

City of Shamokin Regular Council Meeting
March 13, 2023
6:00 PM

The Regular Monthly Meeting of Shamokin City Council was held this evening with Mayor Richard H. Ulrich presiding.

CALL TO ORDER:

PLEDGE TO FLAG:

PRAYER:

ROLL CALL: Leschinskie, Moyer, Annis, Ulrich
Absent: Milbrand

PRESENTATIONS:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

BIDS:

CORRESPONDENCE:

CITIZENS COMMENTS (contingent upon business listed on the agenda):

MINUTES:

MOTION BY: Moyer to accept the minutes of The City of Shamokin Council Meeting on February 13, 2023 (Regular Council Meeting).

Second by: Annis

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Leschinskie, Moyer, Annis, Ulrich
Nays: None
Absent: Milbrand

BILLS:

MOTION BY: Annis to approve the bills from February 2023, as listed on the Bill List.

Second by: Moyer

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Leschinskie, Moyer, Annis, Ulrich
Nays: None
Absent: Milbrand

DIRECTORS' REPORTS:

Accounts & Finance

General Fund \$ 339,491.36
Motor License \$ 112,465.37
Library \$ 122,197.86
Debt Service \$ 99,906.48
Recreation \$ 261,333.39
Street Lighting \$ 595.60
American Legion \$ 1,770.16
Neighborhood Mitigation \$ 30,218.32
Code Department Credit Cards \$ 3,862.50
Police Department Credit Cards \$ 3,105.74
Total All Funds \$ 974,946.78

Fund balances as of March 1, 2023 submitted by Brenda Scandle, City Treasurer.

Parks and Public Buildings

Councilwoman Moyer spoke about AEDs in City buildings. The Chief stated he got price quotes on those and he forwarded those to Councilwoman Moyer so she can speak with SEDA-COG about that. The Chief mentioned he could get them quickly and they're in stock.

Streets and Public Improvements

Councilwoman Leschinskie mentioned that the street sweeper has started and the schedule has been posted. She asked to please adhere to everything so anyone won't get citations.

SEDA-COG

Betsy stated there was no update for CDBG tonight. They will be getting somebody to fill Aaron's position but for now Teri Provost will be filling his position with the City and she is the Chief of Community Services with SEDA-COG.

She said her report did not mention on there that the Blight Task Force met last month; nine attended and two attended virtually. The County released that they are going to put out ARPA funds for blight so next month she will be asking the City's permission to apply for those funds. There is a 50% match which they could probably go with the CDBG money. She mentioned today they had Senator Bob Casey here in Shamokin in reference to the Safe Street for All grant. Senator Casey contacted SEDA-COG regarding coming to the City and seeing how they want to use those funds. That went very well and they also went down to the American Legion Building. All the grants are going well. The ribbon cutting for the Illumination Station Pocket Park will probably be the end of April or beginning of May depending on the weather and also they will be putting plants in the ground soon.

See SEDA-COG report.

Treasurer

The Treasurer reminded everyone that, with the new Blight Task Force that was put together, the Neighborhood Mitigation fund is for that purpose and currently we have \$30,218 in that account. That can be used for blight and when they get fines from the Code Office from Mr. Gembic, that is deposited into the Neighborhood Mitigation.

Chief of Police

Police Department reported 1,391 total calls for February 2023.

