

BOROUGH OF SUGARCREEK COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

July 3, 2024

*NOTE: A public meeting for CDBG funding was held prior to the meeting at 6:00 PM.

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 James Speth, Alan Heller, Bogan Goughler, Howard Barger, Larry Baughman, and Mayor Matthew Carlson. Also present were Maintenance Foreman Doug Freer, Chief Bob 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. Darin Baker presented Council with a police report regarding a sewer account being set up for his property at 119 Park Street. Mr. Baker asked who at the Borough has the authority to set up a sewer account on his behalf. Mr. Spaid said, in response to Mr. Baker's letter he sent to Mr. Spaid, the Borough has the authority to establish a sewer account for his business at 119 Park Street and to bill him for sewer services at that property. Mr. Spaid said he currently is operating an illegal business since the business was opened more than one year after the Zoning Hearing Board approval. Mr. Spaid said a business is required to have water and sewer services under the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Spaid said Mr. Baker advertised the business on Facebook in October 2023 and the Borough began billing him for sewer in January 2024. Mr. Baker said Mr. Spaid is wrong and he did not set up water until April 2024. Mr. Spaid said he advertised the business as being open in October 2023. Mr. Baker asked who has the authority to open a sewer account. Mr. Spaid said the Borough does since he is operating a business in the Borough and is required to have a water account and a sewer account. Mr. Baker asked if that is in writing anywhere. Mr. Spaid said it is in the Property Maintenance Code and he will send him the statutes for it.
- B. Dan Marvin, Reno V.F.D., presented Council with an update from Reno V.F.D. Mr. Marvin said since the last meeting, they have responded to 15 calls; totaling 112 calls for the year. He also reminded Council and the public that the Annual Car Cruise is scheduled for Sat., July 6, 2024, from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. He said they have been given the necessary permission to close off the streets needed for the car cruise. Mr. Marvin also said the department received a grant from Anheuser – Busch for a pallet of canned water for emergency drinking water. A pallet holds 2,300 can of water.
- C. Teri Lowry asked where the Borough is at with the increase in police hours. She said there are part – time officers that are not being used. She asked if Council has discussed increasing hours. Mr. Speth said he would have to defer the question since he was not at the June meeting. Mr. Speth said he will speak for himself at this time, but the fourth full – time officer has just been added and he would like to see how the hours work out. And it is typically something that is discussed at budget time. Ms. Lowry said there were months prior to the fourth full – time officer being hired in which hours were not used. Ms. Lowry expressed concerns over an increase in non – English speaking men to the area and not feeling safe to walk around the neighborhood. She said she would like to see an increase in coverage. And is Council going to wait until something bad happens before they respond. Mayor Carlson said they have been stretching the hours into the evening and the Borough only has three (3) officers to use right now. Ms. Lowry said there are part – time officers not being utilized.

- D. Rebecca Smeal presented Council with a request to hold the National Night Out at the Rocky Grove Playground, Aug. 6, 2024, from 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Ms. Smeal said she was able to secure a grant in the amount of \$900.00 from the United Way to be used for the event. She felt the playground would offer a better location for family and children to attend. The event is meant to be a way for the Community to get to know the local Police, Sheriffs Dept., and Fire departments.
- E. Tim Whitman questioned if those that live on Keely Road pay higher taxes than those who live on Lamberton Road and Whitman Road, because Whitman Road and Lamberton Road has been tarred and chipped this year. He asked who did the work. Mr. Freer said the Borough did it. And Hager Paving did the work on Keely Road. Mr. Whitman then asked why pea gravel was used on Whitman and Lamberton Roads and limestone was used on Keely Road. Mr. Freer said because Keely Road is a blacktop road and that is how sealcoating is done. Mr. Whitman asked why the Borough cannot do the work on Keely Road. Mr. Freer said the Borough is unable to do that type of roadwork.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Maintenance Foreman:

- 1. Mr. Freer said the sealcoating is completed for the year. He said this is the most sealcoating the Borough has done and with a new company. He said Hager Paving did a great job and in a short amount of time. Mr. Freer said the dugouts have been removed from the Rocky Grove Playground and grass seed has been placed down. He said they have a parking lot built up and stone placed down. He said there is a 4" gas line under where the parking lot is and they will have to keep an eye on it. He said when the gas line was put in, it was backfilled in with clay dirt. Mr. Freer said when they were digging the parking lot out, they puddled up the clay and it will be fine for cars to park on. He would not suggest allowing a fire truck or other large equipment to use it. They have cones placed to allow it time to settle.

