

**Summit Hill Borough Council**  
**November 14, 2023, 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 Pro Tem David Wargo presiding.

**Roll Call** – Vice President William O’Gurek, Gino DeGiosio, Karen Ruzicka, Alan Kruslicky, Joseph Weber, David Wargo and Mayor Jeffrey Szczecina were in attendance. President Michael Kokinda and Solicitor Robert Frycklund were absent.

Presentation of a Proclamation to Kathryn Chickilly in honor of her 100th birthday

**Floor** –

1. Dianne Smith, 230 West Hazard Street, stated that there is a definite threat of crime problems in town. She is a nightshift worker and is awake at night when she does not need to go to work. She has not seen any officers patrolling in the late hours or in the early morning. She moved to Summit Hill twelve years ago thinking it was a safe town to retire. She is a victim of theft, vandalism, and an attempted break-in. She had items vandalized and a propane tank stolen right off the grill, which was located right outside the backdoor. On a summer day last year, two men tried to break into her home while she was laying in the couch after a night of work. The front door was open, and the screen door was locked. The exact words from the men were “Oh shit, it is locked.” She does not feel safe in her own house, therefore, she has taken steps to secure her home and make it safe. She also mentioned that her neighbor had a bench stolen from their property, which is now located at the schoolhouse apartments down the block. They also had an attempted car theft, which is on video. She has been asked why she did not call the police. She has come to realize from hearing other people’s experiences with the police that it is a moot point. Never complain about a problem because nothing will be done. Chief Woodward expressed that if she would call 9-1-1 an officer will respond. He cannot speak on every incident but there are incidents that are extremely difficult to solve especially if it is not on camera. Ms. Smith said that even with having a camera it would not have helped because they pulled their hoods down. She understands their dilemma but feels a little more patrolling would be effective.
2. Kathy Gieniec, President of the Recreation Commission, gave an update on the events they will be holding. This Saturday, 11/18 at 11:00 a.m., the commission members will be decorating Ludlow Park, if anyone would like to help. Sunday they will be holding another cake decorating class. December 3rd will be Christmas on the Hill. This year will be a little different because they are going to be having the Jim Thorpe Trolley come and give free trolley rides. Looking for permission to hold another paint and snack for the kids on December 15th starting at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Szczecina mentioned that he spoke with Kathy about the trolley rides and how they would be free to the public, but it is going to cost the Rec Commission \$400. He stated that he spoke to the three organizations at the American Legion, and they donated money to the commission to pay for the trolley. The Ladies Auxiliary, the SALs and the American Legion Post each donated \$200 a piece, for a total of \$600. Councilman Wargo thanked the organizations for their generous donations.
3. Barbara Boyd, 24 East Ludlow Street, verified that the borough has an ordinance about putting garbage out before Sunday and wanted to know what they do with residents that are constant violators. If they are only getting \$25 per violation that is ridiculous. Councilman Wargo explained that they are being ticketed under the Quality-of-Life ordinance, which starts at \$25 then graduates from \$25 to \$50 to \$150 to \$250 and stays at \$250 and then becomes a citation as many times they are in violation. They can be ticketed every 24 hours. Ms. Boyd stated that she does not think this bothers the woman. She is a slumlord, lives in New York and only comes to the house when the renters move out. The last renters moved out in the middle of the night and left all their belongings in the house. This has not been the first time this has happened

because she rents to people who are not good residents. The owner will show up a few days later, with her crew from New York, and empty out the entire house and leave everything on the pavement. There was stuff lined up in front of multiple homes and was there for at least four days. Plus, the back of the home is filled with junk. Because of this, she has another rat situation in her home. She had to have two different people come in to try and find the holes where they were getting in and has cost her over \$2,200. She cannot afford to keep paying for this and Council needs to start coming down harder on these people. Chief Woodward said he will be sending someone over to the property in the morning. All he can do at this point is make sure the property owner gets fined daily. Councilman Wargo explained that they are still working on the program that he would like to see put into place, but they have to make sure they have the right measurers in place at the end as well as modifying the ordinance. The intension is to go after the people directly instead of putting liens on the property because the liens will never get paid. They want to make sure to hold the violators accountable. They will also need the funding to move forward with the program, which will be discussed during the budget meeting. Councilwoman Ruzicka added that the other issue is that they have an ordinance for rental inspections and people are not getting their properties inspected.

