

Summit Hill Borough Council
March 11, 2025, 6:17 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, Edward Kane, Marlene Basiago, Solicitor Robert Frycklund and Mayor Jeffrey Szczecina were in attendance. Alan Kruslicky was absent.

Floor – No comments from the floor.

Minutes – **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Edward Kane to approve the meeting minutes from the February 11, 2025 Council meetings.** 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 \$576.49 and from Carbon County was \$95.60. He stated that on behalf of the community and Mayor he congratulated Panther Valey Junior female wrestler, Brenda Banks, who won the state championship. He is going to reach out to Superintendent McAndrew to see if Brenda would be able to attend the next meeting and have something to present to her. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the mayor’s report for the month of February 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Police Report – Chief Woodward read the monthly report. He also asked to send Officer Strauss to a “Enforcement of the PA Vehicle Inspection Regulations” training class at the West Hazelton Borough building on May 19 and 20, 2025. There will be no cost to the borough. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Joseph Weber to approve the request to send Officer Strauss to an Enforcement of the PA Vehicle Inspection Regulations class on May 19 and 20, 2025 at the West Hazelton Borough building.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council. Mayor Szczecina stated that he had a meeting with Officer Strauss and Chief Woodward. Over the past few weeks, they have had 6-10 vehicles towed due to violations, habitual offenders or receiving multiple violations and not responding. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Marlene Basiago to accept the Police report for the month of February 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Planning and Zoning – Nothing to report for the month of February 2025.

UCC, Code Enforcement and Rental Inspection Reports – Secretary Steber said included in the information is a list of rental lease applications that were returned to the office. They are still coming in and until all applications are returned, they will not have a complete list to provide at this time. Councilwoman Gonzalez asked where the money being received is being deposited. Ms. Steber said it is being placed in the rental inspection line item in the General Fund until the new account is opened. **Motion was made by Edward Kane and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept the UCC and Code Enforcement report for the month of February 2025.** Motion was opened for comment. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Work Leader Report – President Wargo commended the police and borough workers for the great job they did keeping the streets as open as they could be. He also thanked the borough workers for coming out on a Sunday when the temperature dropped, and they did what they could to get as much ice off the streets. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Edward Kane to accept the Work Leader report for the month of February 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Tax Collector Report – Nothing to report for the month of February 2025.

Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report – Portnoff submitted their Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of February 2025. Total collected was \$1,610.83. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of February 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 February 2025. Total EIT submitted was \$65,431.16 with a commission of \$1,131.96 and postage charges of \$83.83. Total LST submitted was \$130.44, with a commission of \$2.67 and postage charges of \$3.27. Nothing submitted for DLT this month. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the Wage Tax report for the month of February 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Delinquent Garbage Collection Report – Creditech submitted their Delinquent Garbage Collection Reports for months of January 2025. Total collected from Creditech for January was \$2,625.51. Total collected from Summit Hill Borough for January 2025 was \$882.00 with collection fees paid to the Borough in the amount of \$1,905.50. **Motion was made by Edward Kane and seconded by Lacey Gonzalez to accept the Delinquent Garbage Collection report for the month of January 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council. Councilwoman Ruzicka questioned the payments made by a person who is listed 40 times on the list and wanted to know if it was a rental. Ms. Steber explained that it was an outstanding bill that she finally got caught up on. It is not a rental; it is the woman's home. Vice President Weber asked if there is anything else they can do to collect the bills. There are a handful of people who owe significant fees, and they are not getting caught up. Councilwoman Gonzalez asked if we could stop the services. Ms. Steber mentioned that they never did it in the past because Council did not want to cause a health hazard. Ms. Ruzicka said other towns do it. Solicitor Frycklund said they can place liens on the property but would need to give them 30 days' notice to pay for it. Plus, the ordinance would need to include collection of attorney fees, legal costs, postage, etc. He mentioned that they would have to revise the lien every five years, which is an additional cost.

