

SHICKSHINNY BOROUGH
GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING DECEMBER 6, 2022
MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Borough of Shickshinny Council was held on Tuesday, December 6, 2022, in the Council room of the Shickshinny Municipal Building. President Jessica Bolles called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Per roll call, the following members of Council were present: Joe Buchalski, Rosalie Whitebread, Jim Wido, and Jessica Bolles. Absent was Kevin Kruczek.

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

Others in attendance: Mayor Jordan Madl, Attorney Bill Stephens, Bobbi Titus, Sgt. Mark Mackachinas (left the meeting at 7:00 PM), Rickey Noss, Kevin Morris, Greg Shoemaker, and Shaun Agostinelli. (Please note: If any residents did not sign in, their names may not be included as attending.)

President Bolles asked if there were any comments from residents in attendance on the agenda items. There were no comments.

President's Report – President Bolles reported on the following:

Borough Employees thanked Council for the \$40 bonus they received for Thanksgiving. The payment was included in their paycheck dated November 23, 2022.

Motion made by Wido/seconded by Buchalski to give the Borough Employees a \$40 bonus for Christmas. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

President Bolles explained a request from Chief Stephen McDaniels, Mocanaqua Volunteer Fire Department, regarding a change to the 9-1-1 Center alarm protocol for Accidents with Fluids Down, and obtaining a blanket authorization from Council to make the necessary alarm card changes. There was considerable discussion on this topic between Council members, Sgt. Mackachinas, and residents. Council will request Chief McDaniels attend the January Council meeting for further discussion.

Emergency Management Coordinator, Barry Noss, and Deputy Josh Gregory, attended Luzerne County EMA training. Additionally, Shickshinny Borough EMA received a portable radio with battery, microphone and a charger from Luzerne County at no cost to the Borough.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Wido to allow use of the Shickshinny Borough Building for the Luzerne County Special Election on Tuesday, January 31, 2023. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Wido to accept and approve the President's Report. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Madl reported that the Christmas in the Park event was successful and extended his thanks to all who helped.

Mayor Madl raised a concern for children's safety at the present bus stop at the Borough Building. He mentioned complaints received, high traffic area, tractor trailer deliveries nearby as primary concerns. Rosalie Whitebread stated this was not a new issue and has been addressed before however the school would not agree to any changes. After discussion, Mayor Madl stated he will approach the Northwest Area School District Transportation Director with his concerns.

Mayor Madl introduced Shaun Agostinelli, Vice President of the Northwest Little League. Mr. Agostinelli explained the Little League is requesting Shickshinny Borough assistance to prepare the baseball field for the upcoming season, with a goal for completion in April 2023. Both volunteers and funds are being requested from Shickshinny Borough Council to help with the initial landscaping clean up that is needed to prepare the field. President Bolles noted that ARPA funds are available for this type of project. Mayor Madl noted that if the Borough would provide help, it would be easier for Shaun to get additional help and funds. After discussion, Shaun stated he will get firm quotes on what is being requested for a future meeting with Council. Shaun also requested use of the Canal Street Park for T-ball practice. Rosalie Whitebread stated that proof of insurance would be required.

Motion made by Wido/seconded by Buchalski to approve use of the Canal Street Park (near tennis courts) for T-ball practices. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Motion made by Wido/seconded by Buchalski to accept and approve the Mayor's Report. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Zoning/Codes Officer Report – President Bolles provided the following report on behalf of Henry Mleczynski:

Luzerne County EPA received multiple complaints regarding burning in Shickshinny Borough and asked that Council review the Burning Ordinance. Henry reviewed the current ordinance and feels it is consistent with other local ordinances. The problem was not the ordinance but that there was no one to enforce the ordinance.

Henry provided Council with recommendations of borough properties on the Luzerne County Repository Sales list. Two of the properties on previously submitted grant applications are on the repository list and require Borough ownership prior to demolition of the properties. There

was discussion on the issue of how much would be due in back taxes. Bobbi is to contact the tax bureau regarding the process to purchase the properties and find out about the back taxes.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Bolles to buy properties 2, 5, 6, 10, 11, and 12 from the Repository List if no back taxes are due. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Wido No votes: Whitebread Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Council reviewed the new zoning application prepared by Henry.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Wido to approve use of the new zoning permit application. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Shickshinny Borough did not receive any applicants for the Zoning Board Solicitor position, to date.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Wido to appoint Kevin Morris to the vacant seat of the Zoning Hearing Board. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Bolles to approve the Zoning/Codes Officer Report. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Solicitor's Report - Attorney Bill Stephens provided the following report:

Spring near Grant Street – Attorney Stephens stated that as Mr. Gotwalt is not willing to obtain insurance and there is no way to reach resolution in this matter. Council can either let things remain as they are or step in and make changes. There was no further discussion on the issue.

125/127 W. Union Street – The lien has been filed with Luzerne County.

William Reinhard Subdivision – The deeds have been sent to Luzerne County and should be recorded in the near future.

