

Regular Borough Council Meeting

November 2, 2020

The Regular Monthly Meeting of Souderton Borough Council, held on the above date, was called to order by President Brian K. Goshow at 7:00 p.m. Council President Brian Goshow noted that this in-person meeting is also available for the public to access through Zoom to monitor and make public comment. The Borough Council meeting was attended by the following members and staff:

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| President Brian K. Goshow | Councillor Edward Huber |
| Vice-President Julie Munden | Mayor John R. Reynolds |
| Councillor Donna Rogers | Junior Councillor Nick Mancini |
| Councillor Ned Leight | Solicitor Charlotte Hunsberger |
| Councillor Richard Godshall | |
| Councillor Daniel Yocum | Borough Manager P. Michael Coll |
| Councillor Matt Mscichowski | Police Chief James P. Leary |
| Councillor Daryl Littlefield | Public Works Director Steven R. Coll |

The invocation was given by Councillor Edward Huber, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Council President Brian Goshow noted that Vice-President Julie Munden is coordinating Zoom access this evening. The meeting is being recorded and will be available to view through the Borough website.

Consideration was given to the minutes of the October 5, 2020 Regular Borough Council Meeting and the Borough Council work sessions which were held on October 12, 2020 and October 26, 2020. The meeting minutes were considered separately by Borough Council as follows:

A motion was made by Councillor Richard Godshall, seconded by Councillor Daryl Littlefield, to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2020 Regular Monthly Borough Council meeting as presented. The motion was approved.

A motion was made by Councillor Richard Godshall, seconded by Councillor Matt Mscichowski, to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2020 Borough Council work session as presented. The motion was approved.

A motion was made by Councillor Richard Godshall, seconded by Councillor Matt Mscichowski, to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2020 Borough Council work session as presented. The motion was approved.

Mayor John R. Reynolds read a note of appreciation from Esther Stoudt for the support of the Borough in the passing of her husband Paul H. Stoudt, Jr.

Mayor John Reynolds further noted that November 3, 2020 is Election Day, it is a

privilege to vote and he encouraged all to participate.

Police Chief James Leary noted that the monthly report for October, 2020 will be distributed for discussion at our next Borough Council work session. The Souderton Police Department was one of the first departments to initiate a prescription drug takeback program. The department collected and disposed of 362 pounds of drugs during this calendar year.

Vice-President Julie Munden, who serves as Police Committee chair, reported that the Police Chief Search Committee will be interviewing three candidates for the position of Police Chief on Saturday morning, November 7, 2020. The interviews will be closed to the public, however, members of Borough Council are invited to attend and observe the interviews.

Borough Solicitor Charlotte Hunsberger circulated her monthly report to Borough Council. The Borough Solicitor continues to work on the required documentation to obtain a Tax Anticipation Loan for the 2021 calendar year. The Borough Solicitor reviewed information and a notice to property owners in Berkeley Court Phase 1 concerning landscaping. The Solicitor reviewed the BID reauthorization notice sent to property owners listed in the reauthorization plan and they drafted an Ordinance to extend the Business Improvement District should the vote be favorable.

Steven Coll, as Emergency Management Coordinator, reported that Montgomery County is now providing periodic updates on the COVID pandemic through Facebook. The Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center was downgraded and they will continue to address COVID issues as they may arise.

Public Works Director Steven Coll reported that all scheduled paving projects have been completed. Crews have been working on the West Broad Street streetscape project. The storm drain extension is complete and the crew began setting the new granite curb along West Broad Street. Leaf collection is behind schedule due to this construction, but crews will concentrate on leaf collection upon completion of the curb installation.

Borough Manager Michael Coll reviewed the meeting schedule for the month of November. There will be a Borough Council work session on Monday, November 16, 2020 with this joint monthly work session format continuing on the third Monday of each month through 2021.

The Agenda for the November 2, 2020 Borough Council meeting includes an update on the status of the proposed re-authorization and expansion of the Souderton Business Improvement District. The Borough Manager noted that the BID re-authorization plan will include the entire Borough. The Plan and information on the voting process can be found on the BID's website at soudertonconnects.com. The

deadline to receive responses is November 12, 2020. Opportunity will be provided for public comment at this meeting. A motion has been prepared to approve the proposed 2021-2023 Montgomery County Community Planning Assistance Contract. A motion has been prepared to authorize the Borough Solicitor to prepare documents relating to a \$250,000 Tax Anticipation Loan from Univest Bank and Trust Company for the 2021 calendar year. The 2021 Budget Resolution and 2021 Real Estate Tax Ordinance will be presented for public review and advertisement.

Councillor Daniel Yocum noted that the Souderton-Telford Rotary Club will conduct a virtual auction to raise funds for club programs and support towards the Community Park Improvement project.

Consideration was given to paying the bills for the month of October, 2020.

