

BOROUGH OF SUGARCREEK COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

October 1, 2025

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council President Alan Heller opened the meeting at 7:00 pm, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted there will be no hurtful or harmful speech allowed.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (American Flag)

Council President Heller led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. MOMENT OF SILENCE

A moment of silence was observed.

IV. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Present at the meeting were Council members Alan Heller, John McClelland, Bogan Goughler, Larry Baughman, Howard Barger, and Mayor Matthew Carlson. Also, present were Maintenance Foreman Doug Freer, Chief Robert Wenner, James Speth, Attorneys Brian Spaid and Alex Spaid.

V. DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA

VI. COUNCIL CHANGES TO AGENDA

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (limited to 3 minutes each)

- A. Dick Rial asked where the funds come from that are used to demo houses within the Borough, when the Borough purchases houses. Mr. Sporer said the Borough uses CDBG funds, which are distributed from the Federal Government and it is maintained and dispersed to the Borough by the County.
- B. Dan Marvin, Reno V.F.D., updated Council on the fire department's activities since the last meeting. He said the department has had a total of 151 calls for the year and 14 since last month's meeting. Mr. Marvin also said the department has had more fire calls than ambulance calls for the month. He also said that next week is Fire Prevention Week and the department will be going to the schools, as well as the Cranberry Mall for demonstrations and educational presentations. Mr. Marvin updated Council that Bob Byers, member of Reno V.F.D, got out of the hospital and the department brought him home in a fire truck, escorted by Chief Wenner. The monthly dinner will be held on Sunday, Oct. 5, 2025 and the proceeds will be split evenly between Bob Byers and Bob McClintock for any unforeseen medical bills.
- C. Jeremy Rankin, Rocky Grove V.F.D., said that Wilson Excavating has been using the fire department's property while they are replacing gas lines. They anticipate them being there through January or February. Mr. Rankin said they are also preparing for Fire Prevention Week.
- D. Leann Highfield, teacher at Rocky Grove High School and Freshman class Advisor, presented Council with a request for a Homecoming Parade and Bonfire and looking for the Borough's support. She said they have been in contact with the Police and Fire Departments. Mr. Heller asked where the parade and bon fire will be held. Ms. Highfield said the parade route would be the same as the Fireman's Fair Parade and ending at the Rocky Grove V.F.D. field. And the bon fire would be a controlled burn at the fire department's grounds.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Maintenance Foreman:

- 1. Mr. Freer said the second round of boom mowing has been completed. They also tore down and replaced a wall in the salt shed and it is ready for winter. He said they have also trimmed some trees on the country roads to make it easier in the spring to spread the CMS – 2. Mr. Freer also said they have begun collecting leaves in Reno and Rocky Grove, at the designated locations.

B. Police Chief:

- 1. Chief Wenner updated Council that the department submitted a photo from the National Night Out Event to the United States Deputy Sheriff's Association Facebook photo contest. Chief was informed they were selected as one of the winners and recipient of a prize box and a chance to be featured on the Association's social media and newsletter. Chief said this association gives out grants and equipment and they have applied

before and have been a recipient in the past. Chief also presented Council with a partial schedule. Chief also read the department's quarterly report. He said the department is running above average in regards to contacts and phone calls. Felonies are down, but criminal complaints are up. The department averaged 900 miles patrol time per week. Chief also recommended a proposal of changes to some of the other accounts, based on his experience, is feasible and the total is \$4,188.00 and he believes it is good to have a cushion for unforeseen expenses.

