

# BOROUGH OF SUGARCREEK COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 6, 2026

**NOTE:** A public hearing was held prior to the regular Council meeting. The purpose of the hearing was to hear a request for vacating the entirety of Clark Avenue.

## I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council President Alan Heller opened the meeting at 7:05 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, John McClelland, and Mayor Craig Westover. 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 updated Council on the Block Party and there are approximately 100 residents who have expressed interest in it. He invited the Borough Council and Police Department to attend as well. It is scheduled for June 6, 2026, from 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Mr. Kennedy said he also attended a Venango County Commissioners meeting and spoke with them about the proposed Garden Project. He stated all three (3) Commissioners were in support of it. There is also a County Land Bank meeting scheduled for May 14, 2026 and he would like to see the mayor and other members of Council attend it. Mr. Kennedy said he would like to see Council go and find out if the taxes are paid and hopefully get the project started. Mayor Westover said he spoke with Commissioner Breene and Rep. R. Lee James, who were asking the status of the property. The mayor said at this time, the property is still privately owned. Mr. Kennedy asked if the Borough could go talk with the current owner and possibly make a deal with them. Mayor Westover said there was no estate opened up and the mother of the deceased owner has no standing in the courts without an estate. And nothing can be done until the property goes for tax sale. Mr. Kennedy asked if Council could find another way to get the property. Mr. Kennedy said he also spoke with Community Services about their parking lot at the corner of Fox Street and Parker Avenue and using it for a curb market. Mr. Kennedy wanted to inform Mr. Baughman, whether or not Mr. Baughman seeks re – election in 2028, he will be running against him. Mr. Baughman said he holds that seat for 3 ½ more years.
- B. Ron Blair asked how he can press charges against an ex – officer that is harassing him over a truck being parked in his yard. He also said there is a property on Circle Street that has brought in an RV and another vehicle without plates. He stated Mr. Moyer told him the people have 30 – days to have the situation resolved.
- C. Katelyn Konetsky presented Council with photos of road conditions in Reno. She said she would like clarification and action taken by the Borough because she has received conflicting information about the maintenance of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Wolbert Alley, in Reno. She expressed concerns over potholes and winter maintenance. Mr. Freer said the Borough does not receive Liquid Fuels funding for maintaining the alley ways. He explained that the Liquid Fuels is money the Borough receives for the roads the Borough owns and maintains. And that money is used to maintain those roads. Mr. Freer said there is no money to maintain the alleyways and they are more like driveways to the residents up there. Ms. Konetsky asked who the liability would fall on if there were an accident or a slip and fall. Mr. Freer said it would be the same as a residents' personal driveway. She asked if she could petition to own the portion of the alleyway along their property. Mr. Speth said the Borough does not maintain the alleyways and it would be a private matter.

- D. Tim Heffernan, Venango County Commissioner, wanted to introduce himself to the Council. He also wanted to clarify that the Commissioners did not endorse the garden project as proposed by Mr. Kennedy, but offered their support for it. Mr. Heffernan confirmed the Borough has been attending the County Land Bank meetings.
- E. Suzanne O'Neil said some residents are asking where the police are at. She said they are not seeing them during the hours that they are used to seeing them. Ms. O'Neil also said residents are curious about the number of patrol hours there were in the month of April. She also asked if the Police Chief responds to calls and patrols as well or are the patrol hours left to the other staff. Ms. O'Neil also questioned who is responsible for the backgrounds of the new officers and what is the responsibility of the Civil Service Committee; are they involved in the hiring process or only involved when there needs to be disciplinary action taken. Ms. O'Neil also asked if the Borough has ordinances for high grass, junk vehicles and if they are enforced.
- F. Terri Lowry presented Council with a handout in regards to Mr. Sporer's retention agreement. Ms. Lowry said she does not understand why the property was a gift, but he also received insurance for the land. Ms. Lowry asked Mr. Spaid if he drew up the agreement. Mr. Spaid said he did. She questioned Mr. Spaid that if the land was a gift, then why was he compensated for it. Mr. Spaid stated he has previously explained the agreement between the Borough and Mr. Sporer. Mr. Spaid explained that the land was donated to the Borough and could not be included in the retention agreement. He said the Council could have agreement to provide Mr. Sporer with COBRA coverage regardless of whether or not that property was gifted to the Borough. Ms. Lowry asked again why it was done the way it was done. Mr. Spaid informed Ms. Lowry that he spoke with another attorney in his office who is more familiar with such items and it was recommended to keep them separate for auditing purposes. And the Council could have given Mr. Sporer insurance coverage with or without the donation of the land. Ms. Lowry said the Council signed an agreement that was not true. She also said Council all voted on it and no one questioned if it was done the right way.
- G. Adam Blount updated Council on a trash clean – up day that he and some fellow neighbors had a few weeks ago. He also said he would like to encourage fellow Borough residents to continue to clean up their properties. And thanked those that have been cleaning and maintaining their properties.