GENERAL FUND

Nationwide Trust Co.	\$64,226.00	James P. Leary	\$336.59
Nationwide Trust Company	40,670.03	Lansdale Police Department	300.00
Souderton Firemens Relief Assoc.	38,272.38	Lansdale Power Washers, Inc.	840.00
Comcast	691.68	Maryjane Yoder	113.50
NAPA Auto Parts	75.45	Metlife/Brighthouse Financial	6,335.13
NetCarrier Telecom, Inc.	511.41	Montg. Co. Planning Comm	4,677.75
PECO Energy	64.29	Moyer Indoor/Outdoor	2,144.51
Verizon Wireless	354.31	Nationwide Trust Company	1,964.29
Advanced Disposal	38,025.14	North American Benefits Co	1,004.41
Airgas National Carbonation	78.00	PA Department of Transportation	20.00
Allan Myers	613.90	PA One Call System	102.20
American Power washing, LLC	120.00	PPL Electric Utilities	1,458.34
Bergey's, Inc.	2,806.53	PPL Electric Utilities	121.56
Clemens Uniform Rental	131.56	Propet Distributors, Inc.	506.35
Code Inspections, Inc.	260.00	Ready Fresh	81.37
Cope's Garage	708.70	Richter Drafting Office Supply	159.33
D. L. Beardsley, Ltd.	40.50	SEPTA	7,379.24
Davidheisers, Inc.	36.00	Shelly Enterprises USLBM, LLC	27.44
Delta Dental/Gettysburg Benefit	1,096.12	Suburban Propane	770.54
Fredericks Flowers	139.00	Sudz In A Bucket	55.00
Freedom Systems Corp	2,095.00	Telford Press Printers	1,407.50
Fromm Electric Supply Corp	261.50	Montgomery County Treasurer	1,296.00
GALCO Business Communications	99.50	Trumbauers Lwn & Rec, Inc.	73.28
George Allen Portable Toilets	229.00	Univest VISA	3.93
Gran Turk Equipment Co., Inc.	1,178.00	Univest VISA	42.34
Highway Materials, Inc.	391.70	Univest VISA	539.67
Home Depot	145.49	Verizon	72.92
Independence Blue Cross	16,015.57	Wise Electric	347.50
Indian Valley Reg Planning Comm	3,000.00		
Witmer Public Safety Group	134.95	Total General Fund	\$244,652.40

SEWER FUND

Comcast	\$89.51	Jesse Baro, Inc.	\$14,262.59
Home Depot	61.82	Landis Block Nycecrete Co	23.40
NetCarrier Telecom, Inc.	159.41	Lawson Products, Inc.	313.98
Bearing & Drive Solutions	104.72	Metlife/Brighthouse Financial	138.42
Bergey's Electric, Inc.	108.00	Moyer Indoor/Outdoor	234.41
CCP Industries, Inc.	2,076.32	North American Benefits Co	250.60
Cintas First Aid & Safety	121.62	NYCO Corporation	41.14
Clemens Uniform Rental	180.92	PPL Electric Utilities	10,858.14
Commonwealth Precast, Inc.	1,528.00	Pyrz Water Supply Co., Inc.	858.60
Coyne Chemical	4,890.63	Richter Drafting Office Supply	150.08
Delta Dental/Gettysburg Benefit	284.64	Rodney Shoemaker Plumbing	198.33
Derstine Company, Inc.	53,850.00	Suburban Water Testing Labs	2,999.15
EVOQUA Water Technologies	4,330.90	Telford Press Printers	1,257.50
Hajoca Corporation	720.60	Univest VISA	235.00
Hart Mechanical Contractors	997.80	USA Blue Book	980.68
Independence Blue Cross	4,659.03	Verizon	76.46
J. P. Mascaro & Sons	612.30	Total Sewer Fund	\$107,654.70

POOL FUND

CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Commonwealth of PA Clean Water	\$400.00	Cooper Roofing Corp	\$9,600.00
MCCD/Clean water Fund	500.00	Naceville Materials	530.22
Montg Co Conservation District	1,950.00	Sherwin Williams	40.33
American Biosolids & Compost	719.00	TRM Telford Recycling	140.00
Blooming Glen Quarry	220.00	Total Capital Reserve Fund	\$14,099.55

LIQUID FUELS FUND

PPL Electric Utilities	\$849.29	PPL Electric Utilities	\$5,543.41
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A motion was made by Councillor Matt Mscichowski, and seconded by Councillor Richard Godshall, to approve the payment of bills for the month of October, 2020 as presented. The motion was approved.

A motion was made by Councillor Matt Mscichowski, and seconded by Councillor Julie Munden, to approve the payment of recurring bills for the month of November, 2020 as presented. The motion was approved.

President Goshow opened the meeting for public comment on matters not pertaining to the 2021 Budget. He will again open the floor for public comment on the proposed budget once it has been presented and summarized by the Borough Manager. The following comments were made at this time:

Daniel Houser, 436 Central Avenue, commented that the new marquee sign for

the Broad Theater has brought positive attention and community excitement for the eventual opening of the theater. The marquee sign, which was approved by variance from the Souderton Zoning Hearing Board, is historically sensitive and has positively changed the landscape.

