BOROUGH OF SUGARCREEK
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
April 1, 2026

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)

Mayor Craig Westover led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. MOMENT OF SILENCE

A moment of silence was observed. Mayor Craig Westover concluded the Moment of Silence with a prayer.

IV. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Present at the meeting were Council members Alan Heller, Bogan Goughler, Larry Baughman, Matthew Carlson, and Mayor Craig Westover. Council Member John McClelland was excused. Also, present were Maintenance Foreman Doug Freer, Chief Michael Goss, Attorneys Brian Spaid and Alex Spaid.

V. DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA

VI. COUNCIL CHANGES TO AGENDA

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

A. Scott Kennedy presented Council with his proposal for a community garden next to his residence at 202 Nesbit Street. He said he had researched and identified some grants through the State that would help offset the costs of the project. He also said using volunteer work would also lower the cost. Mr. Kennedy said another option was having the contractor that would demolish the existing house on the proposed garden lot save the copper wiring and windows to cash in and help offset costs. He also said that they may find someone to do the work for free since it is a community project. Mr. Kennedy also presented Council with a budget estimate for items needed such as a pavilion, benches, tables, bird baths, and furniture. Mr. Kennedy also presented a proposal for a block party for neighbors and it would be potluck. He said he spoke with a neighbor and they thought it would be a good idea to have a fire truck come for the children. Mr. Kennedy said they would just need to have port – a – potties brought in and he is not sure of the cost and the Borough would know more about that. He said he is asking for the Borough's support to bring the neighbors together and to get to know each other. Mr. Baughman asked if he considered using the fairgrounds at the firehall to avoid closing the streets down. Mr. Kennedy said he preferred a smaller setting. Mayor Westover commended Mr. Kennedy for the work he has done and he said the Borough will have to defer his request to the Borough Solicitor. Mr. Heller told Mr. Kennedy that Mr. Speth can contact him with information once Council discusses it.

B. Ellen Gierlach informed Council that when the sidewalk was installed along Rt. 8 and the new road signs were installed, one sign lists Allegheny Blvd. as Allegheny Ave. She said the sign is located at the intersection of Rt. 8 and Rural King.

C. Ron Blair presented concerns he had to Council in regards to an ordinance enforcement with the Zoning Officer and former Police Chief Wenner. Mr. Heller suggested he speak with Chief Goss about his concerns. Mr. Blair said he has an issue with no parking on Palmer Avenue. He stated he was told he could not park on either side of Palmer Avenue. He said there were no "No Parking" signs out.

D. Suzanne O'Neil had questions regarding the police force. She said at the last meeting they were told there were job postings and she asked how many applications there are and where they are at in the hiring process. She also expressed concerns about the upcoming road construction along Liberty Street in Franklin and the increase in traffic in the Borough.

E. Terri Lowry thanked the Mayor for his prayer regarding transparency. She stated she wasn't able to speak after the last meeting so she had handouts to present to Council and Mr. Sporer, with information they may have forgotten about. She said according to the newspaper article, as quoted by Mr. Sporer and Mr. Spaid, Mr. Sporer's medical coverage was in exchange for the piece of land. Ms. Lowry questioned why the medical coverage and consultation were not placed together, especially if it was for the property. And why did Council vote that way. Ms. Lowry asked Mr. Spaid if he wrote the agreement. Mr. Spaid said he did. Ms. Lowry questioned

why the medical coverage was not listed in this agreement. She questioned if it was because it was a gift. Mr. Spaid said Council agreed and believed it was a fair trade to exchange the medical coverage for the piece of land. Mr. Spaid said Council could have agreed to medical coverage without the gift of the property to the Borough. Ms. Lowry questioned why it was not all included on one agreement. Mr. Spaid said due to auditing purposes, it had to be drawn up in separate agreements. Ms. Lowry stated if she was on Council, she would question how it was done and not done in one (1) agreement. Mr. Spaid said Council was aware of the whole process and it was discussed in Executive Session as it dealt with a deed transfer. And the agreements were done as two (2) separate motions as well. Ms. Lowry stated the Retention Agreement is one (1) article and it says nothing about the property. Mr. Spaid agreed and asked Ms. Lowry what her point of questioning is. Ms. Lowry asked why it was done that way. Mr. Spaid said it was due to auditing purposes, as he previously stated. Ms. Lowry said she still did not know why it was done that way and it was not transparent. Mr. Spaid questioned what was not transparent. And the Council did not have to accept the property and could have given Mr. Sporer medical coverage without the exchange of property, as they have done with previous employees. He also stated deed transfers and personnel issues are discussed in Executive Session. Ms. Lowry stated they are not always discussed in Executive Session, because when Mr. Speth was hired, everyone knew what he was making.

