

City of Shamokin Regular Council Meeting
June 12, 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: Milbrand, Moyer, Annis, Ulrich
Absent: Leschinskie

PRESENTATIONS:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

BIDS:

CORRESPONDENCE:

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

Joe Leschinskie asked for an update on why Councilwoman Leschinskie was not present for this meeting. Mayor Ulrich responded that she had a family situation. Mr. Leschinskie stated he asked about that is because under Solicitors Report there is the first reading of the Home Rule Charter Ordinance. They can't put a Home Rule Charter on a ballot without forming a Study Commission so the wording on that is incorrect. He asked that they table that vote tonight because the one vote that's missing could be the difference of this passing the first reading or failing. The State has come here twice and proposed this to voters and it was voted down; respect people's votes, it wasn't close either time. He understands that there are letters out to Representatives and Senators. He doesn't think this is the route to go. Mr. Leschinskie also asked what the Social Media Policy is. Solicitor Greco explained that it is basically so any official news comes out of the City subject to the City Administrator. Everyone could have their own social media saying what they want but the official news comes out of the City of Shamokin. Also, if someone was making comments that they have a right to censor those types of comments on social media on something the City has posted. Mr. Leschinskie stated that going back to the Home Rule Charter, he thinks the Act 47 people should be doing more to help the City in the situation it is in. SEDA-COG has been amazing since they've been here. Councilwoman Moyer asked him to rethink his position on the Study Commission. They can discuss whether they can amend that phrasing here. Mr. Leschinskie stated that they were told after the last time it failed it wouldn't be allowed on the ballot for four years but within a year and half it is back. He asked what are seven people going to be able to come up with that five elected or appointed can't do?

He understands that the goal is to go to Home Rule and take the cap off of EIT. It worries him because there is a declining tax base and an elder tax base, people that are elderly, disabled, or unemployed and this affects the people who are employed and he doesn't think it would be fair to them. What would the seven people have the power to do? The City Administrator stated that the seven-member board are independent individuals to study information about how the City operates under the Third Class City Code. Him and City Council thought the same thing that they were out of it and there wasn't enough time. If they don't do what they're doing now they are going to miss out on it and are scheduled to come out of it next year in August. He is asking Council to move ahead with this and see where it goes. Mr. Leschinskie stated this was tried since 2018 so five and a half years and they still have questions such as the cost, how much power does this board have, etc. The Administrator stated if the City does not make a good faith effort, they've done it twice but now the Act 47 Coordinator is saying they want the City to do this. If they do nothing, what is going to happen to the City in August of 2024. The people of Shamokin will make a decision.

Jesse Storm wanted to reiterate what Joe spoke about. He spoke about the agenda item for the Home Rule Charter and if that's the ordinance he believes that everybody needs to vote no to it because they have to start with creating the panel first and then have the government study done and then put the Home Rule Charter on the ballot. The Administrator stated that they need to get this accomplished or they cannot do anything as far as getting it to the County because they only have so many weeks that allows them to do this and if they don't do this as soon as possible they will miss it. He doesn't want the State and the Act 47 Coordinator being critical of the Mayor, Council, or himself and that's what will happen if they don't move this along. Councilwoman Annis stated they would have to vote to amend the wording and then post the new agenda. Solicitor Greco stated that the ordinance is really submitting the vote for the commission, but this is only the first reading and it's the motion to authorize the advertisement. They're not voting on it and they're not submitting it, so it's just paraphrasing what the Ordinance itself is saying. Mr. Storm asked the Administrator that he stated they have to do something but they've had to do something for a long time and they've done nothing for long time. They've tried things but the same things over and over again. He cited other municipalities and stuff they do for revenue. Why don't they try other things?

MINUTES:

Minutes are not available at this time. The Mayor stated this will be taken care of next meeting.

BILLS:

The Administrator stated that the bills are being paid as they are every month. The Bill List will be available at next month's meeting for ratification.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS:

Accounts & Finance

General Fund \$ 495,222.80

Motor License \$ 234,135.79
Library \$ 697,399.16
Debt Service \$ 213,962.21
Recreation \$ 368,895.26
Street Lighting \$ 17,501.72
American Legion \$ 547.38
Neighborhood Mitigation \$ 37,758.35
Code Department Credit Cards \$ 5,367.00
Police Department Credit Cards \$ 4,049.01
Total All Funds \$ 2,074,838.68

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

Parks and Public Buildings

Councilwoman Moyer met with Larry. She also spoke about the Second Street Playground and thanked the Street Dept. for installing everything. She also reminded anyone who has rented or arranged to use Claude Kehler Park to please clean up the trash and if the bathrooms were opened up, they are responsible for cleaning them. The Music in the Park opening concert was great.

Streets and Public Improvements

Public Safety

Fire Department reported 42 total calls for the month of May.

Code Office collected \$12,268.17 in total revenue for the month of May.

