bocci courts have ever been used. Councilwoman Basiago said to have the net removed and not replaced. John C. Poko stated that the bocci court is a place for kids to smash their bottles. The weeds are usually knee high because no one has every used it. As for the walkways, nothing was supposed to grow on them. They were supposed to use a special mix that would prevent growth. Councilman Kruslicky said he will talk to Ronnie and anything on the list that does not need materials to be purchased he can start. Whatever things he needs to buy, he will bring back to the table to see who is going to pay for it. President Wargo suggested prioritizing the list and come back with a plan at the next meeting.

Emergency Services Committee - Councilwoman Basiago mentioned that there will be a Pour and Plant event on June 20th at a cost of \$25 per person and the Golf Tournament will be on July 26th at Mountain Valley.

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

Communications –

Communications for the Month of May/June 2025:

1. Updated information for the request from the residents of the 100 block of South Chestnut Street to have permission to close the block down on July 4, 2025 for a potluck with neighbors and to allow safety for the children.
2. Request from Liz Saba, Support Coordinator for the Girl Scouts looking to use a borough facility on a bi-weekly basis for troop meetings from 6:15-7:15 p.m.

3. Letter from Terri Kane, Chair for the Summit Hill Hootenanny, with requests for the upcoming Hootenanny.
 4. Letter from Rev. Robert George regarding the Annual Festival at St. Joseph Parish of the Panther Valley.
 5. Notice of Occupation Assessment from Carbon County Board of Assessment and Revision of Taxes
- Request from the Residents of the 100 block of South Chestnut Street for permission to close the block on July 4, 2025 for a potluck with neighbors and to allow safety for the children. President Wargo stated that a few years back a similar request was presented for a block on Fell Street, and it was denied due to the concern of affecting neighbors who were not in favor of it and because of emergency purposes. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Joseph Weber to deny the request due to a possible disturbance to other neighbors in the area and for emergency purposes.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
 - Request from Liz Saba to use a borough facility for bi-weekly troop meetings. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to allow the Girl Scouts to use the Training Room for bi-weekly troop meetings from 6:15 – 7:15 p.m.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
 - Request from Terri Kane regarding the annual Hootenanny. **Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Joseph Weber to grant permission to close and post No Parking signs in the areas requested, allow access to the Ginder Field for event parking, access to the Hill Top Community Center for the event, additional trash cans, traffic horses, and extra police patrol once the tents, tables, chairs and porta potties are placed and the park is unattended.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried by majority vote. Edward Kane abstained because he is on the committee for the Hootenanny.
 - Request from Father George regarding the Annual Festival. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to grant permission to Father George of St. Joseph Parish of the Panther Valley to hold their Annual Festival on the Church grounds from July 18 – 20, 2025 and to block off the streets that are closest to and run parallel to the Church.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Edward Kane to accept communications for the month of May 2025. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Old Business -

1. President Wargo said they received quotes for increasing the bond for the Borough Secretary-Treasurer. **Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the bid from the Kilmer Group to obtain a bond in the amount of \$200,000 for the Borough Secretary-Treasurer at a cost of \$325 for the year.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
2. President Wargo said they discussed amending the International Property Maintenance Code ordinance to adopt the 2021 version because the borough is currently using the 2012 version. He mentioned that the newest version is 2024 and Solicitor Frycklund recommended adopting that version, so they are up to date. Councilwoman Basiago had a question regarding Letter H in the amendment. President Wargo read H stating that all exterior property and premises shall be kept free and clean from accumulations of items covered by tarpaulins or the like. He explained that it was most likely added because it is a similar issue that our police are having with people throwing tarps over things and claiming they cleaned up the property. He explained that it would allow the Code Officer to go on the property and cite the person for

having something that violates the ordinance. The Borough's Code Officer is Ralph Hummel. The 2024 version is cleaner and easier to amend because the language is much more explicit. Solicitor Frycklund recommended having Ralph Hummel look at it and give any comments regarding the newest version. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Edward Kane to have the Code Officer, Ralph Hummel, review the 2024 International Property Maintenance Code and submit his suggestions to Council before they amend the ordinance.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