#### 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; 64 calls YTD and 11 calls since the last Council meeting. Mr. Marvin informed Council the department will be working on replacing the foam they use to extinguish fires. The department will be taking over 300 gallons of the foam to the County 911 Building to properly dispose of it. The department is also having their next dinner on May 17, 2026, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM. And Flea Market on May 16, 2026, in the Social Hall's field.
- B. Mr. Heller provided a handout for Council that he was sent by the R.G.V.F.D. Chief. They have responded to 83 calls YTD and 14 calls since the last Council meeting. The department is continuing the Firefighter Essential classes through May. The annual fund drive has also begun and envelopes have been mailed. They will also accept online donations. The RGVFD Fireman's Fair is scheduled for June 23 – 27, 2026.

#### IX. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Maintenance Foreman:
  - 1. Mr. Freer said the City of Franklin has begun to replace the water line on Maple Street. He also said the department will begin the seal coating on the rural roads next week and it will take them approximately 3 weeks to complete it, depending on the weather. Mr. Speth wanted to thank Mr. Freer, the Borough's PennDOT representative and Stephanie Lehman, Admin. Assist., for the work they did on the liquid fuels bids this year.
  - 2. Mr. Freer also presented Council with the recommended bids for the Liquid Fuels bids, as recommended by him. The bids presented were: 3,000 Tons Type 3B Antiskid (AS1) awarded to Cooperstown Sand & Gravel (awarded pick-up and delivery) at a pick-up price of \$9.00/ton, total cost of \$27,000 and a delivery price of \$10.91/ton, total cost of \$32,730; 1,500 Tons 2A Crushed Gravel awarded to Cooperstown Sand & Gravel (awarded pick-up and delivery) at a pick up price of \$9.50/ton, total cost of \$14,250 and a delivery price of \$11.50/ton, total cost of \$17,250; 3,000 Tons 1B Type C Aggregate awarded to Cooperstown Sand & Gravel (awarded pick – up and delivery) at a pick – up price of \$12.00/ton, total cost of \$36,000 and delivery cost of \$13.50/ton, total cost of

\$40,500; 81,330 SY Single Bituminous Seal Coat (delivered) awarded to Russell Standard, at a cost of \$2.33/SY, total cost of \$189,498.90; Tree Trimming of Lambertson Road (1.6 miles) awarded to Cline Energy, at a total cost of \$33,950 ; Bituminous Milling and Paving of Maple St. between Fox St. and Egbert St., Park St. between Maple St. and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. and the milling only of Prospect Ave. between Spruce St. and Hazel St. awarded to Protech Asphalt, at a total cost of \$135,591.00.

3. Motion by Matthew Carlson, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to award the Liquid Fuels bids as recommended by the Maintenance Foreman. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Police Chief:

1. Chief Goss presented Council with the Police Department's monthly report. Chief said the department responded to 52 incidents last month, including 7 arrests, 29 traffic citations, 39 traffic warnings and approximately 15 – 20 assist/public service calls. He also reported the department, with the help of the Maintenance Department painted speed lines on the Borough roads. Chief said he is currently running between 80 – 100 patrol hours per week, with one (1) full – time officer and two (2) part – time officers. Chief stated he patrols as well. He also informed the Council and the public that he has almost completed the background check on a potential hire and that he is the one responsible for doing the background checks on the officers. He said he uses the same criteria that he used when he conducted background checks when hiring State Troopers. Chief introduced Officer Tony McIntyre to the Council and the public. Chief said he brings knowledge and experience to the department. Officer McIntyre thanked the Council for this opportunity and said he looks forward to working with and for the Borough.