The Chief mentioned Officers Busko and Bischof are removing abandoned vehicles. Over the last two months, they've removed multiple abandoned vehicles from the Bunker Hill section. They are working on other locations in the City.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Request a motion to approve the Shamokin Community Gardens Pick up Pennsylvania event on March 25th, 2023, 10am-1pm at Claude Kehler Park, Volunteer Park, The Sunbury St Community Garden and surrounding sidewalks.
2. Request a motion to approve Mountainside Assembly of God's Easter Sunrise Service at Claude Kehler Park on April 9th, 2023 from 6:30am-9:30am, using the facilities.
3. Request a motion to approve Northumberland County Council for the Art's event, Anthracite Heritage Fest, on May 27th 2023 10am-5pm, closing Market St from Arch to Pine and Market to 6th on Arch, Chestnut, and Pine Sts from 7am-6pm.
4. Request a motion to approve Carrington Family Investments, LLC's event 2nd Annual Fifth Ward Block Party on August 12th, 2023 from 11am-9pm, closing S Pearl St from Race St to Spruce St and E Chestnut from Franklin St to Pearl St from 7am-10pm.
5. Request a motion to suspend the Open Container Ordinance for Carrington Family Investment LLC's event August 12th, 2023, in the specified event corridor for alcoholic beverages sold within the event corridor.
6. Request a motion to approve Oasis Community Recovery Club's event, Overdose Awareness Day, at Claude Kehler Park on August 31st, 2023 6pm-7pm, closing Arch St from 3rd St to 5th St from 5pm-7pm and using the facilities.
7. Request a motion to approve Oasis Community Recovery Club's event, Oasis Recovery Fest, at Claude Kehler Park on September 16th, 2023 from 4pm-8pm, closing Arch St from 3rd to 5th St from 3pm-8pm and using the facilities.
8. Request a motion to approve Northumberland County Council for the Art's event, Food Truck Frenzy, on October 28th, 2023 from 11am-5pm, closing Independence St from Rite Aid to Wendy's from 9am-6pm.
9. Request a motion to approve Northumberland County Council for the Art's event, Downtown Christmas Market, at Claude Kehler Park on December 2, 2023 from 11am-3pm at closing Arch St from 3rd to 5th St, including a parade starting at Mulberry and Market, down Market to Arch to Claude Kehler Park at 11am.
10. Request a motion to add Harrison St to the already approved street sweeper list.

MOTION BY: Moyer to approve items #1-10 under New Business as listed on the agenda.

Second by: Leschinskie

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Leschinskie, Moyer, Annis, Ulrich

Nays: None

Absent: Milbrand

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

SOLICITORS REPORT:

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

Mr. Dennis Kaleta spoke about the portal incidents and stated he has concerns. Being a business, they're slowing down. Last year the AOAA riders helped them stay open and he's concerned that they may shut down the portal. If the portal shuts down he feels like they very possibly are likely to go out of business this summer. He asked if there is anything they can do or any way they can get some cameras over there or have it controlled more or anything at all. He will help and maybe some community people can check on stuff or call the police. He asked if the area can be a no trespassing zone so that nobody can go on it. He is just throwing it out there because he's extremely concerned. The Mayor stated that he, Mr. Slaby, and the Chief were all over there and one of the ideas they came up with was to put up basically high street lights and try and light it up. The only problem they had with that was with the expenses of the Legion. It is about \$68,000 for the lights. Mr. Kaleta stated that this stuff has happened during the daytime. The Mayor stated he was giving examples of what they've been trying to work on. Councilwoman Leschinskie asked if the AOAA has security. Councilwoman Annis stated no. Councilwoman Leschinskie said that from Bamse back to the steps is City property so they can't stop people from being on that. Mr. Kaleta asked if they can use some of the Safe Streets grant money to put some cameras over there. Betsy stated that Safe Streets for All is just to create a plan; there's no actual funding for implementation. The following year they can apply for that. The Mayor brought up another problem that to even try to get vehicles back there wouldn't be safe. The Chief stated they can't get a vehicle back there. Mayor said the only other option is if someone maybe would donate a four wheeler that they could utilize. The City Administrator said even the smallest Police Car wouldn't be able to fit back there. The Chief stated the terrain is the problem too. He also spoke to Mayor Ulrich about what they can do but there are so many concerns. Councilwoman Leschinskie stated the only suggestion that they could do at this point is AOAA puts somebody on the path. The Chief stated in the summertime, they do foot patrolling but in the winters, with the mud and snow, it's not safe to walk back there. He's been working with the Mayor to come up with a solution that could help, but right now it's manpower that is the problem. Even in the summer, if an Officer is on the path and gets a priority call, they have to leave and it's the same situation downtown. They have a Crime Watch that is very active, but for that specific area there is a liability if they designate persons, the concern is if something happens to them. Before the meeting started he spoke to the Mayor about this so he hopes they can do something. Councilwoman Moyer asked if that's the only thing impacting his business.