B. Police Chief:

- 1. Chief Wenner reiterated Ms. Smeal's request for the National Night Out request at Rocky Grove Playground. He said this will coincide with Ms. Struthers' request for breakfast at the Reno Playground on the same day. Mr. Baughman asked how the security has been going on at the playground. Chief Wenner said it has been good; no major complaints as of late.
- 2. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the use of the Rocky Grove Playground from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, on Tuesday, August 6, 2024 for a National Night Out event. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by James Speth to approve the purchase of uniforms and equipment for Patrolman Montgomery, from Uniform Outfitters, LLC, in the amount of \$2,431.00. Motion carried unanimously.
- 4. Chief said the department has applied for a grant for the officers' KEVLAR vests, which will be due to be replaced next year. Officer Montgomery is able to wear an extra one that is currently inspected. Chief said the grant covers about 51% of the cost of the vests. Each vest costs about \$6,300.00 prior to the grant, which drops the cost to around \$3,000.00 each.
- 5. Chief Wenner discussed increasing patrol hours and he acknowledges that this request mid – year poses a budget issue as he is requesting an increase in patrol hours than what was budgeted for 2024. Chief said going into July 2024, he has used 32% of his budget for police services and 26% of the overtime budget. He would request from Council the authorization to use the part – time officers, at straight time. He would request to increase to 190 patrol hours per week. Then himself, along with the Borough Manager, would monitor the budget each month to track it and report back to Council each month. Chief said the new officer is currently being trained and this makes it difficult to have two (2) shifts. And with the current budgeted 160 hours per week, that equates to four (4) full – time officers and unable to utilize the part – time officers. Chief said he is currently using Aggressive Driving and Buckle Up programs to work the part – time officers. Chief said he would like to work a part – time officer with a full – time officer and run two (2) full shifts. Mayor Carlson said he feels this is more of what Council has been wanting and will be the most cost effective for the Borough. Mr. Speth asked Chief if during those months before the fourth (4th) officer was hired, were the part – time officers using the 40 extra hours. Mr. Speth said from the research he did, based on payroll records, the part – time officers only used 15 – 20 hours per week. Chief said one of the part – time officers was injured and has since returned to duty.

And the department cannot continue to run or rely on the extra details such as Aggressive Driver for part – time hours because the department can only run those details and not respond to calls. Therefore, the State Police would have to then cover calls in the Borough and then the Borough runs into overtime hours if they have to stop the special detail and go to calls and the continued back and forth. Mr. Speth asked Council if there were any comments. Mr. Speth said it is his opinion to see how the department runs with four (4) full – time officers and then discuss the increase at budget time. Mayor Carlson asked if Council would consider the increase from month – to – month with Council examining it each month. Chief also said this time of year would be the ideal time to try the new hours, with the weather nicer and kids out later. Mr. Speth said Council will discuss the matter.

6. Chief said he has not received any word yet on the grant he applied for in regards to the upgrades to the department’s radios. He spoke with Mr. Sporer about the Borough applying for the share grant in the fall. Mr. Speth asked if the radios are the same ones discussed at the end of 2023. Chief said it is and they are currently looking at about 14 months before the old radio system is phased out. Chief said the Fireman’s Fair was a good turnout, few incidents and a good, but rainy parade.

C. Administrator/Special Projects:

1. No report.

D. Zoning Officer:

1. No report.

E. Solicitor:

1. No report.

IX. COUNCIL REPORT

A. Alan Heller wanted to thank the Maintenance Department on a job well done at the Rocky Grove Playground. Mr. Heller said he has been receiving numerous questions about the KFC building. Mr. Sporer said the new owner has come in and is attempting to develop the lot and parcel, including the old KFC building, the Big Lots Plaza and the old Wendy’s building. Mr. Heller wanted to thank Council for their donation to The Charlie McDaniel Memorial Golf Outing and it was a great turnout.

X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2024 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

XI. FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Dan Marvin, Reno VFD, wanted to inform the Council that the Reno VFD will be hosting a First Responders search and rescue training for Autistic individuals, on Sept. 7, 2024. He will have more information at the next meeting.

XIV. CORRESPONDENCE

XV. BOARD OF APPEALS

XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council recessed at 7:34 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 9:19 pm.

XVII. NEW BUSINESS CON'T.

- A. Motion by James Speth, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to approve an additional 16 patrol hours per week, from August 4, 2024 – September 28, 2024, for purposes of additional training hours for the new officer. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. Mr. Baughman wanted to note that Mayor Carlson is to inform Chief Wenner of the adaptations Council wants made to the Police schedule.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Motion by Alan Heller to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Joseph M. Sporer, Borough Manager

James Speth, Council President