C. Administrator/Special Projects:

1. Mr. Speth reminded the Council and the Public that the Rocky Grove Community Yard Sales are on May 15, 16, & 17, 2026.
2. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve the Credit Card Use Policy as presented by the Borough Manager. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve the issuance of credit cards by First National Bank and naming the Borough Manager, Police Chief and the Maintenance Foreman as authorized users. A roll call was taken. Mr. Baughman, Mr. Goughler, Mr. Heller and Mr. McClelland voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Carlson opposed the motion. Motion carried.
4. Motion by John McClelland, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the purchase of new awnings for the front of the building. Motion carried unanimously.
  - a. Mr. McClelland asked who the vendor was. Mr. Speth said he received a quote from Erie Awnings and Carter Lumber.
5. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Matthew Carlson to approve the replacement of the remaining two (2) exterior doors on the Borough building and the man door on the Maintenance garage. Motion carried unanimously.
  - a. Mr. McClelland asked who the vendor was. Mr. Speth said it is G & G Builders.
6. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by John McClelland to approve the request by the Special Olympics Venango County to use the Front Street Playground for 10 Saturdays, beginning May 30, 2026 and ending August 8, 2026, for their softball program. Motion carried unanimously.
  - a. Mr. Baughman asked if there will be a scheduling conflict with the YMCA program. Mr. Speth stated he spoke with Mayor Westover and the YMCA representative about a potential conflict on Saturdays. Mr. Speth said he informed the YMCA that the field may not be available until noon, but the YMCA will be using the field during the week. Mayor Westover said the Special Olympics will have their own insurance.
7. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the request by the Franklin YMCA to use the Front Street Playground for their 2026 Summer T – Ball program. Motion carried unanimously.
  - a. Mr. Heller asked if they have their own insurance as well. Mr. Speth confirmed they have their own insurance.

D. Zoning Officer:

1. Mr. Speth said Mr. Moyer has been working on building permits, as well as issuing trash and high grass notices.

E. Solicitor:

1. Motion by Matt Carlson, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to adopt Ordinance No. 310 of 2026, which vacates the entirety of Clark Avenue. Motion carried unanimously.
2. Mr. Spaid presented Council with the current Records Retention Policy as issued by the State. Mr. Spaid said the Borough had adopted or passed using the State's Records Retention Policy several years ago, but the State has since updated the policy and he recommends approving the update for the Borough as well. He requested Council to read and review the updated policy and it will be voted on at the next Council meeting.
3. Mr. Spaid wanted to address some questions that were brought up during the Public Participation section of the meeting. He said the Civil Service Commission is charged with the hiring of police officers, including examinations, prior to that candidate going to Council for a vote on hiring. He said the Civil Service Commission also serves another role in the event an officer would want to take a hearing instead of going through the grievance procedure set forth in the Police contract. Mr. Spaid said he has only been a part of one (1) such hearing during his time with the Borough.
4. Mr. Spaid also addressed concerns and questions brought up about trash and junk cars ordinances. He said it falls under the Property Maintenance Code and the Borough has adopted that. And it is updated every 3 – 5 years. He said these concerns are addressed by the Zoning Officer. Mr. Spaid said he understands that people feel nothing is getting done, but the problem is that these individuals have to first be given notice and that notice gives them a timeframe to address the complaint. And if they fail to comply with the notice, then the citation process begins. Those citations are then filed with a District Judge and it takes time to get a hearing scheduled. Also, depending on the ruling by the Judge, the property owner is entitled to an appeal, which also takes time. Mr. Spaid said it may look like nothing is getting done, but administratively, the process takes time. He said this process has been established to protect the rights of the property owner. Mr. Spaid said this ordinance also addressed tearing down properties, but it is very cumbersome.
5. Mr. Spaid said in regards to Mr. Kennedy's comments, he said the Borough cannot tear down any properties, unless the Borough owns it. For the house at 158 Nesbit Street, there was no estate opened up and therefore there is no one who can sign it over to the Borough if they wanted to. Mr. Spaid said the Borough cannot issue violation notices either because there is no estate. Mr. Kennedy asked when he went and researched the property, the deceased's mother was listed. Mr. Spaid said the mother would have to hire an attorney and open an estate on behalf of her son. He said the Borough cannot force her to take that action. Mr. Spaid said then speaking about tearing down properties, it can be a very costly project costing municipalities between \$8,000 - \$32,000 each. Because of these costs, many municipalities turn to grant funds, such as CDBG for such projects. Mr. Spaid said there is currently a push in the Federal Government to decrease CDBG funds. The Borough uses CDBG funds for demolitions. Mr. Spaid reminded the public that CDBG funds come with restrictions and stipulations. For example, if the Borough used CDBG funds to tear down a house, nothing can be done to the property for three (3) years, including transferring the property. But he said building on the property may be another issue. He also addressed Mr. Kennedy's suggestion of obtaining grant funding. Mr. Spaid said he does not handle grant writing for the Borough and the Council can choose to apply for grants or not. Mr. Spaid cautioned that grants are becoming more and more competitive with less and less tax dollars going to grants, which is typically funded through the State. Mr. Spaid also said the Council would have to consider what the maintenance expectations and costs would be if there were to be a garden put in on the lot in question. Council would have to budget those costs year after year.

