

BOROUGH OF SUGARCREEK COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

June 4, 2025

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. 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 Chief Robert Wenner, Attorneys Brian Spaid and Alex Spaid.

V. DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA

VI. COUNCIL CHANGES TO AGENDA

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

- A. Rebecca Smeal requested use of the Front Street Playground, on August 5, 2025, for the National Night Out Event. It will be held from 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Ms. Smeal also asked if the crosswalk at Fox Street and Shuffstall Street could be painted once the water line replacement could be done. Chief Wenner said it is a PennDOT road and he can contact PennDOT with the request.
- B. Terri Lowry asked Council if there was an update on hiring the new Borough Manager. Mr. Speth said it is on the agenda for tonight's meeting.
- C. Dan Marvin, Reno V.F.D. gave the fire department's update. The fire department has responded to 85 calls year – to – date and 17 calls since the last Council meeting. The Annual Car Cruise is scheduled for July 5, 2025, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, at the Reno V.F.D. Social Hall. Mr. Marvin said they will request to close some of the streets and the department will provide the cones for the closures. He said there were over 100 cars there last year and they hope to continue to grow.

VIII. PLANNING COMMISSION

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the appointment of Kevin Songer to the vacant position on the Sugarcreek Borough Planning Commission, effective immediately.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Maintenance Foreman:
 - 1. Mr. Sporer updated Council on the summer road work. He said they are halfway done with chipping the roads.
- B. Police Chief:
 - 1. Chief Wenner has requested Council to approve him working with Deb Sobina and the Oil Region Alliance in applying for the LSA Grant, which is open from September – November each year, for two (2) new Police cruisers. Chief said if they are unsuccessful in being awarded the LSA Grant, he would like to budget for at least one (1) new cruiser in the 2026 budget. Chief said the department has not purchased a new vehicle in four (4) years. Mr. Goughler asked what the years are of the current vehicles. Chief said there are two (2) 2022's, a 2017 and a 2016 and he does not have the exact mileage of the vehicles.
 - 2. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve the Police Department contacting and working with the Oil Region Alliance (ORA) to apply for the LSA Grant, as well as any other grants which may become available, in order to obtain two (2) police vehicles. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Chief updated Council on the building assessment which was conducted on the Police Department's side door. Amos Rudolph came and inspected the door and will be getting information back to the Chief. Chief also said the department will be participating in the Ice Bucket Challenge from 3:30 – 4:30 PM, on June 5, 2025. He also informed Council of an event the Fire Department will be hosting on July 16, 2025. It will be an autism awareness event and training. Chief said the officers will be attending it. He also said he was approached by some neighbors near the Rocky Grove V.F.D., asking if the Borough could sweep the fire department's lot where the medical helicopter lands and kicks up dust and debris onto the houses. Chief said the helicopter lands up to four (4) times a month there and is a primary landing zone. Mr. Spaid advised against it and the fire department can take care of it.

C. Administrator/Special Projects:

1. No report.

D. Zoning Officer:

1. No report.

E. Solicitor:

1. Mr. Spaid had a matter for Executive Session involving litigation regarding the Latshaw municipal lien and personnel matters. He also wanted to inform Council that the new proposed Federal Tax Bill would eliminate CDBG funding.

X. COUNCIL REPORT

- A. Alan Heller asked if the Borough has a speed trailer and if so, is it operational. Chief said the Borough does have one, but does not know if it is operational. Mr. Heller said he has received complaints about speeding in the 500 block of Cherrytree Road. He also asked if the Borough has a "jake brake" ordinance, especially on Rt. 417. Chief said he is not familiar with it. Mr. Spaid said since Rt. 417 is a PennDOT road, a traffic study would have to be conducted by PennDOT before the Borough could be given permission to adopt such an ordinance. Chief said he conducted a traffic study on Rt. 417 in 2024, near Seysler Road, over speeding concerns in the "Passing" zone which is there. He said PennDOT declined to make that area a "No Passing" zone.

XI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2025 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

XII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the Police Department placing the Community Policing form on the Borough's website. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. Mr. Baughman asked if there has been a good response. Chief said there has not been much but he hopes to get a wider response and the website will help.

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Motion by Alan Heller, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to permit the use of the Front Street Playground for the National Night Out Event to be held on Tues., Aug. 5, 2025, from 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

XV. CORRESPONDENCE

XVI. BOARD OF APPEALS

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council recessed at 7:23 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 7:40 pm.

XVIII. NEW BUSINESS CON'T.

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to appoint James Speth as Assistant to the Borough Manager at an annual salary of \$55,000 plus benefits, effective June 23, 2025. A roll call was taken. Mr. Barger, Mr. Goughler, Mr. Heller and Mr. Baughman voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Speth abstained. Motion carried.
- B. Motion by Alan Heller, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the appointment of Leech Tischman as bankruptcy counsel for creditor representation in the Latshaw bankruptcy matter. Motion carried unanimously.
- C. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to accept the resignation from Council Member James Speth, effective June 4, 2025, at the end of the meeting. Mr. Speth abstained. Motion carried.
- D. Mr. Spaid said with Mr. Speth's resignation from the Ward 4 Council seat, Council will have 30 days to appoint someone to the vacant seat. And the appointment will be for the remainder of Mr. Speth's term, which ends on Dec. 31, 2025. Mr. Baughman said based on the results of the May primary, he recommended appointing John McClelland to fill the vacancy for Ward 4.
- E. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to appoint John McClelland to the vacant Ward 4 Council seat for the remainder of the term, until Dec. 31, 2025. Mr. Speth abstained. Motion carried.
- F. Mr. Spaid wanted to inform Council that a Reorganization meeting will be held at the beginning of the next regularly scheduled Council meeting, in order to seat a new Council President and Vice President. Mr. Spaid said until the new positions are seated, Council Vice President Alan Heller will conduct the meeting.

XIV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CON'T. *(limited to 3 minutes each)*

- A. John McClelland wanted to congratulate Mr. Speth on his new position. Mr. Speth thanked Mr. McClelland and wished him luck in his role back on Council.
- B. Laurie Hawkins asked who the other candidates were. Mr. Spaid said the Borough will not be releasing the other applicants' names since they have other positions and jobs, for privacy reasons. Mr. Spaid said there were four (4) candidates who were selected for interviews.
- C. Terri Lowry asked if there are two (2) people running the Borough and paying for two (2) people, full – time. Ms. Lowry said she is asking because of what Mr. Sporer has been saying about the crisis with the Real Estate Taxes and does the Borough have the money to do this. And if they are both going to be full – time. Mr. Speth deferred to the Council. Mr. Sporer explained he will remain the Borough Manager and Mr. Speth will be paid as the Assistant to the Manager for six (6) months. Ms. Lowry asked if there was an extra position. Mr. Sporer said it was in the budget for 2025. Mr. Spaid said it was his understanding that Council wanted to be able to have Mr. Sporer's replacement in for some time, working with Mr. Sporer. And this was going to be the plan for no matter who was hired and that was explained to each of the candidates as well. Ms. Lowry said the public was not made aware of that plan and with the cuts to the Police Department, but she was sure it was in the budget.
- D. Karen Snyder wanted to congratulate both Mr. Speth and Mr. McClelland.

XV. WARD 4 COUNCIL SEAT

- A. Mr. Spaid swore – in John McClelland to the Ward 4 Council seat. Mr. McClelland then took his seat with the Council.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Motion by Alan Heller being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Joseph M. Sporer, Borough Manager

James Speth, Council President