2. Chief updated Council on the new desktop computers that were installed in the department. Chief said he discussed this matter with the Mayor and looked at the current budget and was able to find two accounts. He said they were made aware of the issue with the computers the end of January/beginning of February. The department tried to get an organization to work for a fundraiser, but the time ran out. Mr. Heller asked what the organization was that was going to do the fundraiser. He said it is an organization in Butler, PA and Officer Wilson has the information. Chief said he spoke with the Mayor and the department needed to get the computers ordered and installed. He stated he forgot to discuss it at the previous Council meeting with the other issues going on. He said there are two (2) accounts the computers could be paid from, there is no line item since the was not an anticipated expense. Chief said as of Oct. 1, 2025, four (4) of the computers would not be compliant. And the department would not be able to operate the programs they use. Under the department's "Operating Supplies" account, Chief said there is \$4,206.82 remaining, as of Sept. 29, 2025. And \$1,000.00 remaining in the "Office Equipment" account, for a total of \$5,206.82 between the two (2) accounts. Chief said this would pay for the computers and still leave \$308.55 remaining in the budget. Chief said with some of these things, like supplies line item when they're cut to bare bones, it does not give them anything to apply for it. Chief said he spoke with the Mayor and the Mayor said they would budget balance overall, even though there was no line item. Mr. Heller asked if they had laptops. Mayor Carlson said they do have them, but they are for writing tickets. Mr. Heller said the software could be run on those. Mr. Heller also asked for clarification on the number of computers requested; he thought Chief requested two (2) computers in the March meeting. Chief said his computer was able to be updated by replacing the hard drive and the other computers were too old. He said they tried two (2) of the computers and they would not upgrade to Windows 11. Mr. Baughman said the Council is between a rock and a hard place since the computers have already been purchased and installed. Mr. Heller said he saw there was a late fee already applied to the invoice. Chief said it was because the invoice was not paid and does not expect to pay the late fee. Mr. Baughman expressed concerns about still having a quarter to go in the year and these line items are so depleted.
 - a. Motion by John McClelland, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to approve the payment of four (4) HP computers, five (5) monitors, four (4) keyboards with wireless mouse, onsite delivery, setup & disposal and shipping from MaKenzie Enterprises, LLC. A roll call was taken. Mr. Barger, Mr. McClelland, and Mr. Baughman approved the motion. Mr. Goughler and Mr. Heller opposed the motion. Motion carried.
3. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve a donation of \$300.00 to the Venango County Coon and Fox Club, for the use of their facilities for firearms and tactical training. Bogan Goughler abstained. Motion carried.
4. Mr. Baughman questioned which line item the batteries for the speed sign would come from. Chief Wenner said he does not know where the money would come from. Mr. Heller asked Mr. Sporer if the funds were available. Mr. Sporer said it will be taken out of their budget somewhere.
 - a. Motion by Alan Heller, being duly seconded by John McClelland to approve the purchase of replacement batteries at a cost of approximately \$800.00 for the Police Department speed sign. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Chief Wenner presented Council with the estimate he received from Abode Construction, in regards to replacing the Police Department door and the Council door. Chief said the contractor is very busy and could replace a door at a time and he would call the day before. Chief said he would recommend replacing the Police door first since it gets used more. Chief also wanted to thank Mr. McClelland for bringing this company to his attention. Mr. Heller asked if he got estimates from anyone else. He said he did not. But he met with Amos Rudolph and he never heard back.

- a. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Howard Barger to approve the replacement of the Police and Council Room doors, as estimated by Abode Construction, for the cost of \$3,680.00, with 50% down and the balance paid upon completion. Motion carried unanimously.
6. Chief said he researched several vehicles on Municibid. The previous cruiser that was purchased through Municibid was purchased during COVID and a new cruiser would have been two (2) years out, at that time. But ultimately the department would be purchasing someone else's used vehicle. The newest vehicle he found was a 2020 and they were high mileage vehicles or had transmission issues. Chief said with last year's budget, the \$50,000 for the radios and the vest amount for reimbursement, he said they would only have to increase the budget, if they stayed at that number, approximately \$2,000.00 for a new vehicle. Chief said he has the estimates and he would recommend the new cruiser. Chief said he made arrangements to take delivery of the car in December 2025 and pay for it in January 2026, as part of the new budget. He said he thought Mr. Sporer said they could put it in the budget. He also said looking at these two (2) accounts from last year, because the radios and vests will not be occurring next year, he thinks that money could carry over next year, almost the same amount and one item. Chief said the upgrades to the radios were \$50,000 and for the vests it was \$10,700; there was \$1,000 budgeted and the vests were \$9,700.00, which the Borough had to pay up front in order to get the money back. He said if Council recalled having to put half down on the vests and they had to have a motion to add the additional money to it. Mr. Heller asked if the Borough had received the \$3,000 reimbursement for the vests. Chief said the Borough should have gotten it back by now. Mr. Sporer said they had not. Chief he will check on that tomorrow, since the paperwork is all done and has been submitted to them. Mr. Heller asked how long it has been. Mr. Sporer said about two (2) months. Chief also wanted to make Council aware of the distance the department has to go sometimes for calls; based on just the size of the Borough alone. And he said the biggest things with Police vehicles is the idle time. Cruisers are running from the start of the shift on, because the computers would have to reboot and sign back in to everything if the vehicles are turned off. Chief also wanted to remind Council that throughout the year he has mentioned they would have to look at budgeting for another car in the 2026 budget and they are well overdue. Mr. McClelland stated he was on Municibid looking at the police cruisers as well and he stated it's a seller's market, not a buyer's market and the vehicles on there are well worn. Mr. Heller asked how many vehicles the department currently has in its fleet. Chief said three (3) currently and this new one would be the fourth (4). Mr. Spaid asked for clarification if this vehicle will be a part of the 2026 Budget. Chief confirmed it will be. Mr. Heller asked if this was the vehicle that was applied for through the LSA Grant. Chief said it is, but it won't come in until next November. Chief asked Mr. Sporer if he has heard back for the grant he applied for. Mr. Sporer said he has not. Chief said the December delivery date was given to him last month, but it may be changed by now and pushed out to January. Mr. Heller asked if Chief got prices from somewhere else. Chief said he did not and that is State contract and it's as good as you're going to do. Especially with a car that's on the lot and it will be a year – old by the time they get the vehicle.
 - a. Motion by John McClelland, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to approve the purchase of a 2025 Ford Police Explorer from Jim Shorkey Auto Group, at a cost of \$60,925.00, to replace Car #3, out of the 2026 budget. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Administrator/Special Projects:

1. Mr. Sporer reminded the public of the Trick – or – Treat hours, scheduled for Fri., Oct. 31, 2025, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Mr. Sporer presented Council with the 2026 proposed budget. He informed Council that revenues are down approximately \$30,000 due to the ongoing tax appeals. He said there will be increases in all the water and sewer accounts. Mr. Sporer said he did include for the police car in the budget. He will apply within the next month for an LSA grant for a small dump truck. Mr. Sporer said the Borough's debt continues to decrease approximately \$500,000 per year; down to about \$2.2 million. Mr. Sporer said the 2026 Budget is a balanced budget with no tax increase recommended.

2. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve Resolution No. 4 of 2025, Resolution of Approval for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application FFY 2025. Motion carried unanimously.
 3. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to approve the Cooperation Agreement between the Borough and the County regarding the administration of FFY 2025 Community Development Block Grant Funds. Motion carried unanimously.
 4. Mayor Carlson asked if Mr. Heller would want to include in the motion if the school district has the proper insurance for the Homecoming Parade and the bon fire. Mr. Sporer said it would be between the school district and the fire department, as it is not on Borough property. Mr. Baughman asked Mr. Rankin if the bon fire will be in the lower end. Mr. Rankin said it will not be due to Wilson Excavating's equipment. The bon fire will be in the back half of the parking lot, behind the wheel house.
 - a. Motion by Alan Heller, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the request by the Valley Grove School District – Homecoming Committee to hold a homecoming parade and bon fire, on Oct. 9, 2025, with the parade beginning at 5:30 PM and the bon fire ending by 10:00 PM. Motion carried unanimously.
- D. Zoning Officer:
1. Mr. Spaid said Schiffer Excavating has submitted a conditional use application to extend their permit for their excavation/mining operation at their 322 location. He said this was a requirement of their original use permit. Mr. Spaid said a public hearing will need to be held. He recommended scheduling the hearing before the November Council meeting.
 - a. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to schedule a conditional use hearing for Schiffer Excavating on Wed., Nov. 5, 2025, at 6:30 PM. Motion carried unanimously.
- E. Solicitor:
1. No report.

IX. COUNCIL REPORT

- A. Larry Baughman said he and Mr. McClelland both serve on the Venango County Regional Planning Commission. Mr. Baughman presented Council with their 2024 Annual Report. He asked Council to review it so they would know what the County Planning Commission is up to.

X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by John McClelland to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2025 Public Hearing and the September 3, 2025 Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

XI. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve the payment of bills/issuance of checks as presented by the Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

XIV. CORRESPONDENCE

XV. BOARD OF APPEALS

XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council recessed at 7:40 pm for an executive session to discuss personnel and legal issues which, if conducted in public, would violate a lawful privilege of information or confidentiality protected by the law and any action to follow. The meeting was reconvened at 8:27 pm.

XVII. NEW BUSINESS CON'T.

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to accept the resignation of Patrolman Nash Montgomery, from the Police Department, effective September 26, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Motion by John McClelland to seek to employ a full – time officer and part – time officer, as recommended by the Chief of Police. The motion died for a lack of a second.
- C. Mr. Heller recommended having the department's current part – time officers fill in the schedule, following Officer Montgomery's resignation. Mr. Baughman said Chief Wenner told Council the part – time officers currently have full – time jobs and asked if the Council would want the part – time officers out on the streets after serving 40 – hours on a regular work day. Mr. Heller said he had done it for years. Mayor Carlson said they have all done things for years that they should not have done. Mr. Baughman said the Council has the authority to accept or reject what comes out of the advertisement.
 - a. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by John McClelland to approve the Chief of Police to advertise for a full – time and a part – time officer. A roll call was taken. Mr. Barger, Mr. McClelland, and Mr. Baughman voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Goughler and Mr. Heller opposed the motion. Motion carried.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman being duly seconded by John McClelland to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Joseph M. Sporer, Borough Manager

Alan Heller, Council President