New Business –

1. President Wargo stated that a few months back they discussed an issue that they had with people dumping snow on borough property and asked that it be put back on the agenda. Currently they allow private clean up of snow but there was an issue with snow being dumped in the parks, which ended up making a mess in the park due to stone and other material that was dumped with the snow. He would like Council's opinion on if they want to stop people from dumping in the parks during winter. The borough workers do not dump snow in any park unless it is an emergency. Councilwoman Basiago said that she feels it should be allowed. A brief discussion took place about the subject. President Wargo recommended that Council take the time to think about it and discuss it next month. Councilwoman Ruzicka suggested putting signs up around the parks. Solicitor Frycklund explained that signs can go up but then there is no ordinance to back it up. President Wargo feels they should keep this on the backburner until they must amend the ordinance and this way they do not have to spend money to advertise at this time.
2. President Wargo said they received samples of Bed & Breakfast and Short-Term Rental ordinances Vice President Weber and Councilwoman Basiago. Vice President Weber mentioned that he did just get the information out so he suggested that everyone take the time to review it, and they can discuss it further next month. He added that there are things about parking spaces and how many people would be allowed per bedroom. As for houses in White Bear, there are things about septic tanks which would limit the number of people who can stay. He stated that he did go through and highlighted some bullet points that he felt were important.
3. Councilwoman Basiago said she provided a sample ordinance pertaining to registering contractors because months ago they discussed the issues they are having with contractors when opening the streets. What she found was an ordinance that makes contractors register with the borough, which gives them some control over the contractor and the work they do in the community. Councilman Kruslicky recommended that they review and prioritize the list of ordinances that have been provided on which ones they want to address first.
4. President Wargo mentioned the Mechanical Amusement Device Tax ordinance that was provided. He reviewed it but feels it needs a lot of work because it does not include the items that they discussed. There is a concerted effort to bring tourism into the area, and they want to try and do some capacity building in the Panther Valley which includes new businesses and new types of things to do while people are in the area. A lot of facilities that offer recreational opportunities for guests and tourists have an amusement tax or an admission tax for the municipality where it is located. Pennsylvania allows such a tax to be placed on these things, but the money must be earmarked for recreation. If they put this in place, they can earmark the funds to the parks and other recreational things, which would be a benefit to the Borough.
5. President Wargo stated they also received a sample of a Transient Retail Business ordinance. They do have something like this in the books and covers solicitation. He feels that it does not need to be discussed any further.
6. President Wargo said another ordinance that was provided was one for Adult Entertainment. He is not aware of anything that is coming into the area. This ordinance would be covered by zoning, but you can still have it in the books. You cannot ban these types of businesses, but you can challenge them. Solicitor

Frycklund explained that this comes up a lot in the short-term rental where most municipalities have not caught up with the trend yet and people are challenging it saying its de facto excluding. That is illegal and you to have allow at least one district in your municipality to allow any given use.

7. President Wargo personally thanked Kira Steber for taking time out of her busy schedule to the website developer around town so he could get pictures for the website. He also thanked Chief Woodward, Officer Fische, Ron Yuricheck and Colton Black for assisting with moving police cars and fire trucks around to get photographed. Ms. Steber stated that she spent a few hours with Bob taking him around to photograph areas and he mentioned that our website is next on his list. He provided her with a list of items for her to work on and get back to him. She does not have a date as to when it will be completed but she will continue to work with Bob to get it up and running as soon as possible.
8. Ms. Steber explained that currently the IT company is at a standstill with emails due to multiple accounts with Microsoft. Andy is currently working with Microsoft to get the situation resolved and can then move forward with the emails.
9. Marlene Basiago, Holiday Light Committee Chairperson, thanked all the citizens and sponsors who donated to purchase new Christmas lights. They raised enough money to purchase 33 lights. She noted that at least 18 lights will be displayed, and 15 lights cannot be placed until PPL installs the connections for them. President Wargo congratulated Ms. Basiago for spearheading the committee and for her effort in raising enough funds to purchase all the lights and thanked everyone who was on the committee that helped in fundraising. He also mentioned that the LSA grant that they applied for was not approved due to the push to upgrade emergency radios to a digital system for Carbon County.
10. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to transfer funds in the amount of \$188,629.40 from the General Fund to the Sewer Fund to reimburse the account for funds borrowed for operating expenses in 2024 and 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Edward Kane to enter into an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters regarding the police at 7:35 p.m. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Marlene Basiago to enter back into regular session at 7:50 p.m. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by David Wargo to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m. until the next regular meeting of the Summit Hill Borough on July 8, 2025. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

David Wargo
Council President

Kira Steber
Secretary/Treasurer