F. Kirk Anna had a concern about the Reno Playground. He stated he understood that the Borough is responsible for the upkeep of the playgrounds. He said there is not enough mulch at the playground and he asked when there will be work scheduled for it. Mr. Speth said he has been in contact with Speedy Ewing about it. Mr. Anna asked when the work will be done. Mr. Speth said he does not have a date from Mr. Ewing, but it will be done. Mr. Anna said if he has to come back to the next meeting when it is not done, he will.

G. Annie Maloney, Foundation for Sustainable Forests, wanted to speak to Council about an 84 – acre forest off of Lamberton Road, which is currently owned by a timber company and they are interested in selling. Ms. Maloney stated her organization approached them about purchasing the property and they have entered into an agreement with the timber company. They have also been seeking DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program Grant funding. The plans for the property will be to open it to the public for recreational use, but not to include ATV's as they want the trees to regenerate, but horseback riding will be welcome. They would like to install some parking spot and gravel. Ms. Maloney said the property will stay on the tax role. She asked Council to consider a letter of support to send with their grant application. Mayor Westover asked if there is a time table in place. Ms. Maloney stated the sales agreement is contingent on the funding and the grant is due April 30, 2026. Mr. Carlson asked what their plans are with how lands are typically left after timber companies come through. She said they leave the land as – is to help deter deer. But they do not leave the land like that along the trails.

H. Joe Sporer wanted to thank Ms. Lowry for the misinformation she has been bringing to the meetings for the last couple of months, as well as on Facebook. Mr. Sporer said that Ms. Lowry stated at the February 2026 Council meeting that he was anti – police. He said he and Ms. Lowry have never had a conversation in the 40 years he has known her stating he was anti – police. At the March 2026 meeting, Ms. Lowry brought up about the property Mr. Sporer gave to the Borough in exchange for medical coverage. Mr. Sporer stated the property was appraised at $25,000 by a certified appraiser. And the property is very valuable to the Borough for dumping materials and they have used the property for the past 6 – 7 years, saving fuel costs and not having to pay to dump or store materials. He believes in the 15 years he was the Borough Manager, Council has treated him fairly, but the statement at the beginning of every meeting about hurtful or harmful speech has not been followed.

VIII. VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT(S)

A. Dan Marvin, Reno V.F.D., updated Council on the number of calls the fire department has responded to; 50 calls YTD and 19 calls since the last Council meeting. He also updated Council on the department's upcoming fundraisers. There will be a public dinner on April 12, 2026, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM and they will be serving meatloaf and mashed potatoes. He said the Car Cruise is scheduled for July 11, 2026. Mr. Marvin also said there is a new member, Austin Boucher, that will need to be sworn in as fire police.

B. Gary Knox, R.G.V.F.D., provided a handout for Council. They have responded to 69 calls YTD and 29 calls for the month. The upcoming events in April include Bingo each Thursday, April 8 there will be a presentation by the National Weather Service. The certification program for fire fighter certification will continue in April and conclude in May. The regular meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2026 at 7:00 PM. There will also be a Demolition Derby on April 18, 2026. On April

25, 2026 there will be a Fire Police demo for the local departments. They will also have a member, Mike Zinz, to be sworn in as Fire Police.

C. Jake Hellem, R.G.V.F.D., updated Council about the meeting he had with Mr. Speth, Mayor Westover, and Chief Goss about R.G.V.F.D. obtaining their Quick Response License again. He said the licensing was dropped several years ago due to volunteer shortages. They are hoping to have their inspection for this in May.