Adam Rich, 55 N. School Lane, noted that he is a board member of the Berkeley Court Homeowners Association and has commented in the past and continues to have concern over the storage of the fill material on the site. The developer needs to be more accountable in the overall management of the site. He requested Borough Council to take a more aggressive role in having the developer better maintain the site.

Dr. Barbara Smith, owner of Ark Animal Hospital, 201 N. Main Street, commented that they are still moving forward with the renovations of 140-142 N. Main Street. The project has stalled due to the COVID pandemic. They are making provisions to add some decorative signage on the building façade to improve the street appearance. Most recently a decision was made to purchase the property across the street at 143 N. Main Street. This is a smaller building to renovate. They have secured the services of an architect and civil engineer to develop plans to renovate the street level commercial unit for retail space. They also plan to renovate the second level which walks out to the rear yard into commercial space with outdoor venues for dining. They hope to present conceptual plans to the Souderton Planning Commission at their December meeting.

Following initial public comment, President Brian Goshow moved to the scheduled business items as follows:

Borough Manager Michael Coll provided an update on the status of the Business Improvement District reauthorization plan. Notices were sent out to all property owners listed within the expanded reauthorization plan. The deadline to receive responses is November 12, 2020. The Borough Manager noted that the Solicitor prepared an advertised an Ordinance for formal consideration at the December 7, 2020 Borough Council meeting to reauthorize the Business Improvement District for another five year term, providing the responses are favorable. To date a total of 41 parcels expressed opposition to the plan, which is significantly below the 40% threshold as provided in the State legislation. President Brian Goshow opened the floor for any public comment concerning the proposed Business Improvement District reauthorization plan. There was no public comment.

The next item of business was consideration to extend the planning assistance contract with the Montgomery County Planning Commission. A motion was made by Councillor Edward Huber, and seconded by Councillor Matt Mscichowski, to approve the execution of a Planning Assistance Contract with the Montgomery County Planning Commission effective January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2023. The motion was approved.

A motion was made by Councillor Richard Godshall, and seconded by Councillor Ned Leight, to authorize the Borough Solicitor to prepare and advertise the necessary documents to obtain a \$250,000 Tax Anticipation Loan through Univest Bank and Trust Company effective January 1, 2021. Councillor Daniel Yocum noted that he will abstain due to his employment with Univest Bank and Trust Company. The motion was approved by a vote of 8 ayes, 0 nays and 1 abstention from Councillor Yocum.

Borough Manager Michael Coll provided Borough Council with a summary of the proposed 2021 Budget. The 2021 Budget was discussed at great length during the October 26, 2020 Budget Work Session. The 2021 Budget recommends consideration of a real estate tax rate increase for the General Fund from 5.20 mills to 5.35 mills. The increase was necessitated by anticipated reductions in Earned Income, Local Service and Real Estate Transfer Tax revenues. The tax increase will also offset projected growth in expenditures in the Police Budget and preserve an acceptable level of revenue growth for capital expenditures. The Borough Manager recommended an increase in the Special Fire Tax rate from 0.25 mills to 0.27 mills. The increase is recommended to offset potential increases in workers compensation premiums for the fire company. The overall real estate tax rate will increase from 5.78 mills to 5.95 mills for the 2021 Budget and calendar year, an average increase of \$25.00. The overall real estate tax rate remains below the median average tax rate for Montgomery County Boroughs.

President Brian Goshow opened the floor for public comment concerning the proposed 2021 Budget.

Karen Peterson, 18 N. Hunsberger Lane, Souderton presented a prepared statement to Borough Council concerning the proposed 2021 Budget. Karen Peterson stated that this budget reflects a lack of communication and understanding of socio-economic disparities in the Borough. Alternative options should be available for viewing public meetings. Due to the pandemic many of us are concerned about attending a live meeting due to the lack of safeguards. Regardless of personal opinion, not wearing a mask to the meeting prevents those who do believe in the risk from attending, preventing our voice from being heard. While the Borough is using Zoom to access the meeting there are limitations. The Borough must have an alternative way to improve broadcast of the meetings or to view them at a later date. Plexi-glass shields should be installed around the council members desks.

Karen Peterson further expressed concern about the proposed 3% pay increases. Raising wages is irresponsible at this time. Many in the community are unemployed or making less money due to COVID. She was not opposed to the wage increases for the lower end employees, but management should not receive pay increases. She also opposed the Borough's efforts to eliminate the bag system option for trash collection, which offers a better price for persons with limited income or small families.

There being no further public comment on the proposed 2021 Budget, President Brian Goshow noted that the budget will be posted on the website and will be further reviewed at the November 16 Borough Council work session.

A motion was made by Councillor Richard Godshall, and seconded by Councillor Daniel Yocum, to authorize the advertisement of the 2021 Budget Resolution and 2021 Real Estate Tax Ordinance for formal consideration at the December 7, 2020 Borough Council Meeting. The motion was approved.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Secretary