4. Joanie Morana, East Ludlow Street, stated that she is very upset that people are allowed to put blacktop down for their sidewalks. It looks horrible and if you are trying to make the town look better, this is not going to help. She has also tried to reach Mr. Matika about the fence down the street from her. It is leaning, there are tree branches growing out of it and is it even up to code. Ms. Morana also asked if the Quality-of-Life ordinance includes noise during the day. She is having an issue with the daycare next door. One, she feels that a daycare should have never been granted to be opened in a residential area. She works from home, is a taxpayer and is entitled to her peace and quiet. She should not have to listen to 25 kids screaming at the top of their lungs while she is trying to work. Does she have the right to call the police about this. Chief Woodward stated that the noise ordinance only pertains to music. There is no court that would allow him to cite a daycare for kids carrying on. This is an issue that would have to be addressed by Council.

**Minutes** – Motion was made by Gino DeGiosio and seconded by Joseph Weber to approve the meeting minutes from the October 10, 2023 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 \$1,001.16 and \$187.10 from Carbon County. He also mentioned the following: **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept the mayor's report for the month of October 2023.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Police Report** – Chief Woodward read his monthly report. He also mentioned that the tablets have come in however the printers are on backorder and there is no delivery date at this time. Councilman Wargo stated that a letter of resignation was received from Daniel Long. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the resignation of Officer Daniel Long as a part-time police officer.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion was carried unanimously by Council. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to accept the Police report for the month of October 2023.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Planning and Zoning** – Motion was made by Gino DeGiosio and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept the Planning and Zoning report for the month of October 2023. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously. Councilwoman Ruzicka asked why they are not being provided a list of properties that were inspected. Ms. Steber notified her that the current Zoning Officer does not do the rental inspections; Lehigh Engineering does them.

**UCC and Code Enforcement Report** – Motion was made by Gino DeGiosio and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept the UCC and Code Enforcement report for the month of October 2023. Motion was opened for comment. Councilwoman Ruzicka said that there is not a rental inspection report attached and would like to start getting one each month. Ms. Steber said she will talk to Lehigh Engineering about it. No further comments made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Work Leader Report** – Motion was made by Gino DeGiosio and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the Work Leader report for the month of October 2023. Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Tax Collector Report** - Nathan Halenar submitted his Tax Collector Report for the month of October 2023. Total collected was \$7,562.20 with a commission of \$226.87. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept the Tax Collector Report for the month of October 2023.** 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 October 2023. Total collected was \$3,810.68; the monthly expense reimbursement was \$525.44 for July, August, and September. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept the Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of October 2023.** 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 October 2023. Total EIT submitted was \$22,741.70 with a commission of \$393.43 and postage charges of \$13.29. Total LST submitted was \$102.76 with a commission of \$2.11 and postage charges of \$6.82. Total DLT submitted was \$990.42 in delinquent Occupation Tax and \$406.52 in delinquent Per Capita Tax. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to accept the Wage Tax report for the month of October 2023.** 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 October 2023. Total collected from Central Credit was \$264.50. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept the Delinquent Garbage Collection Report for the month of October 2023.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Receipts** – Total receipts received for the month of October 2023 were \$70,194.16. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to accept the Receipts for the month of October 2023.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

### **Committee Reports**

**Streets** - Ms. Steber stated that the workers have been out filling potholes, tar sealing cracks, getting the trucks ready for winter and doing inside work that needs to be done.