Comcast Expansion Project Franchise Agreement has been changed to 5%. To move ahead with the project, Council would need to accept the agreement and sign it. Comcast would contact Henry for any necessary permits etc.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Bolles to accept the Comcast Expansion Project Franchise Agreement. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Attorney Stephens noted that he has had several conversations with Henry on zoning issues/hearings in process as of his start date with the Borough. All hearings have been rescheduled and Henry will start fresh on any violations based on current ordinances.

Motion made by Wido/seconded by Buchalski to accept and approve the Solicitor's Report. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report – Bobbi Titus provided the November report.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Wido to accept and approve the minutes of October 27, 2022. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Wido. Abstain: Whitebread abstained as she did not read the draft of the minutes. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Wido to accept and approve the minutes of November 7, 2022. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Wido. Abstain: Whitebread abstained as she did not read the draft of the minutes. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Council reviewed and discussed November bills. Jessica stated that she did not feel the Borough should continue to use Stephenson Equipment for Skidsteer repairs as we are out of the warranty period and a significant amount of charges was for travel from Harrisburg. All council agreed.

Motion made by Wido/seconded by Buchalski to accept the bank balances as of 11/30/22 and ratify the November 2022 bills paid. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

The November Deliverables Matrix was provided showing the dates completed for current required deliverables.

Bobbi requested Council provide her with copies of their Oath of Office and Affidavit of Residency as required for the Secretary files. There was discussion that copies were provided to the previous Secretary. Bobbi will continue to look for the documents.

The preliminary draft Budget for 2023 was provided to Council.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Bolles to accept the draft preliminary Budget and advertise the budget for public review. A special meeting for purposes of a Budget vote will be scheduled for Thursday, December 29, 2022. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Bobbi noted that she has not received any updates from Rainey & Rainey on the status of the 2020 Financial Audit.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Bolles to accept and approve the Secretary/Treasurer's report. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Street Department – President Bolles provided the following report from the Street Department:

On November 16, 2022, the Borough purchased a used 3-ton floor jack for \$25 from Shaun Whitmire.

Five Mountain Hardware provided prices on Qik Joe Ice Melt and Rock Salt for treatment of the Borough Sidewalks.

Motion made by Whitebread/seconded by Buchalski to purchase a pallet of bags of Qik Joe Ice Melt Pellets from Five Mountain Hardware for the price of \$950/pallet. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Wido to accept and approve the Street Department report. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Old or Unfinished Business

Status of Crary Street Sink Hole Project – LSA Grant – \$44,916 Balance in Grant. – Council has not yet received a revised quote from Mohawk Contracting. Rosalie Whitebread stated that she wants to rescind her previous vote to appoint John Ackerman as the Special Project Engineer for the Crary Street Project. Attorney Stephens stated she could not rescind her vote from a previous meeting. After Rosalie’s objections to Attorney Stephen’s guidance, Attorney Stephens agreed to research the issue further and will call Rosalie and email Council with his findings.

2022 LSA Grant – Public Works Vehicle – Grant \$93,463 vs. Revised Quote \$120,542 – The grant expiration is June 30, 2025. – Council discussed options to purchase a vehicle noting that the issue was how to fund the approximately \$30,000 difference between the cost of the vehicle and the grant amount awarded. Attorney Stephens stated that ARPA funds could be used for this purpose. Bobbi is to contact the Ford dealer to see if there was any option to submit the purchase order even though the deadline has passed.

Motion made by Whitebread/seconded by Wido for the Secretary/Treasurer to call and place the order for the 2023 purchase, if possible, using ARPA funds up to \$30,000 to cover any difference between the grant and purchase price. Yes votes: Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. No votes: Bolles Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

There was discussion on the need to fill a seat on the Sewer Board as Barry Noss’s term expires December 31, 2022. There was discussion on when the appointment should be made and whether or not the vacancy should be advertised. A vote to appoint a Sewer Board member for a new term will be on the January 2023 agenda.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Bolles to accept the Old or Unfinished Business. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

New Business

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Bolles to accept and approve Resolution 2022-0005 for the 2023 Tax Rate to remain the same. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Bolles to approve and advertise the 2023 Council Meeting Dates. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Bolles to cancel the Work Session scheduled for December 29, 2022 and instead hold the Special Meeting for a Budget vote on that date and time. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Bolles to approve the New Business. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

Comments from Residents

Rickey Noss stated it was very important to vote on the Sewer Board vacancy at this meeting before the board member's term expired. There were heated comments between Rickey Noss, Kevin Morris, and Council members on the subject. Joe Buchalski pointed out that the January Council meeting was scheduled for January 3rd and a vote would be conducted then. Council will schedule a meeting with the Sewer Board.

Kevin Morris said that the Borough did a good job on Christmas in the Park.

Rosalie Whitebread noted that there would be a Service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 18, 2022 at 6:00 PM at the First United Methodist Church. A flyer for the event will be posted at the Borough building.

Motion made by Buchalski/seconded by Wido to adjourn the meeting. Yes votes: Bolles, Buchalski, Whitebread, Wido. Absent: Kruczek. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta J. Titus, Secretary
Borough of Shickshinny