

SHICKSHINNY BOROUGH  
GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING JUNE 5, 2018  
MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Borough of Shickshinny Council was held on Tuesday, June 5, 2018, in the Council room of the Shickshinny Municipal Building. President Rosalie Whitebread called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Per roll call, the following members of Council were present: Candice Kruczek, Jeff Norcross, Helen Ruffenach, Jim Wido, and Rosalie Whitebread.

President Whitebread led the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance and then welcomed others in attendance.

Others in attendance: Mayor Brenda Long, Attorney William Burke, Bobbi Titus, Brian Swingle, Larry Frace, Aggie McDaniels, Jule Moore, Valerie Bigelow, Donald Switzer, Nancy Beach, Diane Reese, Barry Belles, Sharon Belles, Richard Kuchta, Bonnie Federici, Linda Wrba, Jeffrey Noss, John Ruffenach, Lois Norcross, Dawn Gregory, Joshua Gregory, Rick Noss, Kathy Llewellyn, Walter Sims, Carol Kieser, Tom Noss Jr, Tom Noss Sr, Stanley Helstowski, Amanda Sherlinski, Kathy Taylor, Michael Duda, Gary Moore, Brian Caverly, Nicole Davis, Ellie Kolb, Sonja Sprague, Kyle Morris, Barbara Dawson, Joann Shaffer, Zachery Middaugh, Robyn Middaugh, Owen Lavery, Corey Davis, Mike Shoemaker, Holly Morris, Kevin Morris, Amy Noss, and John Noss. Please note there were additional members of the community present, however, as they did not sign in, the minutes may not reflect their names.

**Mayor's Report** – no report was provided.

**President's Report** – President Whitebread expressed appreciation to the Job Corps young adults that assisted in the Borough, Brenda Boston and Shickshinny Floral for the decorations/flower beds in Memorial Park, Valerie Bigelow for cupcakes for the Job Corps group, Bobbi Titus for water/soda/snacks for the Job Corps group, Brian Swingle and Walter Sims for help with the boat dock, and the new Street Department workers for a “job well done”. She also acknowledged receipt of a certificate for the completion of Fire Police Training for Joshua Gregory and congratulated him for this training.

**Secretary/Treasurer's Report**

**Motion made by Jeff Norcross/seconded by Jim Wido to accept and approve the minutes of May 8, 2018. The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**Motion made by Jim Wido/seconded by Helen Ruffenach to accept and approve the minutes of May 31, 2018. The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**Motion made by Candice Kruczek/seconded by Jim Wido to accept the bank balances as of 5/31/18. The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**Motion made by Helen Ruffenach/seconded by Jim Wido to ratify the May 2018 bills paid. The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Bobbi requested Council decide the handling of the invoice from Tomassacci Tree. President Whitebread expressed her opinion that Council should pay the invoice for the road cleanup portion of the invoice but had questions on the amount allocated for the cleanup. Attorney Burke recommended that Council defer a decision until he could provide a recommendation. Whitebread asked how long it would take to make a decision and Attorney Burke agreed to a maximum of one-week.

**Motion made by Jeff Norcross/seconded by Jim Wido to defer the decision on the Tomassacci Tree invoice until Attorney Burke provides a recommendation (within one week). The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

**Motion made by Jim Wido/seconded by Jeff Norcross to proceed with the execution of the contract between Shickshinny Borough and We Pay for 3<sup>rd</sup> party payroll services. The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

### **Street Department/Office Cleaning**

**Motion made by Jim Wido/seconded by Helen Ruffenach to purchase the used snow blower from Mike Reese for \$200. Yes votes: Kruczek, Norcross, Ruffenach, Wido Abstain: Whitebread. Motion carried.**

**Motion made by Jim Wido/seconded by Candice Kruczek to hire Madison Sirak for part-time office cleaning. Yes votes: Kruczek, Ruffenach, Wido, Whitebread Abstain: Norcross. Motion carried.**

**Ashburn Advisors/Grants** – Chris Cawley was not in attendance and no report was provided.

### **New Business**

**Special Council Meeting** – President Whitebread announced a Special Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, June 12, 2018, at 6:00 PM for the purpose of discussing future camping plans for the Borough. The meeting will be advertised.

### **Resident Comments**

Barry Belles asked the status on the vacant lot leases. Attorney Burke stated the leases are in draft and must comply with state and federal requirements. Additionally, preapproval by the appropriate agencies is required. Mr. Belles asked who is responsible for the grass cutting of the vacant lots and President Whitebread stated that the Street Department is responsible. Bobbi will follow up with the Street Department to mow the lots.