Councilman Milbrand stated that after hearing all of the issues with the Home Rule Charter he wants everybody to know that right from the beginning of all of this, he's taken a stand on this and he's not going to back down from the stand he has originally taken. The Act 47 program is not that individualized and he believes that with a simple change to the Third Class City Code this can be resolved. He is asking why the Code cannot be changed. When he first served on Council, the Third Class City Code was changed to adjust the Real Estate Taxes and what could be levied as far as real estate taxes. A change was made back then and it was made to add an extra five mills for real estate taxes for distressed communities if you went before a judge. That is what he proposes to do the same thing with the earned income tax. The only one that is affecting is the working people. The people who are living on fixed income or retirees aren't

going to be affected by this. The extra 2% that was added to the real estate tax is what's keeping the City going and keeping it afloat. They're not raising taxes, just a simple change.

The Mayor asked him about a request from the Rescue. He responded that he did not get any request.

Controller

Treasurer

SEDA-COG

Linda was present on behalf of Betsy and spoke about the Policy and Procedure for Consultant Selection vote on the agenda. Betsy gave her a copy of it and the Solicitor stated it will come up for discussion later in the meeting, item #7 under New Business. This is required for the \$2.675 million that Congressman Meuser has prepared for the City. After the meeting tonight, they have advertised a public meeting for CDBG for the purpose of project selection, so at 7 pm they will discuss possibilities for using the City's CDBG funds for 2023.

See SEDA-COG report.

Chief of Police

Police Department reported 1,435 total calls for May 2023.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Request a motion to approve Shamokin Cruise & Events' Shamokin Car Cruise Jun 17, 2023 7pm-10pm in Downtown Shamokin.
2. Request a motion to approve Synergy's Outside Concert of Worship & Prayer July 7, 2023 7pm-10pm, closing the East Parking Lot 10am-11pm.
3. Request a motion to approve Far's Follow Up Picnic to Reconvening Workshop at Claude Kehler Park July 16, 2023, 3pm-6pm. Closing W Arch St from 3rd St to 5th St and using the facilities at Claude Kehler Park during event.
4. Request a motion to approve VNA's Annual Memorial Butterfly Release at Claude Kehler Park on August 27, 2023 at 1:30pm.
5. Request a motion to approve the updates to Friendship Fire Co's Car Show on August 19, 2023, closing Independence St and Commerce St from Liberty St to Rock St, and the East Parking Lot.
6. Request a motion to approve Citizens for a Better Community to do their annual collection for the fireworks on Rt 61 at Jack Williams and Pool World on Friday June 30, 2023 at 4pm-8pm and Saturday July 1, 2023 10am-9pm.
7. Request a motion to approve the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Appendix 7A Publication 93: Policy and Procedure for Consultant Selection for the \$2,675,000 Congressional Appropriation for the Independence Street Streetscape project

The Administrator stated regarding item #5 that he thought that the Chief of Police would be here. Since the Chief of Police was not present, they added to item #5 pending approval by the Chief of Police.

MOTION BY: Annis to approve items #1-7 as listed on the agenda and #5 is subject to approval by the Chief of Police.

Second by: Moyer

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Councilwoman Annis asked if there is any update on the Pocket Park. The Administrator stated that he met with Kevin this afternoon and he also mentioned the signs and cameras.

The Treasurer stated that she wanted the public to know that the reminder letters will be going out this week for real estate.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

SOLICITORS REPORT:

1. *First reading of Ordinance 23-__:* Social Media Policy
2. *First Reading of Ordinance 23-__:* third amendment to the financial recovery plan.
3. *First Reading of Ordinance 23-__:* Home rule charter to be put on the November 2023 General Election ballot.

The Solicitor stated that what's listed on the agenda is the First Reading of Ordinance 23-02: Social Media Policy. The document he prepared is in resolution form, so it would be a resolution.

MOTION BY: Annis to adopt Resolution 23-05: Social Media Policy.

Second by: Moyer

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

MOTION BY: Milbrand to advertise Ordinance 23-02: third amendment to the financial recovery plan.

Second by: Moyer

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

Nays: None

Absent: Leschinskie

MOTION BY: Moyer to advertise Ordinance 23-03: Home rule charter to be put on the November 2023 General Election ballot.

Second by: Annis

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Moyer, Annis, Ulrich

Nays: Milbrand

Absent: Leschinskie

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

Joe Leschinskie asked about Section One of Ordinance 23-03. What is the government study commission going to study? He also mentioned the consultant to manage the \$2.675 million.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT:

The Administrator asked if they need to adjourn so the CDBG meeting can begin. Linda stated that this doesn't have to be a hearing, it just has to be an opportunity for her to hear if anyone here would like to discuss CDBG potential projects for 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting ended at 7:10 PM

Minutes taken by Aeman Kamran, Administrative Accountant