

# BOROUGH OF SUGARCREEK COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

August 2, 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, Matthew Carlson, James Speth, Larry Baughman, Alan Heller, and Mayor Charles McDaniel. Also present was Chief Bob Wenner, Maintenance Foreman Doug Freer and Attorney Brian Spaid.

## V. DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA

## VI. BOB McCLINTOCK, EMA

- A. Bob McClintock, Sugarcreek Borough EMA Director, presented and updated Council and the Public on the events of the Venango Water Co., in Reno. On July 20, 2023, contamination was found in the water system. The water system was shut down and the possible source of the contamination was identified. Residents on the water system were then advised via phone message. On July 21, 2023, DEP came and investigated the potential site of the contamination. A water buffalo was then secured from the Borough to supply water to the Reno residents, but DEP would not authorize it to be used. The Venango Water Co. contacted Saegertown Beverage to purchase bulk water. That water would not be delivered until July 28, 2023. Mr. McClintock contacted the Borough in order to get water sooner. The Borough ordered 400 cases of water. Chief Wenner also contacted the Salvation Army and they provided 2 pallets of water. Mr. McClintock was also in contact with Dan Koehler, Venango County EMA Director. Mr. Koehler began working on obtaining a bulk water tank. On July 28, 2023, Mr. McClintock met with Mr. Sporer and Mayor McDaniel about declaring a Declaration of Disaster Emergency at the next Council meeting. This would help in obtaining additional help and resources and would be on a month – to – month basis. Council could review it at each meeting and ratify it as necessary. Wanango Country Club and Pathways donated 4 pallets of water; which was delivered free of charge by Pepsi. The YMCA in Oil City has offered their showers to the residents of Reno. There was a water distribution held on July 29, 2023, at the Reno Fire Department. Another order of water was secured through Fox Water on July 31, 2023. Mayor McDaniel requested to use the Reno Fire Department for another water distribution on Aug. 1, 2023. On Aug. 2, 2023, a water tank, holding 6,000 gallons of water, was delivered to the Reno Fire Department. The water tank was purchased by the County Commissioners. Residents would have to bring their own jugs/containers and volunteers would be on hand to assist. Residents will be able to go on Aug. 3, 4 & 5, from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM to get water. Mr. McClintock also wanted to thank everyone that has helped during this time.
- B. Dan Koehler, Venango County EMA Director, said the goal is to get drinking water to the residents. He said there currently is no information available as to when the issue will be resolved. Once information is available, residents will be notified through the Venango Water Co.'s Public Notification System. Mr. Koehler said there will be jugs handed out at the water company and those can be refilled at each distribution event.
- C. Kevin Rhodes, Venango Water Co., asked that residents continue to conserve water. Currently, the DEP test results take 10 days to 2 weeks to come back. He will continue to meet with DEP. Mr. Rhodes also wanted to thank the Borough and the residents for their assistance.
- D. Mike Dulaney, County Commissioner, said he was there for the County EMA Director and if the Borough had any questions or needed anything from the County.
- E. Chip Abramovich, County Commissioner, said he is here for the same support and ready to work with the Borough and the water company.
- F. Sam Breene, County Commissioner, wanted to express his appreciation while working with each level of government during this time.