Mr. Kaleta stated that they lost a lot of locals with the economy and the people that are coming with the ATVs have a lot more funds than the people around here because they're on vacation and if the portal is closed they are not going to get back in their vehicle for lunch and then go back out riding. They have the option to stop by and they do and it's been helping the business. If anyone has any ideas they can reach him. Councilwoman Annis stated that it's a mess and she would like to talk to Mike and some people about doing a cleanup again back there. They decided to choose a date and time for that.

Mike Duganitz spoke about the portal. How far is it City property? Because at Bamse they put that gate there and they took away the walking area from Patsy's Bridge to Bamse and the boulders next to the fence. Now that there is a gate there they can't get a police car or an ambulance down there. He is asking if they can move that to the other side of Patsy's Bridge off of City property. Councilwoman Annis stated there is enough room alongside that gate to walk past it. They also spoke about not being able to get the volunteers to clean up there.

Jesse Storm thanked the Code Department. He also asked the Chief if digital trail cams would help back there in that area. He stated that the problem is that there are people going back and looking for the cameras or cutting them down or cutting the wires to them. The trail cams that are on the phone, they are just taking the cameras. Mr. Storm stated that they do make some trail cams that have the chip for the telephone company in it that wirelessly sends every motion back. They can have it running during the day on a computer in the Police Department. The Chief said they have one person for four hours a day Monday through Friday who's now watching the downtown cameras. He also said they've been working on ideas but haven't found the right one yet. Even remote cameras that they could focus on that area but they can't get the shot where the trees are at because it automatically encloses it. The Chief stated the cameras are a great idea but the first time something happens, people are going to question why someone wasn't watching the cameras. Mr. Storm suggested a third-party monitoring service. The Chief stated that would be expensive and he can't make that decision, it would need to be in cooperation with the City and the AOAA. Mr. Storm stated they don't want to see the portal shut down. They want to do everything they possibly can to keep activity going for local businesses that may come through there. That is the reason for the ATVs on the street, it's helping businesses and supporting them. He would be willing to try and help in every way he can to help keep local businesses. Another thing that Mr. Storm spoke about was the possibility of getting DUI checkpoints in the City. The Chief said that is the DUI Association which is based on reporting the number of DUI accidents and taking that into consideration that's how the Association picks the locations. Fortunately, they don't have a lot of DUI crashes on the area where they're able to set up a checkpoint. The other thing is there are guidelines that you have to meet with traffic studies and other things that need to be taken into consideration. Mr. Storm questioned what about a Friday night by the portal where they're having the issues, is it possible to set up near there so they have the Police presence there. The Chief stated there's a long process but unfortunately they can't set one up in town. Mr. Storm asked if it would be possible to park an unused patrol car on a Friday night out in town. The Chief said they did it once and their SUV got shot up with paintballs. They've tried it but it's a hard situation. They have an idea and they're monitoring it. Mr. Storm had one last question for Council and that is if they will reconsider a three-strike policy in the City for tenants. They talked about this a year and a half or two years ago that when the Police are called for a non-domestic call to a property it counts as a strike and after three strikes the tenant has to move out of the City or be evicted by the landlord or the landlord loses their license for failure to

evict. He doesn't have a legal reason to evict someone just because the Police are called multiple times in one day to a residence. If they have a three-strike policy that would give him the legal right to evict them. The Landlord-Tenant Ordinance was brought up and Councilwoman Annis stated there may be a clause in the ordinance. If the Police or Code Officer are out they would have to actually make a report and that's the only way those strikes would count towards the policy for him to evict.

Joe Leschinskie stated that he agreed with Mike and he had an issue with the gate being there. If that's determined to be a City street or public road the AOAA should have to put it on the other side of the fence. He doesn't know who owns the gate and who paid for it there but it's very difficult to get around walking there. He also asked the Treasurer how much she mentioned was in the Neighborhood Mitigation account. The Treasurer stated there is around \$30,000.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting ended at 6:44 PM

Minutes taken by Aeman Kamran, Administrative Accountant