Receipts – Total receipts received for the month of January 2025 were \$230,987.75. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Marlene Basiago to accept the Receipts for the month of February 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Bills – General Fund \$116,874.25, Local Service Tax Account \$5.94, Community Center \$2,440, Street Lighting Account \$4,489.82, Sanitation Account \$28,292.58, Street Account \$7,047.19 and HOME Account \$73.75. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by David Wargo to pay the bills from February 12 – March 11, 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Committee Reports

Streets –

1. Councilman Ruzicka said that there is a USDA grant for the purchase of a new truck for the borough workers and looking for a letter of request. Councilwoman Basiago said she needs Council's approval. Some of the paperwork has been started, Kira will need to provide 5 years of audits and will need to go after three loan companies for quotes. Ms. Steber said that she was notified by the Work Leader that the EGR is failing again. This is the third time it has happened and the last time they paid \$10,000 to fix it. It may not hurt to get the truck ordered right away because it is going to take 6-8 months to build a truck. They are trying not to use it currently because they do not want to blow it up and it will not make it until

Fall. Councilwoman Basiago said she does not know when the grant would be awarded. There is also a grant through DCED up to \$50,000 and at a 2% rate. The cost of the vehicle is \$129,000 with a 9ft. plow, spreader, aluminum body and it will be diesel. A brief discussion took place on the funds to pay the payments and the cost of the truck going up if they wait any longer to order. President Wargo asked that they get a little more information so they can talk about it on March 24th meeting.

Recreation –

1. Councilwoman Basiago read the minutes from the February 4, 2025 meeting. President Wargo asked about the grant that Ms. Gieniec is applying for. Ms. Gieniec said she applied for a grant through the Carbon County Community Foundation in the amount of \$2,000. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to ratify the motion for the Summit Hill Recreation Commission to apply for a grant with the Carbon County Community Foundation in the amount of \$2,000 to purchase playground equipment for the Little League Playground.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
2. Councilwoman Basiago mentioned that the soldier statue in the park needs to be repainted. She is looking into getting prices and would like to apply for the Pocono Mountain Visitors Bureau grant, which closes on April 4th. President Wargo said they can discuss it further at the meeting on March 24th. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Joseph Weber to table the discussion of applying for a grant for the soldier statue in Ludlow Park until the March 24th meeting so that more information can be obtained.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
3. Councilman Basiago talked to the Shade Tree Commission regarding the trees that are planted around the monuments that are in Ludlow Park to either have them trimmed or removed. She would also like to have the monuments and sidewalks cleaned. President Wargo asked that the committee talk it over with Alan to see if the road crew can manage taking care of the trees. They will follow up on it at the March 24th meeting.
4. Councilwoman Gonzalez asked if they came to a consensus about the incident that took place in Ludlow Park and the kids playing football. President Wargo explained they do not know the legitimacy of the complaint, but he did talk to the Chief and asked that if the police are out and they see someone playing an intense game to politely ask them to move over to the Ginder Field.
5. Pat Williams, 313 East White Street, asked the status of the cherub statue that was knocked over. President Wargo stated that statue was able to be repaired, and they are in the process of figuring out how to get it back in the park. He said they may want to hold a dedication closer to Memorial Day.
6. Councilwoman Basiago mentioned that the trees on unit block of East Ludlow Street, which she initially thought were the borough's trees, are the residents' trees and not the boroughs. Ms. Steber said the borough can trim the trees if they are obstructing the roadway.

Building –

1. Councilman Kane mentioned that a window was cracked at the Community Center. An estimate for repair is in the amount of \$325. Not sure what caused the crack.
2. Councilwoman Ruzicka mentioned the cleaning process at the Community Center. She looked at the expenses and is wondering if she is cleaning the building once a week. President Wargo said she is except for when people rent the building because the cleaning fee is part of the cost for renting. Ms. Ruzicka stated that there was a party last Saturday and she has been in the building a few times since then and the floors are filthy. Looks as if they have not been cleaned at all because there were food crumbs in areas.