**VII. COUNCIL CHANGES TO AGENDA**

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

- A. Ed Conn, Reno resident, offered to help deliver water to those residents who may not be able to get out or not have the means to get to the distribution dates.
- B. Jessica Struthers, Reno resident & member of the Reno Neighborhood Association, stated the Neighborhood Association were the ones who reached out to the various organizations who offered services such as using shower facilities. She also expressed concerns about being told the water is safe to use for showers, for example, when results are not back yet. Therefore, not knowing what may or may not be in the water. Mr. Koehler said there are some preliminary results back from the DEP, which show some elevated levels of non – dilutable contaminants in the water. DEP issued the “Do Not Consume” order and based on the test results, will also give the solution to the problem. Mr. Rhodes said the DEP was the one who said the water is safe to use for showers.
- C. Stacy Conn, Reno resident, stated she was here for updates. And she will use the water to shower, but not bath her 2 – year old grandchild in it. Mr. Koehler asked to address the showering issue. He stated the DEP is concerned with non – dissolvable particulates in the water. Those are naturally in the water and do not dissolve in the water. He said your skin is a natural barrier and those particulates cannot get in your body that way. Ms. Conn asked if it is the same with washing dishes; it will not be absorbed into the dishes. Mr. Koehler said she is correct.
- D. Kirk Anna, Reno resident, asked if there is any way to speed up the DEP and/or the test results. He said he does not understand why it takes so long for test results to come back. And how the water could be safe to use, but not consume. He also asked if anyone knows how long it would take to the owner(s) of the property to submit plans and correct the issue. He also said he understands the water company is doing their best. Kevin Rhodes said this has happened before, in 2009. He said the levels were higher then and it happened fast and was resolved fast. He also said he agrees with questioning why there are wells allowed so close to a water source. He did say DEP was quick to respond when they were contacted. Mr. Spaid wanted to clarify that Mr. McClintock is the Borough’s EMA Director and he is the one person who is to be the contact person between the Borough, the DEP, and the water company. He wants the public to know, just because Council or the Borough Manager may not be in contact with the DEP, does not mean they do not care.
- E. Patricia Burkett, Reno resident, said some of her questions have been answered tonight. She wanted to express her concern over the water issue. She said she has spoken with the DEP, the Borough, County Commissioners, Venango Water Co., and Mr. McClintock. She also wanted to know if this is a short – term or long – term issue. Ms. Burkett said she has gone on and researched the owner(s) of the well and they have had violations at other well sites and who is monitoring them.
- F. Jessica Struthers questioned what Councilmember Bogan Goughler was doing to help the residents during this time. Mr. Spaid that Mr. Goughler's job is not to manage this situation. Mr. Koehler said he does not want peoples’ questions or concerns to seem like they are going unnoticed or ignored. He said it could really mess up the process having numerous people involved trying to do the same thing. Mr. Koehler said he has notified PEMA as well and they can offer additional help, once the local level agencies run out of resources. Mr. Baughman asked Mr. McClintock and Mr. Koehler if R. Lee James’ or Scott Hutchinson’s offices have been contacted. They stated there has been none, as far as they know. They have not contacted them personally. Mr. Baughman said those should be the next step above DEP.
- G. Patrick Burkett asked if a person can have their water tested themselves. Mr. Rhodes said it is very expensive to run the needed tests. Chief Wenner said the DEP has been taking random water tests throughout Reno. Mr. Burkett asked if a whole house filtration system would work. Mr. Koehler said it was a good question he could take to DEP.

**IX. STAFF REPORTS**

- A. Maintenance Foreman:
  - 1. Mr. Freer said the Maintenance Department has begun to prep the intersections for sealcoating. The mower is starting the second round of mowing. Mr. Baughman said he received a complaint about high grass at the intersection of Sugarcreek Drive and Rt. 322. Mr. Freer said the mower cannot reach very far back and he mows as far back as the mower will allow along there.

- B. Police Chief:
  - 1. Chief Wenner updated Council on the hot spots that were placed in the cruisers. He said they are working very well. The department continues to be busy with calls and cases. Chief also said he spoke with the County District Attorney about sending Officer Johnson to the State Police Academy for a week in October for certification. The D.A.'s office will pay for the hotel and school. The Borough would be responsible for mileage and meals. They also have firearms training scheduled for August. Chief wanted to thank the fire department for providing the trailer for the water distribution, as well as working with the Venango Water Co.
- C. Administrator/Special Projects:
  - 1. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to be resolved that Sugarcreek Borough, Venango County do hereby make application to the County for allocation of County Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for the year 2023. Motion carried unanimously.
- D. Zoning Officer:
  - 1. No report.
- E. Solicitor:
  - 1. Mr. Spaid wanted to thank Mr. McClintock for his hard work and organization throughout this time. As well as everyone else for allowing Mr. McClintock to take the leadership role in this and keeping everything flowing smoothly. Mr. Koehler said he will be willing to help Mr. McClintock and/or the Borough with any additional information on the Declaration of Disaster Emergency.
  - 2. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to ratify the Declaration of Disaster Emergency effective from July 28, 2023 until September 7, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

**X. COUNCIL REPORT**

- A. Mayor McDaniel said he declared the Emergency Declaration on Friday, July 28, 2023, which would allow the County to then enact their emergency response. Mayor said with everyone's help and hard work, over 700 cases of water, the water tank and 4 refills of the water tank was secured very quickly. Mayor McDaniel said any monetary donations can be made to the Reno V.F.D., to offset the cost of refilling the water tank. He also wanted to thank the Maintenance Department for their work on the roads this summer. He also recognized the work the Police Department has been doing in keeping the public safe and going above the call of duty.
- B. Mr. Goughler wished to thank the Reno V.F.D. and all those who has volunteered their time and have done a great job.
- C. Mr. Speth appreciated everyone's help and patience during this slow process in resolving the Reno water issue.

**XI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by James Speth to approve the minutes of the July 5, 2023 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**

**XVI. BOARD OF APPEALS**

**XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Council recessed at 8:10 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 9:18 pm.

**XVIII. NEW BUSINESS CON'T.**

- A. Council will be holding an Executive Session, on Wed., Aug. 16, 2023, at 6:00 PM, in Council Chambers.

**XIX. ADJOURNMENT**

- A. Council President James Speth adjourned the meeting at 9:19 PM.

Joseph M. Sporer, Borough Manager

James Speth, Council President