### **Recreation** -

1. Councilman Wargo said the Recreation Commission is asking for permission to hold a few events over the next month. November 19th a cupcake decorating class at the Community Center from 2:00-4:00 p.m., December 3rd, permission to have the Jim Thorpe Trolley come up for Christmas on the Hill and December 15th, a kid's Snack and Paint at the Community Center starting at 6:00 p.m. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Joseph Weber to grant permission to the Recreation Commission to hold the mentioned events on the dates stated.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

2. Councilman Wargo said the commission would like permission to make a purchase from Amazon for gifts to give to the kids at Christmas on the Hill. Mayor Szczecina said it is something on which he is working. Last year stuffed animals were donated by a resident in memory of his wife, which were handed out by the police department. He is working with someone who is willing to donate money for the purchase of stuffed animals for this year. He spoke with Ms. Steber, who said the borough does have an Amazon account so they can make the purchase and the donation will go towards the bill. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to approve the expenditure of up to \$500 for stuffed animals for Christmas on the Hill, which will be reimbursed.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Buildings** - Kira Steber updated Council on the progress of the HVAC project. The municipal building is completed. On November 27th, they will be starting at the Community Center. The building will be off limits to all events for roughly three weeks because of the equipment and other times that will be stored in the center while the system is being upgraded. Ms. Gieniec asked if they will be removing all the stuff that is being stored in the storage closet. Ms. Steber said it will be cleaned out once the project is complete. Ms. Gieniec also asked about the dinnerware that is also being stored in the room. Ms. Steber explained that inventory was taken a few years back with the intention to sell the items, but it was never done. Bids would need to be accepted for the items.

**Emergency Services** - Councilman Weber read a letter that was received from the Diligence Fire Co. No. 1 requesting \$25,000 from the capital improvement fund to assist with the cost of the new tanker truck. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to grant the request and issue a check to the Diligence Fire Co. No. 1 in the amount of \$25,000 from the capital improvement fund to help with the cost of the new tanker truck.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Handicap** - Councilman Weber stated that a new handicap parking application was received for 54 East Hazard Street. He said that the Chief did his investigation and they both feel the applicant does meet the criteria. Ms. Steber stated that a drawing was attached to the application with a request to have the spot installed alongside the home on Oak Street because there is a doorway there that would be more accessible for her. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to approve the handicap parking application for the property at 54 East Hazard Street and to place the parking spot on Oak Street for easier access to the home.** Motion was opened for comment. Marlene Basiago asked if there is specific size that the handicap parking spots should be painted. Councilman Wargo stated that the standard size for PennDOT is 22 feet. Ms. Steber explained that it does depend on the size of the vehicle plus they do have to allow so many feet in the front and back of the vehicle, so the person has room to get in and out of the spot. No further comments. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Economic Development** – Councilman Wargo stated the LSA grant is still in review, and he will not have an answer until January 2024. He gave an update on the Blueprint Community. They met last night and identified the team members that will form the core part of the team who will undergo training if the application is approved. He currently is working on the application for the grant, with the deadline of December 1st. They are working on it as a joint community, as per Senator Argall’s recommendation, because of the common needs and goal to increase the economy and strengthen the communities. If approved, there will be 18 months of intensive training, with mandatory meetings. At the end of it, they would be designated as a blueprint community that has been trained satisfactorily to manage projects and gives them a preferred status when applying for projects and grants. If anyone is interested, they are looking for people to volunteer. Their main goal is to revive and strength the communities as a whole.

**Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept the Committee Reports for the month of October 2023.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

### **Communications** –

#### **Communications for the Month of October 2023:**

1. Notice of Board Assessment Appeals from the Carbon County Board of Assessment and Revision of Taxes.
2. Fall 2023 Newsletter from the Central Pennsylvania Teamsters
3. Fall 2023 Newsletter from Barry Isett & Associates, Inc.

**Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept communications for the month of October 2023.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Bills** – General Fund \$138,496.59, Community Center \$376.30, Sanitation Account \$29,416.86, Street Account \$6,541.48, Capital Improvement Fund - Recreation \$9,950 and Capital Improvement Fund - Borough Building \$76,350. **Motion was made by Karen Ruzicka and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to pay the bills from October 11 - November 14, 2023.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

### **Old Business** -

1. RFPs for Abatement Program - Solicitor Frycklund explained that he is pulling together other RFPs. General RFPs are drafted by engineers or architects because they have to do with specs. They are going to need two different RFPs, one for an exterminator and one for cleaning. He should be able to provide a draft in the next couple of weeks.
2. Assistant Secretary Position - Kira Steber said applications were received, which were due by November 1st. Interviews need to be scheduled. Councilwoman Ruzicka said that she is the only one who responded about getting a date set for the interviews.
3. Chief Woodward mentioned that he brought it to the table last month about selling the 2015 Ford Taurus police car because it is not being used. He would recommend that the borough try to sell the vehicle on Municibid.

### **New Business** –

1. Councilman Wargo said that they received notice of the 2024 Solvency Fee in the amount of \$1,178.13. This is unemployment compensation levying for certain cases where someone may be separated from the borough and applies for unemployment and would relieve the borough from the dollar-to-dollar cost of paying the compensation. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to pay the 2024 Solvency Fee for the election for relief from charges in the amount of \$1,178.13.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
2. Councilman Wargo said a Hold Harmless Agreement was received from the Lehighon Ambulance Association regarding the borough helping clear snow and salt the driveway area during inclement weather at their station located at 345 East Ludlow Street. Solicitor Frycklund reviewed the document and stated that it was acceptable. Councilman Weber pointed out that they have the borough secretary listed for

signature of the document and thinks that it should be a member of Council; Solicitor Frycklund agreed. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to approve the Hold Harmless Agreement between the Summit Hill Borough and the Lehighon Ambulance Association, with the correction to be made that a council member be listed to sign the agreement.** 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 enter into a Cooperation Agreement with the Diligence Fire Co. No. 1 as part of the grant for the purchase of a new tanker truck.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
4. **Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to accept and approve the letter of understanding from Jospheh Collura, Auditor, to audit the Summit Hill Borough's financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2023 at a cost not to exceed \$5,300.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
5. Councilwoman Ruzicka said it was brought to her attention about people redoing sidewalks with blacktop. When she was redoing her sidewalks they wanted to redo it with pavers. The Zoning Officer at the time told them that it could only be replaced with cement. When the blacktop issue came up, she looked at the ordinances and they do not have an ordinance for sidewalks. A few months ago, she spoke with Kira about a permit being needed to replace sidewalks and had informed her that if the existing sidewalk is changed in any way, then a permit is required. She is not sure if Liz or her neighbor got a permit, but they changed the sidewalk by putting blacktop down. She and Kira both pulled ordinances from other boroughs in Carbon County. She is working on creating a draft sidewalk ordinance for the borough and spoke with some contractors to get specifics. Once the draft is done, she will forward it on the Frycklund for review. She is hoping to have it in effect by January. Councilman Wargo said that it will not be ready for adoption in January but can be ready early in the year. Councilman Weber stated that it would be a good idea to forward the sidewalk ordinance onto the Borough Engineer for review. Wargo added that they will be having zoning hearings in the spring for the new zoning ordinance so they may want to make sure that something is in the new ordinance about sidewalks.
6. Councilman Wargo explained that a letter of support is needed for the Blueprint Community application. **Motion was made by Jospheh Weber and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to submit a letter of support from the Summit Hill Borough in support of the Blueprint Community grant.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to enter into an Executive Session to discuss possible litigation at 8:28 p.m.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Motion was made by Gino and seconded by Karen Ruzicka to enter back into regular session at 9:11 p.m.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Motion was made by Joseph Weber and seconded by Gino DeGiosio to adjourn at 9:12 p.m. until the next regular meeting of the Summit Hill Borough on December 12, 2023.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Michael Kokinda  
Council President

Kira Steber  
Secretary/Treasurer