Councilman Kane said he did see what she is referring to but added that there will be additional costs charged if she does clean in between events. Ms. Steber added that she did speak to her, and she said that she does not clean the floors after the last party on the weekends during winter because of the material that is being tracked in from the parking lot during the week. If it is bad after an event, she will give it a dry mop until she cleans before the next party. She said she will gladly come and clean throughout the week, but it will not be done for free. President Wargo said that there was event on Sunday and 4 exercises classes between Monday and Thursday. Kathy Gieniec said it was like that on Tuesday when they were there for their meeting. Ms. Steber reiterated that she does not mop the floor after the last event on the weekends because of the classes that are held during the week. She will come in on Friday to clean before the next party.

Special Purpose Parking – Councilwoman Basiago said there is a special purpose parking application for 126 West Fell Street. The committee recommends approving it. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Joseph Weber to approve the special purpose parking application at 126 West Fell Street.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Economic Development – Councilwoman Gonzalez received the Amusement Tax Ordinance and will work on getting a draft together.

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

Communications – Nothing to report for the month of February 2025.

Old Business –

1. President Wargo stated that they need to discuss the definition of family to be defined in the Rental Inspection Ordinance so there can be exemptions to the ordinance. Councilwoman Basiago provided examples to Council. Councilwoman Gonzalez said she likes the IRS definition that Marlene provided. The definition for family members for rentals is spouses, siblings, half-siblings, parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Marlene Basiago to amend the ordinance to allow exemptions for family members, as defined by the IRS.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council. President Wargo would also like to require a notarized statement for anyone asking for an exemption. Councilwoman Gonzalez mentioned looking into getting someone in the office notarized.
2. President Wargo said last month they agreed to have a sentence removed from the Winter Parking Ordinance under Section 450-38 No. 4. They are looking to have the second sentence of that paragraph deleted. Solicitor Frycklund will prepare it for the April meeting.
3. President Wargo asked Council what they would like to do with the old Christmas decorations once they are replaced with the new ones. If they are going to sell them, it will put a value on them. Solicitor Frycklund will look into it further and provide information for the April meeting.

New Business –

1. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Joseph Weber to adopt Ordinance No. 04-2025, amending the Physical Fitness section of the Civil Service ordinance.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

2. Letter from Ian Farrell requesting he be appointed as the Borough's Sewage Enforcement Officer and that Scott Bieber be appointed as the alternate because Mr. Bieber is looking to start moving towards retirement. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to appoint Ian Farrell as the Borough's Sewage Enforcement Office and to appoint Scott Bieber as the Sewage Enforcement Officer Alternate effective immediately.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

3. President Wargo said there was a question as to what they would like to do about churches that have special purpose parking spaces. Councilwoman Basiago stated that she would exempt them unless they must replace the sign or require a special sign and then they would be responsible for the sign but nothing else. A brief discussion took place on whether to include 501(c)(3) organizations. **Motion made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Lacey Gonzalez to exempt churches and 501(c)(3) organizations from paying the renewal fees but will require them to pay for any replacements or special signs.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

4. Secretary Steber suggested opening a new bank account for the Rental Inspection Program. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to authorize Kira Steber to open a new bank account with Jim Thorpe Neighborhood Bank for the Rental Inspection Program.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

5. President Wargo asked for a brief discussion as to what Council's goals are for 2025. He reiterated the goals they set for 2024 and reached 90% of them.

Council Goals for 2025:

- a. Amusement Tax Ordinance proposed – Councilwoman Gonzalez
- b. Short Term Rental Ordinance in place – Councilman Weber
- c. Do more with the parks (appearance, equipment, supplies, etc.) – Councilwoman Basiago
- d. The appearance when entering the town – Councilman Kane
- e. Website up and running – Councilwoman Gonzalez

6. The Electronics Recycling will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2025 from 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. along the Ginder Field. ID is required for the electronics recycling. Spring Cleanup dates will be held on Saturday, April 19 and Saturday, April 26, 2025.

Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Joseph Weber to adjourn at 7:23 p.m. until the next regular meeting of the Summit Hill Borough on March 24, 2025. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

David Wargo
Council President

Kira Steber
Secretary/Treasurer