

Summit Hill Borough Council
February 13, 2024, 7:00 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 William O’Gurek, Lacey Gonzalez, Karen Ruzicka, Alan Kruslicky, Joseph Weber, Marlene Basiago, and Mayor Jeffrey Szczecina were all present. Solicitor Frycklund was absent.

Floor – No one from the audience spoke

Minutes – **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Joseph Weber to approve the meeting minutes from the January 9, 2024 Council meeting.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

President Wargo asked that they step into a brief Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to enter into an Executive Session at 7:02 p.m.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to enter back into Regular Session at 7:05 p.m. 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 \$1,038.39 and from Carbon County was \$365.68. He mentioned that the Fire Company held a Dart Tournament fundraiser last week. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to accept the mayor’s report for the month of January 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Police Report – Mayor Szczecina read the monthly report. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Marlene Basiago to accept the Police report for the month of January 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Planning and Zoning – **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept the Planning and Zoning report for the month of January 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

UCC, Code Enforcement and Rental Inspection Reports – **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the UCC, Code Enforcement and Rental Inspection reports for the month of January 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Work Leader Report – **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the Work Leader report for the month of January 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Tax Collector Report - There is no Tax Collector report for the month of January 2024, but Council needs to approve the 2023 reports submitted by the Tax Collector. President Wargo mentioned that between the real estate and per capita delinquencies, there is in excess \$43,000 of unpaid taxes, with \$8,745 of that being delinquent per capita taxes. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Marlene Basiago to approve the Delinquent Real Estate, Delinquent Per Capita and the Exoneration lists submitted by the Tax Collector for the 2023 collection year.** 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 January 2024. Total delinquent real estate tax collected was \$497.20 and total expenses reimbursed were \$820.94. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of January 2024.** 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 January 2024. Total EIT submitted was \$21,081.03 with a commission of \$364.70 and postage charges of \$34.22. Total LST submitted was \$119.61, with a commission of \$2.45 and postage charges of \$1.52. Total DLT submitted was \$198.55 in delinquent Occupation Tax and \$71.50 in delinquent Per Capita Tax. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Lacey Gonzalez to accept the Wage Tax report for the month of January 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Delinquent Garbage Collection Report – Central Credit Audit submitted their Delinquent Garbage Collection Report for the month of January 2024. Total collected from Central Credit was \$2,050.62. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Marlene Basiago to accept the Delinquent Garbage Collection Report for the month of January 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Receipts – Total receipts received for the month of January 2024 were \$300,904.37. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the Receipts for the month of January 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Committee Reports

Streets – Councilman Weber said a complaint was received from a resident regarding an issue with a neighbors sump pump on East Hazard Street. At the time of the complaint, ice was building up on the street causing a hazard for the surrounding neighbors. He recommends contacting the borough engineer to see if they have any suggestions on how to rectify the problem. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to allow Joseph Weber to contact the borough engineer to see if they have any recommendations to remedy the sump pump issue.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Recreation – Councilwoman Ruzicka said that Easter on the Hill will be held on March 23rd, with a rain date of March 30th. Pickleball is held two nights a week. They are asking to change the hours on Wednesdays to 5-8 p.m. with Mondays hours staying 6-9 p.m.

2024 list of events for the Summit Hill Recreation Commission:

- Monthly meetings are held the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Hill Top Community Center
- Easter on the Hill on Saturday, March 23rd; rain date of March 30th
- Breakfast sale on Monday, May 27th
- Summit Hill Townwide Yard Sale on Saturday, July 6th
- Back to School movie event in August. Date to be announced.
- Ghouls and Gourds Halloween event on Saturday, October 26th; rain date of October 27th
- Christmas on the Hill on Sunday, December 1st

Motion was made Lacey Gonzalez and seconded Karen Ruzicka to approve the list of the events for 2024 for the Summit Hill Recreation Commission. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Personnel – Councilwoman Ruzicka stated that the Borough Secretary/Treasurer’s contract needs Council’s approval. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Marlene Basiago to approve the employment contract of the Borough Secretary/Treasurer, Kira Steber, for four years with a 4% increase in salary each year.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Emergency Services - Councilman Kruslicky mentioned that the new tanker truck is not in service yet due to some minor issues that need to be addressed. The new tanker replaced the 1987 KME tanker. The old truck carried about 1,500 gallons of water; the new truck will carry 3,000 gallons. The fire company now has the capacity of bringing 4,500 gallons of water to a fire scene. It is a major upgrade for the rural areas and for the town to supplement the water system. On January 27th, the fire company hosted their annual dart tournament. They held a pizza sale on February 11th, which was the best one they have ever had. Upcoming fundraisers for the fire co. are an Easter flower sale on March 23rd and 24th and a spaghetti dinner on April 7th.

Sanitation – Councilwoman Gonzalez said a complaint was received from a resident with regards to trash not being emptied completely from the can. She believes it was a result of weather so there is not much they can do at this time.

Handicap – Councilwoman Basiago stated that an application was received for 228 East Hazard Street. She is recommending that the request be denied.