Richard Kuchta addressed Council on a proposal to lease a vacant lot adjacent to his park property. He will make the area available to the public and will volunteer to help clean along the land adjacent to the river. President Whitebread stated that Council is not leasing any of the vacant river-front properties, per a previously Council vote. Mr. Kuchta asked if that included using the property as a soccer field. President Whitebread responded that there are no present plans to use it for a soccer field and that if the property was leased it would be for many years and the land should be available for the public. Mr. Kuchta asked why President Whitebread told him to present this issue if the result was predetermined. He further stated that President Whitebread was unprofessional and intimidates people. President

Whitebread stated this was her opinion only and Council members make their own decisions. Mr. Kuchta explained he wants to lease the Mizakowski property for a nature area. He then asked if the Borough plans to cut down the trees by the river. President Whitebread stated that was not planned.

Carol Kieser requested that the Shickshinny Fire Company be placed on the Borough Council agenda because there are signed petitions indicating "just cause" to be placed on the agenda.

Amanda Sherlinski was questioning the roadblocks on Grant Street. She indicated that a resident at the top of the street is removing the roadblocks and then hiding them. Rosalie will check on this.

Kathy Llewellyn asked if Council received the petitions related to the Shickshinny Fire Co. and will these be discussed. President Whitebread stated the petitions were received but will not be discussed. Ms. Llewellyn asked if all Council members were members of the Mocanaqua Fire Company. She further stated it appears the majority of Council are members and it appears to be a conflict of interest. Jeff Norcross asked if she was aware that when individuals joined the Mocanaqua Fire Company, it was after the decision to decertify the Shickshinny Fire Company. Ms. Llewellyn asked if Council ever considered joining the Shickshinny Fire Company.

Walter Sims made comments in support of the Shickshinny Fire Company and stated that Shickshinny Fire Company has better equipment than the Mocanaqua Fire Company and doesn't want any tax dollars going to Mocanaqua.

Barbara Dawson asked that the Shickshinny Fire Company be put on the agenda and stated they want to protect to town. She asked why Council is not willing to meet with the Fire Company and resolve the issue.

Brian Caverly spoke as a life-long resident of Shickshinny, and stated he is reassured to know that Mocanaqua Fire Company is here to help us at this time. However, he still feels a need to have a fire company in the Borough for many reasons in addition to the protection of the residents. He spoke of the cultural benefits of having the fire company in the Borough and the sense of pride in the community for its fire company. He stated he is not speaking as a partisan and is not speaking for any side. Further he expressed that over many years, the Fire Company and Council was always fighting but the responsibility of those entities is to the community/residents and the individuals that put people in positions can also remove those people. He expressed that the community must resolve this.

Kevin Morris stated that by not letting the fire company be on the agenda, it has disenfranchised many community members. He hopes Council will reconsider and allow people to be heard.

Holly Morris stated that the February 14, 2018 letter from Attorney Kepner asked for a meeting with Council and Council needs to stop the lies. Jeff Norcross read the letter from Attorney Kepner to the residents. Mrs. Morris yelled that she would show all the documentation they have after the meeting. Jeff then read the January 16, 2018 letter to the Fire Company from Borough Solicitor Burke.

Kevin Morris stated that all of the requested information would be thousands of documents and asked who would pay for the copies. Further, some of the documents contain Social Security Numbers and his members said those documents should not be provided. Further, he stated that if Council wants to see

the financial documents to come look at them. Adding, it makes more sense to just sit down and have a meeting, however he understands not being able to have a quorum. President Whitebread said it would be ok to have a quorum if the meeting was advertised. President Whitebread asked if the documentation was all there, then why it was not there for the audit. Mr. Morris stated out of nine audit findings, only three findings were valid, the other findings were "BS". Nothing was stolen or purchased with the money. He also noted that Council previously requested physicals for fire fighters and that cannot be given.

Ellie Kolb does not live in the Borough, but had a brush fire and both Shickshinny and Mocanaqua Fire Companies responded. She feels the bickering needs to stop and it is time to work together.

Bob McDaniels stated that the politicians in this town "suck".

Zachary Middaugh spoke on behalf of the Shickshinny Fire Company and has joined them as a way to give back to the community.

Robyn Middaugh spoke on behalf of the Shickshinny Fire Company and is a member to help the community. She wants Shickshinny Fire Company back on the call box.

Owen Lavery is from Reyburn and has concerns because Shickshinny Fire Company is closer than Mocanaqua Fire Company. He would be more comfortable with a fire company that is closer.

Kyle Morris made heartfelt comments in support of the Shickshinny Fire Company and that the equipment, water rescue, and training certifications are going to waste by not using them. He challenged Jeff Norcross to respond to where water rescue will come from. Mike Duda and Stanley Helstowski provided clarification that Berwick, Hanover, Hunlock, and the scuba squad would be dispatched. Kyle stated he is thankful that Mocanaqua has addressed this and are highly trained, although they don't have the equipment that Shickshinny Fire has and the town needs to speak up.