D. Marie Johnson, Search & Rescue Team, said they have been around for about a year, working with the R.G.V.F.D. Ms. Johnson said they are an all – inclusive search team, with several certified K9 in areas such as trailing, area searching and human remains search. They also have a drug support M.O.U. with Emlenton. Ms. Johnson said if they are needed, they are contacted through 911. There will be a demonstration on May 17, 2026, at 9:00 AM, at Two Mile Run Park.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Maintenance Foreman:

1. Mr. Freer updated Council that the parts for the street sweeper are in and it has been repaired. He asked that everyone be patient since he is approximately a week and a half behind schedule. Mr. Freer said they are working at removing debris on the country roads and will continue to work on that, as well as cleaning ditches.

B. Police Chief:

1. Chief Goss said they are continuing to rebuild the department. There is one full – time and one part – time officer currently working. The second part – time officer has passed the last of his certification process and he is scheduled to begin working next week. Chief said he has received another application for the full – time position. He has been in contact with the academy at Mercyhurst University for new hires. Chief also updated Council on the calls that the department responded to. There were 13 calls for service that resulted in criminal investigations, 36 traffic stops, with 16 citations and 19 written warnings.

C. Administrator/Special Projects:

1. Mr. Speth reminded Council and the public that the Spring Clean – Up Day is Saturday, April 25, 2026, 7:00 AM – 3:00 PM.
2. The Rocky Grove Community Yard Sales will be May 15, 16, 17, 2026.
3. Mr. Speth presented Council with a credit card policy for their review and to discuss at the next Council meeting.
4. Mr. Speth also presented Council with a request from the General Authority of the City of Franklin for a letter of support to send with funding/grant request for a new water treatment plant at Barrett's Flat.
5. Mr. Speth said the new doors will be installed soon.
6. Mr. Speth updated Council with a request from Country Fair and they are looking at purchasing a liquor license for the store on Rocky Grove Avenue.

D. Zoning Officer:

1. Mr. Speth stated Mr. Moyer has been beginning to issue permits for the building season. As well as addressing zoning complaints.

E. Solicitor:

1. Mr. Spaid updated Council on the status of vacating Clark Avenue, in Sugarcreek Borough. Mr. Spaid said he received a petition from over 50% of the homeowners around the paper street and he does not believe there will be any opposition to vacating the paper street.
2. Motion by Alan Heller, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to advertise a public hearing on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 7:00 PM to receive comments about the ordinance for vacating Clark Avenue between Marshall Street and McQuaid Street, with the regularly scheduled Council meeting to follow. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Mr. Spaid provided an update to Council on advertising public notices. He said the Meadville Tribune has been selling their paper in local stores within the County. Mr. Spaid said the Borough will be using the Meadville Tribune for any public notices.

X. COUNCIL REPORT

A. Matthew Carlson had an item for Executive Session in regards to personnel.

B. Alan Heller wanted to know if the clean up day could be held after the community yard sale days in the future. Mr. Heller asked if a meet – & - greet could be held with the new Police Department. He also asked Mr. Freer if the batteries for the speed sign needed to or were

replaced. Mr. Freer said two (2) of the batteries were cracked and two (2) were not, but the sign is ready to go now.

C. Mayor Westover said the speed sign will be placed back out this weekend. He updated Council that he has been speaking with individuals about any grants or funding available for the proposed sidewalk between Wiley Avenue and Rt. 8. He said the engineering fees could run between $7,000 - $15,000. But he said there is Federal funding under the Safe Streets Program for such projects. He said that application is due May 7, 2026. The Mayor said he would like to move forward with the feasibility study, with the study paid for through grant funding. Mr. Baughman and Mr. Carlson expressed support in moving forward with the feasibility study.

XI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2026 Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

XII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Matthew Carlson to approve the letter of support for the General Authority of the City of Franklin to build a new water treatment plant at Barrett's Flats. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Motion by Alan Heller, being duly seconded by Matthew Carlson to approve a letter of support for the DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program Grant being applied for by the Foundation for Sustainable Forests. Motion carried unanimously.

XV. CORRESPONDENCE

XVI. BOARD OF APPEALS

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council recessed at 8:04 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 8:48 pm.

XVIII. NEW BUSINESS CON'T.

A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to amend the April 1, 2026 agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the purchase of six (6) cell phones and service from Verizon for the Chief of Police, the Police Department, Maintenance Foreman, Water/Sewer Department, the Mayor, and the Borough Manager. Motion carried unanimously.

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

A. Motion by Bogan Goughler being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Jim Speth, Borough Manager

Alan Heller, Council President