**X. COUNCIL REPORT**

- A. Larry Baughman asked Mr. Freer how many dumpsters were filled during the Spring Clean – Up Day. Mr. Freer said all five (5) dumpsters were filled.
- B. John McClelland discussed placing a new bench out front of the Borough building, preferably two (2) benches. He said the benches were a trademark of the building. Mr. Baughman requested Mr. McClelland to bring prices to the next meeting.
- C. Mr. Goughler thanked the Maintenance Dept. for the sweeping of the roads and the grading of Martin Hill Road.

- D. Mayor Westover said he received concerns from residents on Shaffer Run Road about having lines painted on the road. Mr. Freer said Shaffer Run Road is the only Borough road that had lines painted on it, but it became very costly to the Borough to have the lines painted. Mayor Westover asked if the Borough would contract it out or how was it done. Mr. Freer said PennDOT would do it and to contract it out would be extremely costly. Mr. Freer also said they stopped painting the lines because no other Borough roads had lines painted. The mayor requested Mr. Freer to get prices on the line painting so he could give an answer to the residents. Mr. Heller asked if the Borough still swapped line painting with the mowing of Front Street with PennDOT. Mr. Freer said the Borough has been exchanging the mowing for approximately 90 signs each year. He said swapping the line painting for the mowing was not coming close to covering the costs for the Borough. Mr. Freer said he can get a price. Mr. McClelland asked how long the lines last. Mr. Freer said the Borough tars and chips Shaffer Run Road every three (3) years, so the lines would need redone every three (3) years. Mr. Marvin added that the paint needed to paint those lines has glass beads in it to reflect the headlights and that is what drives up the cost of the paint. The mayor also said he had those same residents question the 25-m.p.h. speed limit on Shaffer Run Road. Mr. Spaid said the speed limit was set by ordinance a couple of years ago. He said it was done because of speeding complaints. Mr. Carlson said it was also because of school bus stops. The mayor also updated Council on the sidewalk along Front Street. He said he contacted the Oil Region Alliance and there is grant money available to pay towards the costs of the feasibility study. The cost of the study will be \$25,689.00 and the grant would require a 10% contribution from the Borough. The Borough would be responsible for approximately \$2,500.00. The mayor said his next concern is snow removal. Mr. Freer said the Borough does not have the equipment for snow removal along a sidewalk. The mayor said the DCNR offers grants for snow removal along bike trails. Mayor Westover said he would like to have the feasibility study done to see if it is even able to be done. Adam Blount said he worked for PennDOT for several years and there is discussion on rehabbing Front Street, as well as installing a bike lane or widening the shoulder. He suggested the mayor contact PennDOT and there are several drainage pipes along the hillside. The mayor also informed Council that he and the Chief have completed the department's towing policy. He stated the Chief modeled it after the State Police's towing policy. He requested the Council review it.

**XI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2026 Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**XII. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Matthew Carlson 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**

- A. Mr. Speth asked Council if they would want him to contact the individual who expressed concerns over the Foundation for Sustainable Forests purchasing 84 – acres off of Lamberton Road. Mr. Speth asked Council for direction on how to handle this gentleman and if they would want him to come to a Council meeting to speak. Mr. McClelland said he feels it is too late since Council took action and Mr. Speth sent the letter of support.

**XVI. BOARD OF APPEALS**

**XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Council recessed at 8:37 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 10:11 pm.

**XVIII. ADJOURNMENT**

- A. Motion by Matthew Carlson being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Jim Speth, Borough Manager

Alan Heller, Council President