

**BOROUGH OF SUGARCREEK
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

September 4, 2024

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Council Vice – 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. Mr. Heller noted the meeting would be recorded by the newspaper reporter in attendance.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (American Flag)

Mayor Matthew Carlson 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, Bogan Goughler, Larry Baughman, Howard Barger and Mayor Matthew Carlson. Council member James Speth and Attorney Brian Spaid were excused. Also present were Maintenance Foreman Doug Freer, Chief Bob Wenner, Attorney Alex Spaid.

V. DISTRIBUTION OF AGENDA

VI. COUNCIL CHANGES TO AGENDA

***NOTE:** Council Vice – President Alan Heller read the following statement into the minutes: "We understand that some of the members of the public may be present to comment on a potential agreement between the Borough and Valley Grove School District to provide a school resource officer to the district. Before we commence public discussion, we want to be clear that the Borough Council will not be voting to approve or disapprove any contract with the school district tonight. Our solicitor is out of town and has not had the opportunity to review the proposed contract, which was received over the holiday weekend. We intend to take the matter under advisement and schedule a vote on the matter on October 2nd. On the advice of our solicitor, the Borough Council will not make any additional public comment on this matter tonight because the matter involves personnel and school security concerns, all of which are to be addressed in executive session and additional discussions and investigation that will occur over the next month."

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (limited to 3 minutes each)

- A. Ron Sowers presented Council with continued concerns about his neighbor's fence on Phipps Street. He said the fence makes it difficult for him to see people walking or cars coming up or down the street. He gave the Borough permission to look at the fence and the line of vision. He said he would like to see the first section of the fence removed. Mr. Heller said the matter will be discussed with the Zoning Officer.
- B. Dee Hannah said she is there to support the school district in having a resource officer at the elementary school.
- C. Terri Lowry expressed support for a school resource officer being at the elementary school. She asked Chief Wenner how long it would take to provide an officer to the school. Ms. Lowry asked if there was no solicitor available for tonight. Mr. Alex Spaid said he is a member of the Dale Woodard Gent McFate Law Firm and here tonight on behalf of Mr. Brian Spaid. Ms. Lowry said it could be voted on tonight then. Mr. Spaid said the review of the agreement needs to be reserved for a future executive session to be scheduled after this meeting since it involved personnel and details that cannot be discussed in a public meeting. Ms. Lowry asked why it could not be voted on since there are so many people in attendance and the safety issues are what they are concerned about.
- D. Dan Marvin, Reno V.F.D., said the fire department will be holding a class on Sat., Sept. 7, 2024 at the Reno Social Hall to talk about search and rescue tactics when dealing with autistic members of the community. He said the department anticipates a large group of the local law enforcement community to attend. The next dinner will be held on Sunday, Sept. 8, 2024 and it is open to the public. The department will also be holding fire school this weekend as well. Mr. Marvin provided an update on the year – to – date calls; they are currently at 160 calls for the year and 46 since the August meeting.

