

BOROUGH OF SUGARCREEK COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 5, 2025

NOTE: A public hearing was held prior to the regular Council meeting. The purpose of the hearing was to hear a request for an intermunicipal transfer of a Restaurant Liquor License into Sugarcreek Borough.

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council President James Speth opened the meeting at 7:06 pm, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted there will be no hurtful or harmful speech allowed. Mr. Speth noted the meeting would be recorded by the newspaper reporter in attendance.

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 Alan Heller, James Speth, Bogan Goughler, Larry Baughman, Howard Barger, and Mayor Matthew Carlson. Also present were Attorneys Brian Spaid and Alex 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., presented Council with the fire department's report. They have responded to 19 calls for year and approximately 17 of those calls have been for the ambulance. He also said there will be a public dinner held on Sunday, February 9, 2025. Mr. Marvin also updated Council on the status of the grant the department applied for, with the help of and support of the Council. He said there will not be a decision made until September or October. Mr. Heller thanked Mr. Marvin for their hard work. Mr. Marvin asked to talk with the Council after the next Council meeting, before the Council goes to Executive Session.
- B. Teri Lowry said it is the Council's responsibility to take care of and protect the Police Department. Ms. Lowry said she did not think any members of Council were going to make the motion at the last meeting to approve the vests. She stated she did not understand what the back and forth was about when there was funding available and the vests would then be half the cost. And she was not aware if the Council was aware that over the last three (3) years, the Borough has spent over \$1,000,000 on Maintenance equipment. She does not know if Council is aware of it when they look at \$3,000 and she did not think they were going to approve it. Ms. Lowry also does not know if Council realizes or when they read the bulletin they receive about an issue on Elm Street, where the Police Department and the AG's office had to break into the house and there was loaded handgun, which she feels the paperwork sugarcoated that and it was actually a fully loaded handgun and it was laying in the house. She feels we need to think a little bit more about things and protecting the Police Department. She also said she just noticed, while looking over her paperwork that the Chief wrote up, now we are going to start fundraising for the Police Department. She asked why do we have to fundraise for the Police Department. She asked if there is a reason they are not getting the money they should be getting for certain things. Mayor asked if she was speaking on "Item #3." Ms. Lowry said it was and if he knows anything about that. He said Chief mentioned it to him and will brief him more when he gets back. Ms. Lowry said it is for computers for the station and she would think that is an item that should be taken care of through the budget. But she is just now seeing it. She does not feel this is something they have to fundraise for. Mr. Heller asked if laptops were just purchased last year, but he does not know anything about these computers. She hopes we can take a look at this and see what we can do about it. She wanted to end with a fun fact she found out about Titusville Police Department, as one of her friend's son works there. She said Titusville's population is similar to the Borough's; around 5,100 people. The department covers 29 square miles and has ten (10) full – time officers. Ms. Lowry said we, if the Council is not aware of it, we have 4,700 people and it's the largest Borough in Venango County. And we cover 37.9 square miles and have four (4) full – time officers and two (2) part – time officers. And we have

that responsibility. Mr. Speth said if Ms. Lowry has anything in writing she would like the Council to look at, to please provide it.

- C. Ken Bryan, Venango County Commissioner, introduced Isaac Coon, who is the President of the ATV Organization. Mr. Bryan would like Council, if they approve of the ATV Ordinance, to act quickly. There are other municipalities who are submitting their ordinances and the County would like to be able to get all the municipalities done at one time and begin selling the permits/licenses on April 1, 2025.
- D. Isaac Coon said he is available if the Council has any questions or concerns. Mr. Coon said the local volunteer fire departments are looking forward to the fundraising opportunities that will now be available, such as Poker Runs. Mr. Spaid said he has not been in any conversations about the ATV ordinance since the last meeting. He said if Council would like him to draft an ordinance for the next meeting, he just needs Council's directive to do so. Mr. Heller said he is in favor of it. Mr. Speth said his concern is that this may not bring in the amount of money that the County or ATV Organization is anticipating. Mr. Bryan said there are currently 15,000 registered ATV's in Venango County, so there is potential there for funds. He said they are also looking at what it will do for the local restaurants, hotels and other businesses in the County. Mr. Coon said they are developing trails to purposely go by the outlying, rural businesses. Mr. Bryan said the County is looking for any way to help bring revenues into the County without raising taxes. Mr. Speth said he would like to table the discussion in order to have an opportunity to review the information that was sent back. Mr. Spaid asked if Council would like him to draft an ordinance for the next Council meeting. Mr. Baughman said he would like to have an ordinance ready to go next month, but will reserve his vote on it until after he reviews everything.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Maintenance Foreman:
 - 1. Mr. Freer said the department was having a difficult time securing another salt delivery. He said they did have some in reserve, which is why there is more antiskid on the roads. He said the Borough received some salt, but will continue to combine what salt they have with the antiskid until another load of salt can be delivered. Mr. Baughman thanked the Maintenance Department on the job they have been doing this winter.
- B. Police Chief:
 - 1. Mayor Carlson presented Chief Wenner's report in his absences. Mayor Carlson said he has made quality of life issues one of his main goals for the Police Department. Mr. Baughman asked Mr. Sporer if the request for new computers was submitted as a request in the 2025 budget. Mr. Sporer said it was not. Mr. Baughman said he believes any equipment request such as this, should be submitted as a budget request a year in advance.
- C. Administrator/Special Projects:
 - 1. Motion by Alan Heller, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve Resolution No. 1 of 2025, which approves the request to transfer Liquor License No. R – 14178 from Oil City to Sugarcreek Borough. Motion carried unanimously.
 - 2. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by James Speth to approve payment to Roszbacher Insurance Group to provide Sugarcreek Borough's 2025 Worker's Compensation and Property & Casualty Insurance at an annual cost of \$126,308.00. Motion carried unanimously.
- D. Zoning Officer:
 - 1. No report.
- E. Solicitor:
 - 1. Mr. Spaid said he found out about the liquor license request right before the Council meeting last month and he forgot to bring it up. He said he thought it was best to just schedule the hearing for 7:00 PM on the meeting night and then the Council could go right into the regular meeting. He said if he felt it was going to need more time, then it could have scheduled at 6:30 PM. Mr. Spaid said Giant Eagle will pay for the advertising costs.

IX. COUNCIL REPORT

- A. Alan Heller informed Council that he and Larry Baughman attended the meeting with the Rocky Grove V.F.D. about the grant they applied for. He said the fire department is requesting a letter of support. Mr. Sporer said Mr. Rankin has not contacted the Council or Borough yet for a letter of support. Mr. Heller said this is the first he has heard or seen anything about a request for new computers for the Police Department.

X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2025 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 7:30 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 8:45 pm.

XVII. NEW BUSINESS CON'T.

- A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by James Speth to accept the intent to retire of Joseph M. Sporer, Borough Manager, effective at the end of the workday on December 31, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. Motion by James Speth, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve moving forward with the hiring process of a new Borough Manager, as recommended in Executive Session. Motion carried unanimously.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman being duly seconded by Alan Heller to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Joseph M. Sporer, Borough Manager

James Speth, Council President