

**BOROUGH OF SUGARCREEK  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

October 6, 2021

**I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Council President John McClelland 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 McClelland 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 Larry Baughman, John McClelland, Bogan Goughler, Matthew Carlson and James Speth. Mayor Charles McDaniel was absent. Also, present were Borough Solicitor Brian Spaid, Chief Bob Wenner and Maintenance Foreman, Doug Freer.

**V. DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA**

**VI. COUNCIL CHANGES TO AGENDA**

**VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (*limited to 3 minutes each*)**

- A. Alan Heller asked if it was possible for the Borough Council to give some financial assistance for part – time officer Dave Wilson, who is currently experiencing medical and physical issues. He stated there has been a GoFundMe page set up on his behalf and he believes the Borough should contribute since he is an employee for the Borough, if possible. Mr. Spaid said the Borough cannot donate taxpayers' money for personal reasons. He said individuals may donate on their own behalf.

**VIII. COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Planning Commission  
1. No report.

**IX. STAFF REPORTS**

- A. Maintenance Foreman:  
1. Doug Freer, Maintenance Foreman, presented Council with an updated purchase price for the 2022 John Deere 672G AWD Motor Grader. The current price is \$275,000, which has increased \$5,000 from the previous quote two months ago. Mr. Freer also presented Council with a price on a new mower. He said the current mower is 16 years old and beyond repair. They are hoping to be able to get the last of the mowing done for the season with it. Mr. McClelland asked if Mr. Freer knew what the Borough paid for the previous grader. Mr. Freer stated he has not seen anything on the paperwork showing a purchase price. Mr. Sporer said \$100,000 would come from Liquid Fuels and \$175,000 from the Reserve Account, to pay for the grader. Mr. Freer added it will be at least a 20 – week waiting period to receive it. Mr. Sporer said the price has gone up \$11,000 in the last two months and the Borough is given government pricing. The original retail cost is \$411,000. He recommended purchasing the grader in order to continue to maintain the roads as the Borough has been. Mr. McClelland said it is an essential piece of equipment. Mr. Speth asked if we can expect to get the same longevity out of the new grader as the previous one. Mr. Freer stated he cannot guess, but this grader is the most popular by the other municipalities and the State. Mr. Sporer said the new mower will be used for both plowing and mowing. He also stated the Reserve Account made approximately \$14,000 in interest over the past year and that money would be used to purchase the mower. Mr. Baughman said the expenses are not listed in the budget. Mr. Sporer stated the money will be coming out of Liquid Fuels and the Reserve Account and would not be reflected in the Budget. Mr. Speth asked if the old grader and mower could be sold. Mr. Sporer anticipates selling them on Muncibid. Mr. Carlson asked what the actual cost was for the mower, since the quote is showing higher prices. Mr. Sporer explained the Borough was also given government pricing for the mower and the retail price is \$16,889.00.