- E. Jessica Blum said she is there to support the SRO at the elementary school, especially since the recent school shooting in Georgia.
- F. Jeremy Rankin, Rocky Grove V.F.D., wanted to thank those involved in the National Night Out Event that was held. He said the department continues to work on and hold fundraising events.
- G. John McClelland said he feels this is a worthy cause to discuss and the Borough should provide a security officer.
- H. Jake Hellum, R.G.V.F.D., gave the Council the department's updated calls for the year. He said the department is at 117 calls for the year and 12 calls for the month.
- I. Jessica Struthers, Reno Neighborhood Association, wanted to thank all those involved in the National Night Out event. She also expressed her support of the SRO at the elementary school.
- J. Valerie Zitterbart, Reno Neighborhood Association, wanted to express her support for the SRO at the elementary school and presented Council with statistics about the benefits of SROs in the schools.
- K. Sara Saullo expressed support for the SRO at the elementary school for the students and staff.
- L. Andrew Fish, District Judge, asked why the meeting was not moved to the firehall or a larger building. He also said he will not be available to attend the October Council meeting.
- M. Sam Saeli questioned if there were grants available from the State or Federal government.
- N. Rachel Wargo expressed support for the SRO at the elementary school and the relationship the children can form with the SROs. She also stated that her daughter has expressed anxiety to her over the school district's lack of an SRO at the elementary school.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Maintenance Foreman:
 - 1. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to place the 2000 International Truck with spreader and five (5) Hi – Way Salt Spreaders for sale on Municibid. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. Police Chief:
 - 1. Kevin Briggs, Valley Grove School District Superintendent, spoke to Council in regards to the Borough providing a School Resource Officer (SRO) to the elementary school. Mr. Briggs said the Sheriff's Department currently provides two (2) school resource officers within the school district. The Sheriff's Department is no longer able to commit a second officer due to staffing issues. Mr. Briggs said he is pleased to see the Borough Police Department at the schools on a daily basis and the relationships being formed with the department and the school staff and students. And he would like to formalize the relationship. Mr. Briggs said the SRO would also be able to provide staff with numerous training opportunities as well. Mr. Briggs said the SRO would be 100%, fully funded by the Valley Grove School District and has been in the school district's budget. Currently, it is funded by both federal and state grants and no local taxes are used to fund it. Mr. Briggs said the school district is currently looking at a one (1) – year commitment to get through the school year and then re – evaluate the commitment. He also said he understands nobody wants to be rushed and have time to look at it, but sometimes people do not have that option. And they are soon going to be down one (1) officer. Mr. Heller asked when the next school board meeting will be held. Mr. Briggs said it is scheduled for Sept. 16, 2024. Mr. Heller said those in attendance can ask the school district questions at that meeting. Chief Wenner said he could provide a part – time officer to the elementary school the following day, if it is approved and he has knowledge working with SROs when he chief in Oil City. Chief said the department will be out there as much as possible until something is decided.
 - 2. Chief Wenner asked for Council to have the upgrades to the radio system factored into the 2025 budget. Chief said he is asking for an increase in his budget to account for this expense and he has several line items currently under budget for the year; he is currently operating at 42% of his budget. He also explained to Council how he has done municipal budgets for the last 24 years and knows how to gauge the budgets. He believes some of the cost of radios could be absorbed with however much he comes in under budget at the end of the year. The current cost for the radio upgrade is \$50,641.00. He also asked Council to leave the additional 16 hours/week Council allotted for training the new full – time officer in the 2025 budget, to provide additional police protection. He stated last month the part – time officers worked 110 hours running patrol and extra duties. And he is currently scheduling for four (4) full – time officers and three (3) part – time officers. Mr. Heller asked how many radios does this cost cover. Chief said it is for eight (8) portable radios and four (4) mobile radios, one (1) base, programming fees with the antenna(s), mics and other accessories. This

system would be compatible with the County's upgrades. Mr. Sporer said a motion is not needed to add it to the 2025 budget.

3. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Alan Heller to approve Patrolman Johnson to attend the recertification training for Drug Recognition Expert, Nov. 20 – 22, 2024 at The Seven Springs Resort. Patrolman Johnson's scholarship will cover the cost of the hotel, the training fee and some meals are provided. Chief said the Borough will be responsible for any meals not provided and mileage if Patrolman Johnson is unable to take a police cruiser. Motion carried unanimously.
- C. Administrator/Special Projects:
1. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Howard Barger to approve Resolution No. 1 of 2024, Resolution of Approval Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application FFY 2024. Motion carried unanimously.
 2. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the Cooperation Agreement between the Borough and the County regarding the administration of FFY 2024 Community Development Block Grant Funds. Motion carried unanimously.
 3. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Howard Barger to approve Trick – or – Treat hours withing the Borough, for Oct. 31, 2024, from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Motion carried unanimously.
- D. Zoning Officer:
1. Mr. Baughman asked if the Zoning Officer has lookod at the fence on Phipps Street which was addressed earlier in the meeting. Mr. Sporer said it has been looked at, the owner removed a section of fencing and there is no line – of – sight issue. Mr. Heller asked Chief if he was aware of the fence and the situation. Chief said he is and will look more closely at the pedestrian traffic.
- E. Solicitor:
1. No report.

IX. COUNCIL REPORT

X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. Motion by Larry Baughman, being duly seconded by Bogan Goughler to approve the minutes of the August 7, 2024 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

XI. 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.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Mr. Sporer said there is a vacant lot on Baker Street, formerly 32 Baker Street for which the Borough received a bid of \$500.00 from a neighbor to purchase the lot. Mr. Sporer said this is notice that the Borough will be selling the lot to the neighbor in the amount of \$500.00.

XIV. CORRESPONDENCE

XV. BOARD OF APPEALS

XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council recessed at 7:52 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 8:36 pm.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Motion by Bogan Goughler, being duly seconded by Larry Baughman to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 PM. Motion carried unanimously.

Joseph M. Sporer, Borough Manager

Alan Heller, Council Vice – President