

**BOROUGH OF SUGARCREEK  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

December 6, 2023

**I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Council President James Speth 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 Speth 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 Bogan Goughler, Howard Barger, James Speth, Larry Baughman, Alan Heller, and Mayor Matt Carlson. Also, present was Chief Bob Wenner, Maintenance Foreman Doug Freer and Attorney Brian Spaid.

**V. DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA**

**VI. COUNCIL CHANGES TO AGENDA**

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

A. Dan Marvin, Reno V.F.D., was to present Council with his department's report, but was called to an emergency call. Mayor Carlson gave the report for the month. Reno V.F.D. responded to 25 calls, including medical, fire, structure collapse and motor vehicle accidents and 205 calls year – to – date. On Sat., Dec. 9, 2023, Santa will be at the Reno V.F.D. Social Hall. There is also a braised steak dinner on Sun., Dec. 10, 2023, from 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM. Mr. Baughman said Mr. Marvin was elected Fire Chief for Reno V.F.D., for 2024.

**VIII. STAFF REPORTS**

A. Maintenance Foreman:

1. Mr. Freer said the department has received their first order of salt and the salt shed is full. All the plows and spreaders are on the vehicles and they are ready for winter.

B. Police Chief:

1. Chief Wenner presented Council with the department's report for March – November 2023 for calls, but does not include any juvenile offenses or investigations the department had or is working on. Mr. Baughman said he read the newspaper article from a few days ago that said the County will be upgrading their equipment with grant funds that they are applying for. He then asked if the Council approves the purchase of the radios at tonight's meeting, would the Borough be retroactively reimbursed through the same grant. County Commission Abramovich said the \$6 million for the 911 upgrades is coming from the County's General Fund, as well as the \$140,000 – \$180,000 for the consultant, MCM. He also said there is potential for grant opportunities for County municipalities and volunteer fire departments. He said the County recently applied for a LSA grant in the amount of \$740,000 to help cover the costs of mobile and handheld radios for the County departments, Sherrif's department, Probation and Parole and EMA Dispatcher. Commissioner Abramovich said the County cannot apply for grants outside of the LSA grant, but municipalities and volunteer fire departments may apply for grants. Chief said he has been in contact with Motorola Solutions and grants will be opening in January 2024. Chief said if the radios are purchased ahead and then the Borough applied for the grants, Motorola Solutions would reimburse the Borough, if awarded the grant(s). Chief said there's money in the budget, as of Dec. 1, 2023. He said as of Dec. 1, 2023, his department still has \$181,893 and after the purchase of the radios, at a cost of \$46,076.71, it would leave \$135,816.29 in the department's budget. He stated he knows the department will not spend that money by year's end and he is unaware if the excess has been reallocated elsewhere. Chief said he anticipates December's expenditures to be \$14,803.00, based on November's expenditures, leaving \$121,012.95 in the budget. Mr. Speth asked if Reno V.F.D. and Rocky Grove V.F.D. have applied for grants or will be applying. Mark Seigworth, County Public Safety Director, said the municipalities may apply for the LSA grant. The local