- a. Motion by Matthew Carlson, being duly seconded by James Speth to approve the purchase of a 2022 John Deere 672G AWD Motor Grader, at a purchase price of \$275,000. Motion carried unanimously.
  - b. Motion by Matthew Carlson, being duly seconded by James Speth to approve the purchase of the 2022 John Deere 4x4 Tractor with attachments, at a purchase price of \$12,836.37. Motion carried unanimously.
  2. Mr. Freer said Keely Road from Rt. 417 to Cherrytree Rd. has been paved. As well as First Avenue, in Rocky Grove. The City of Franklin had a waterline break two (2) years ago, which damaged the street and the City recently repaved the damaged section.
- B. Police Chief:
1. Chief Wenner said there are currently two part – time officers that are off and unable to work. He will be running the ad in the paper either this week or next week for a full – time officer.
- C. Administrator/Special Projects:
1. Mr. Sporer presented Council with the proposed 2022 Budget. Mr. Sporer noted that there was a slight increase in Revenues in the Earned Income Tax/Local Service Tax and Real Estate Tax lines, despite the COVID – 19 Pandemic. Mr. Sporer said he is not sure if residents were using their stimulus money to pay Real Estate Taxes, but there was an increase on them being paid on time. And he believes it is a good sign that Borough residents are working. Mr. Sporer said the new full – time police officer position has been factored into the budget as well. He said he projects Revenues to increase 4% and anticipates the Expenses to maintain the same pace. Mr. Sporer said the 2022 Budget is a balanced budget and he recommends no tax rate increase for the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) year in a row. Mr. Sporer said this is in part to every employee doing their job and the heads of the department watching their budgets and expenses. Mr. McClelland, on behalf of Council, wanted to extend his thanks to Mr. Sporer and the Borough employees. Mr. Speth asked if there is any way to condense the budget and all the line items. Mr. Sporer said the State mandates the numerous line items and accounts. And the Borough cannot have accounts and/or line items co – mingle with one another.
    - a. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by James Speth to tentatively adopt the 2022 Budget. A roll call was taken. Mr. Carlson opposed the motion. Mr. Goughler, Mr. McClelland, Mr. Speth and Mr. Baughman voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.
  2. Mr. Sporer updated Council on the status of the Front Street Playground. The Maintenance Department will begin removing the old playground equipment within the next 4 – 6 weeks. And he anticipates to have the layout and plans available at the next meeting. Mr. Sporer said a portion of the COVID – 19 Relief Funds would be used to pay for the new equipment. Mr. McClelland asked if any of the old equipment is salvageable. Mr. Sporer said there is not, but the fence along the larger portion of the playground and the Oriole's Nest will be kept.
  3. Mr. Sporer also discussed the Police Pension Resolution which states the Police Department will contribute five percent (5%) to their pension fund for 2022. Mr. Sporer explained that as long as the Borough has to put money into the pension funds, the Borough can request the department to contribute to their pension fund. He said the Borough's Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for 2022 will be approximately \$43,000.00.
    - a. Motion Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve Resolution No. 4 of 2021, which states the Sugar creek Borough Police Department will contribute five percent (5%) to their pension fund, beginning January 1, 2022. Motion carried unanimously.
  4. Mr. Sporer also updated Council on the property located at 191 St. Rt. 427. The new owners have closed on the property and paid \$18,001. Mr. Sporer said the Venango County Land Bank had approximately \$1,000.00 in fees in acquiring the property. Mr. Sporer recommends donating \$1,000.00 to the Venango County Land Bank, in good faith to help them maintain their funds. He said the Land Bank did not request a donation, but that he was recommending one.
    - a. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Matthew Carlson to approve a \$1,000.00 donation to the Venango County Land Bank. Motion carried unanimously.

- D. Zoning Officer:
  - 1. No report.
- E. Solicitor:
  - 1. Mr. Spaid said beginning January 1, 2022, his new rate for Municipal Services will be \$200.00/hour. Currently, his rate is \$165.00/ hour and the Borough has the option to request quotes from other law firms, if they so choose. Mr. Carlson asked if the new rate is in line with the current going rate. Mr. Spaid said it is for the local firms that handle Municipal Law. He said some local municipalities are beginning to use law firms that are out of the County. Mr. McClelland said he wants to keep such services local.
    - a. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by James Speth to approve the rate increase by the Borough Solicitor, Brian Spaid from Dale Woodard Gent McFate Law Firm for 2022. Motion carried unanimously.

**X. COUNCIL REPORT**

- A. John McClelland requested to have a book placed in the Franklin Public Library in honor of Mayor McDaniel's late sister.
  - 1. Motion by James Speth, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to approve the request to have a book placed in the Franklin Public Library in memory of Bonnie Sharrar. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. James Speth wanted to thank Mr. Sporer and his staff, Chief Wenner and the officers and Mr. Freer and the Maintenance Department on the work that they have all been doing. Mr. Speth said he continues to receive positive reports about Borough employees.

**XI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2021 Council Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**XII. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

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

**XIII. OLD BUSINESS**

**XIV. NEW BUSINESS**

**XV. CORRESPONDENCE**

**XVI. BOARD OF APPEALS**

**XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Council recessed at 7:28 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 8:09 pm.

**XVIII. ADJOURNMENT**

- A. Council President John McClelland declared the meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Joseph M. Sporer, Borough Manager

John McClelland, Council President