Bobbi Titus spoke as a resident and taxpayer of Shickshinny and addressed the choices Shickshinny Fire Co. made to remove Mocanaqua from the fire alarm box protocols, not follow through on a meeting between the Shickshinny and Mocanaqua Fire companies, and not to provide requested documentation to Council.

### **Solicitor's Report**

Attorney Burke referred to his January 16, 2018 letter to Kevin Morris and indicated that Council has a duty to evaluate the fire company's ability to service the community and, thus, information was requested. While there was a response to Council's letter, requested information was not received. Attorney Burke expressed that the Auditor General Fire Relief Audit Findings cannot be regarded as "BS" and, at this point, information was not provided to Council on how the items were rectified. Because of the lack of requested information, Council had to seek alternate fire protection for the Borough and it was not a decision that was taken lightly.

Attorney Burke read the letter to Kevin Morris requesting that the 2006 Triton Rescue Boat be returned to the owner, Shickshinny Borough and stated that, to date, no response was received. Mr. Morris

stated that he will return the boat when Council votes on the issue. Mr. Morris further stated that the boat cannot leave the Borough as it was acquired for use in Shickshinny during a flood.

**Motion made by Jeff Norcross/seconded by Jim Wido for Shickshinny Fire Company to return the boat to Shickshinny Borough. Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

### **Additional Resident Comments**

Resident Joanne Shaffer stated that she has nothing against either side, but the bickering needs to stop.

Walter Sims asked where the boat was going. Jeff Norcross indicated it was initially going to the Borough Building. Mr. Sims further stated that the people should have a say in things and Council is doing this for personal family reasons. Further, he stated, Council has told the Code Officer to cite him for property code violations.

President Whitebread stated that the present Council was not in office in December when the Shickshinny Fire Chief and Mayor removed Mocanaqua Fire Company from the fire alarm boxes and indicated this Council should not be blamed for what was done in the past.

Gary Moore stated that this Council got rid of the Shickshinny Fire Company, got rid of Art Zehner, and that Mayor Long and President Whitebread should be in jail.

Amy Noss stated she has friends on both sides of the issue but questioned how this was a safety issue and how things will be handled if there is another flood. President Whitebread stated that Mocanaqua Fire Company will cover Shickshinny Borough in the event of a flood by having fire trucks on both sides of the river. Additionally, through mutual aid agreements, Huntington Mills, Hunlock Creek, and other nearby fire companies provide additional fire protection.

Amy Noss questioned where is the emergency shelter? President Whitebread indicated that emergency plans need to be in writing.

Barry Belles wanted to address the Mocanaqua Fire Company members and stated that this discussion is not against them. Mocanaqua Fire Company does a good job and he apologized for any disrespect shown to them.

Grace Nava stated the more firefighters the better and seconds count. All should forgive and figure out a way to move forward.

Kyle Morris asked if the cable and telephone companies were notified that Asplundh was trimming/removing trees.

### **Zoning Officer's Report**

Larry Frace provided the May 2018 report.

Mr. Frace read a letter he sent to Sonja Sprague regarding her request to remove trees where the ownership (Borough vs. Sprague) was in question. Mr. Frace stated that no permit was needed to remove the tree. Ms. Sprague stated that when the last tree fell, her utility pole was bent. Jeff Norcross stated that Ms. Sprague's service pole is her responsibility. Ms. Sprague asked why the Borough cannot

get UGI to remove the additional trees that are still in the power lines. President Whitebread indicated the Borough will follow up with UGI.

Mr. Frace reported a safety issue at 18 E. Butler Street as there is a big/deep hole near the sidewalk, on private property. He further indicated that the area is dry so it does not appear to be a water issue and he did put caution tape around the area. Mr. Frace will contact DEP on this issue and notify the property owner.

There was a discussion on locations where holes was developed: Crary, Church, E. Butler, S. Canal, and E. Union Streets.

Mr. Frace noted that his first week in the Borough, Josh Gregory volunteered to show him around the Borough streets and Josh accompanied him in his vehicle. This was one-time only and Josh is not working for him.

**Motion made by Jeff Norcross/seconded by Helen Ruffenach to adopt the findings and recommendations of Larry Frace into the Borough Code and revise the related Ordinances, as appropriate. The motion carried by unanimous vote.**

A resident questioned the tree removal at the Art Brobst residence and an argument erupted.

**Motion made by Jim Wido/seconded by Candice Kruczek to adjourn the meeting.** The meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta J. Titus, Secretary  
Borough of Shickshinny