Reasons for denial:

- Physician states the applicant can walk 200 feet without rest and 400 feet with periods of rest.
- Distance from the parking space to the applicants front door is 32 feet.
- Evaluation of the parking space at various times of the day found that the space was either vacant or the applicants vehicle was parked in it.
- There is a driveway next door to the home, which she can park in to unload her vehicle, or she can double park on the street until the vehicle is unloaded.
- The physician’s application was dated 12-15-2023 and it was received in the office on 01-18-2024. At that time, it stated that she was ambulating with a straight cane. Presently, she is ambulating independently.

Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Joseph Weber to deny the handicap parking application for 228 East Hazard Street for the reasons stated. Motion opened for comment; none made. President Wargo asked for a roll call vote for the request to deny the application.

David Wargo	Yes
William O’Gurek	No
Lacey Gonzalez	No
Karen Ruzicka	No
Alan Kruslicky	Yes
Joseph Weber	Yes
Marlene Basiago	Yes

Roll Call vote ended in 4-3 vote to deny the request for handicap parking at the property at 228 East Hazard Street.

Councilwoman Basiago said a letter was received from a resident on Walter Street. He is concerned because someone took a picture of his car parked partially in a handicap spot and posted it on Facebook and now people are making damaging comments about him. He asked for help finding out who the person is that put

the picture on Facebook. Mayor Szczecina mentioned that he could hire a private investigator. It is a civil matter, and the police will not get involved with things on Facebook.

President Wargo stated that they held their first committee workshop meeting and will continue to hold meetings on the 4th Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. He explained how they will be running the committee meetings and how they will be bringing recommendations back to the table at the regular Council meetings. Some of the goals they are hoping to accomplish are:

- Will support the Blueprint Community grant if it is approved.
- Zoning Code will be overhauled
- Looking at changing the LST rate
- Promotional signs
- Funding for new Christmas lights
- Create a review schedule for committees
- Find opportunities for grants

Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the Committee Reports for the month of January 2024. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Communications –

Communications for the Month of January 2024:

1. Request from Liz Saba, Coordinator with the Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania Council, asking to use the Hill Top Community Center as a location to host bi-weekly troop meetings.
2. Acknowledgement and Release request from Anastasia and Wesley LaVeque to use the Ginder Park on May 26, 2024 from 12-4 p.m. for a 1st Birthday Party.
3. Acknowledgement and Release request from Raymond Gusick to use the gazebo in Ludlow Park on June 1, 2024 from 11a.m.-1p.m. for a wedding.
4. Letter from Andy Gorel, Fell Township Chairperson, asking for assistance financially and contacting the senator and state representative with two cases his township is fighting.
5. Notice of Occupation Assessment from the Carbon County Board of Assessment and Revision of Taxes.
6. Letter received from John W. Casella regarding information about waste management services and to inform the borough that they acquired GFL Environmental Waste Management operation in the area.
7. Information form PennDOT LTAP:
 - a. Brochure about what they offer municipalities
 - b. Winter 2024 PennDOT LTAP Technical Information Sheet #228
 - c. Winter 2024 Newsletter
1. **Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by William O’Gurek to conditionally grant permission to the Girl Scouts of Pennsylvania to use the training room on at the Community Center to host bi-weekly troop meetings as per the recommendation of the solicitor.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

2. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to grant permission to Anastasia and Wesley LaVeque to use the Ginder Park on May 26, 2024 from 12-4 p.m. for a 1st Birthday Party.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
3. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to grant permission to Raymond Gusick to use the gazebo in Ludlow Park on June 1, 2024 from 11a.m.-1p.m. for a wedding.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept communications for the month of January 2024. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Bills – General Fund \$116,734.45, Community Center \$551.39, Sanitation Account \$28,210.44, Street Account \$15,845.45, and Capital Improvement Fund – Fire Co. \$215,807. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to pay the bills from January 10 – February 13, 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Old Business -

1. RFPs for Abatement Program – President Wargo stated that he would like to put the RFPs for the Abatement Program out for bid. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by William O’Gurek to advertise the RFP for cleaning services for the abatement program with the RFPs due by 4:00 p.m. on March 12, 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to advertise the RFP for pest control/extermination services for the abatement program with the RFPs due by 4:00 p.m. on March 12, 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
2. Sidewalk Ordinance – Councilwoman Ruzicka stated that Ms. Basiago provided her with another ordinance regarding sidewalks that has a lot of useful information. They are going to get together and talk about it. She would like to have any citizens that have questions or concerns about the sidewalk ordinance come to the committee meeting at the end of the month.

Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept old business for the month of January 2024. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

New Business –

1. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Joseph Weber to adopt Resolution No. 01-2024 Filling the Vacancy on Borough Council.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
2. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by William O’Gurek to adopt Resolution No. 02-2024 Eliminating payment by members of the Summit Hill Police Pension Plan for the year 2024.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
3. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Marlene Basiago to adopt Resolution No. 03-2024 Updating the authorized signers on all borough accounts with Jim Thorpe Neighborhood Bank.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
4. **Motion was made by Alan Kruslicky and seconded by Joseph Weber to ratify the motion to sell the 2015 Ford Taurus for \$500 to Matthew Rogers.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

5. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by William O’Gurek to ratify the motion to write a letter of support to America 250PA Committee Members to acquire funding for the proposed Panther Valley Trail.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
6. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Lacey Gonzalez to write a letter to DCED requesting another year extension of the LSA-MC grant for the Summit Hill Heritage Center’s project with a new expiration date of June 30, 2025.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
7. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to write a letter of support for the Lansford Borough for a Keystone Historic Preservation grant for their railroad station.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
8. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to grant permission to Councilwoman Basiago to attend a four-day webinar through the PSAB for Writing Effective Grant Proposals at a cost of \$50 with the sessions being held on March 14, 21, 28 and April 4, 2024 from 10a.m.-12p.m.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
9. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to renew the yearly membership with the Carbon County Council of Governments at a cost of \$100.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Lacey Gonzalez to appoint Joseph Weber as the voting delegate to represent the Summit Hill Borough.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council. **Motion was made by William O’Gurek and seconded by Marlene Basiago to appoint Lacey Gonzalez as the alternate delegate.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
10. Councilwoman Ruzicka went over the recommendations that were received from McKee Risk Management that were a result of the risk control visit that was held in December 2023. Kira Steber explained that Ronnie went over the list of items that need to be purchased and provided a list of prices for the items. The total cost to purchase the items is \$2,155.80, which is required by the insurance company. Councilwoman Ruzicka asked where the funds will be coming from to pay for the items and suggested using the Capital Improvement funds. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Alan Kruslicky to authorize the purchase of recommended items from the insurance company at a total cost of \$2,155.80 with the funds being paid out of the Capital Improvement Building and Equipment funds.** Motion was opened for comment.
11. President Wargo said it was brought to borough’s attention that the website needs to have changes made to it. Bobby O’Gurek is the current website designer and realizes that he needs to transition out of the position because he is not capable of handling it any longer. Kira Steber added that Keystone Technology has recommended NA Studios. She spoke with a representative who is willing to come to the borough and meet with Council to see what the needs are for the website and to give a presentation. The cost is upfront to redo the website, which he has not provided yet. They would completely redo the website and then everything would be turned over to the borough, who would have access to make changes to the website. They would still provide any assistance that would be needed. President Wargo said they can discuss it further at the committee meeting. It was recommended that they work on putting something on the website to be able to pay garbage bills online.
12. President Wargo mentioned that they received information and a cost to get borough emails through Keystone Technology. The cost is \$6 per month per account, they need 18 accounts, which would come out to a cost of \$1,296 for the year. He was informed by Keystone that there is a municipal change to the

law that will require some security improvements to the police department as of October 1, 2024. They can talk about it further at the committee meeting.

13. President Wargo went over the amendments that were made to the Quality-of-Life ordinance. The reason for it is to make sure they can do what they promised in the abatement program. He asked that Council take a look at it, and they will discuss it at committee meeting.
14. President Wargo said to go along with the amendments to the Quality-of-Life ordinance, they will need to adopt a resolution to establish fees, costs and penalties associated with the QOL ordinance.
15. Councilwoman Basiago stated that a few weeks ago a meeting was held to discuss the Rental Property ordinance and what they can do to get an accurate list together of rental properties. She was given a list of properties in town, which she went through, and produced a list of rental properties. Currently she has 330 properties on a list that are rental properties. She has been working on revising the ordinance and gathering the information to provide to Kira so she can start generating the list. They are still in the planning stages and feels they are progressing very well. She is hoping that in a few months they will be ready to have it instituted and move forward. Ms. Steber added that she and Marlene met with Ralph from Lehigh Engineering. He agreed to work with us once we have the list together and will do as many inspections as he can at a time to help us move forward with the process. It was discussed with her about a spreadsheet that has been created by an employee of Lehigh Engineering that would be willing to provide, but it will come at a cost. They can discuss it further at the committee meeting.
16. President Wargo explained that the program for the Blueprint Community should be due any day. If they do hear something, they will need to act quickly and sign a memorandum of understanding which states that they agree to do what they can to support the initiative. He would like to make sure he has Council's permission to sign the borough's approval of the project. **Motion was made by Lacey Gonzalez and seconded by William O'Gurek to approve a letter of understanding regarding the Blueprint Community Grant project.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
17. President Wargo said that there is an opportunity for the borough's to join in on a grant to install electric vehicle charging stations. There is going to be a workshop on February 29th at 6:30 p.m. at the Jim Thorpe School District High School LGI room. There is limited seating, so anyone interested must RSVP to attend.

Motion was made by William O'Gurek and seconded by Joseph Weber to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. until the next meeting of the Summit Hill Borough on March 12, 2024. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

David Wargo
Council President

Kira Steber
Secretary/Treasurer