volunteer fire departments can apply for AFG grants. Mr. Seigworth said some departments are applying as regional groups. Mr. Seigworth also said the County is currently looking at about 24 months before the new radios are needed, therefore giving municipalities and fire departments two (2) grant cycles. He reiterated what Commissioner Abramovich said, that the County cannot apply for grants on behalf of the municipalities and fire departments. Mr. Speth confirmed that the Borough could apply for a grant. Mr. Seigworth said the Borough can and the LSA grant is a simple grant to fill out. Chief said he planned on applying for the LSA grant on Jan. 1, 2024, once the grant cycle opens back up. Mr. Speth said he is only speaking for himself, not the rest of Council, but he would prefer to apply for the grant first, since we are 24 months out. Mr. Speth said he has some concerns over the radio supplier reimbursing the Borough after – the – fact and he understands that the cost will most likely increase. Mr. Speth also asked if Reno V.F.D. and Rocky Grove V.F.D. have purchased radios yet. Mr. Seigworth said they have not and the only volunteer fire departments that have purchased radios are Seneca V.F.D. and Cornplanter V.F.D., using grant funds. Mr. Speth asked if they know what the timeframe is for the application and award process. Mr. Abramovich said this last LSA grant cycle was originally scheduled to close the end of Sept. 2023, but they extended it through the end of Nov. 2023, with grants expected to be awarded in Sept. 2024. He said the municipalities need to take the 1 - year timeframe into account. Chief said the radios will supply coverage to approximately 96% of the Borough, as opposed to 72% coverage with the current radios. Chief said this is a need that should be anticipated in the budget and it is an issue that will not go away. Mr. Goughler said the Borough still has 24 months and the Borough does not have a number of how many radios the fire departments will be needing. Mr. Seigworth also wanted Council to be aware that the County will need the radios to get them set up with the 911 system. He also suggested the Borough apply for the Police department, Reno V.F.D. and Rocky Grove V.F.D. radios on the same grant. Commissioner Abramovich said Oil City P.D. upgraded their radio system, using a grant, before this decision was made by the County to upgrade the system. The Oil City Police Chief reported much better coverage with the new radios. Mr. Speth asked if the new radios would be compatible with the new computers just placed in the vehicles or are they not even linked together. Chief said they are not affected, but the computers are already compatible with 911. Mr. Speth suggested that Mayor Carlson and Chief Wenner research the grant and get the necessary information and paperwork. Mayor Carlson said he will work with Mr. Seigworth on the grant. Mr. Goughler said they will need to meet with the fire departments to determine how many radios they will need as well.

1. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by James Speth to begin the process to apply for the LSA grant to be used to purchase the new radios needed for the 911 system upgrade, for the Borough Police Department, Reno V.F.D. and Rocky Grove V.F.D. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Administrator/Special Projects:

1. Mr. Sporer said the benches in front of the Borough building are not in good shape. And he knows there has been discussion of placing a memorial bench somewhere in the Borough for Mayor McDaniel. Mr. Sporer spoke with Mr. Freer and he would suggest the original benches be removed and then it can be discussed how they want to handle the memorial bench.
2. Mr. Sporer reminded Council that the Reorganization meeting is scheduled for Tues., Jan. 2, 2024, at 6:00 PM.
3. Motion by Alan Heller, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to adopt Ordinance No. 301 of 2023, which fixes expenditures for Fiscal Year 2024 at \$3,377,039.00 with a tax rate of 6.0 mills and a tax rate of 0.55 cents on each front foot assessment for street lights in Rocky Grove and Reno. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Zoning Officer:

1. No report.

E. Solicitor:

1. No report.

**IX. COUNCIL REPORT**

- A. Larry Baughman asked if a resident goes through the Zoning Hearing process, gets approved and then does nothing with what was approved, does the Borough get any reimbursement. Mr. Sporer said the Borough does not get reimbursed. He said there is a permit fee of \$800 to cover

advertising costs, stenographer and other expenses that is to be paid before anything can begin. Mr. Sporer said there have been only one or two over the last couple of years that have not followed through with their approvals.

**X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2023 Council Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**XI. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

- A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman 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 7:25 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 8:20 pm.

**XVIII. NEW BUSINESS CONT.**

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to fill the vacant police clerk position. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. Mayor Carlson said he won the Ward 3 Council seat in the General Election. He has declined the seat and notified the County Election Board. Mr. Spaid said the Ward 3 seat will become vacant on the first Monday in January 2024. The Council will then have 30 days to appoint someone to the vacancy, by January 31, 2024. This appointment will only be for 2 years because it was a vacant seat that was filled.

**XIX. ADJOURNMENT**

- A. James Speth adjourned the meeting at 8:22 PM.

Joseph M. Sporer, Borough Manager

James Speth, Council President