

THE CITY OF SHAMOKIN COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, August 12, 2024
6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER:

PLEDGE TO FLAG:

PRAYER:

ROLL CALL:

PRESENTATIONS:

BIDS:

A motion needed to accept the bid received from Port Island, LLC, in the amount of \$4,000.00, for the property located at 721-723 N. Shamokin St.

CORRESPONDENCE:

A motion needed to accept the letter of resignation of Councilwoman Tonya Leschinskie, effective August 1, 2024.

A motion needed to approve the 2024-2025 Winter Maintenance Agreement between PennDOT and the City of Shamokin, for designated City streets owned by PennDOT.

A motion needed to approve the Fire Bureau's recommendation of Jim Catino for Battalion Chief starting January 1, 2025.

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

MINUTES:

Motion to accept the minutes of The City of Shamokin Council Meeting of July 8, 2024 (Regular Council Meeting).

BILLS:

Motion to approve the bills from July 2024, as listed on the Bill List.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS:

*Accounts & Finance
Parks and Public Building
Street and Public Improvements
Public Safety
Controller
Treasurer
Chief of Police*

SEDA-COG:

A motion needed to approve CDBG projects and allocations for FFY 2024 funding consideration, as presented.

A motion needed to approve Resolution 2024-07 to submit the City of Shamokin FFY 2024 Community Development Block Grant Application to the Department of Community and Economic Development.

A motion needed to re-adopt the following resolutions and plan for the City of Shamokin, in accordance with the federal and state regulations of the Community Development Block Grant Program, as submitted by Tonia Troup of SEDA-COG: Resolution 2024-08: Section 504 Resolution; and Resolution 2024-09: Fair Housing Resolution; both previously adopted on July 10, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Request a motion to approve 9/11 Memorial on September 11, 2024 in front of City Hall from 7:00 PM-8:00 PM.*
- 2. Request a motion to approve Pep Rally on October 22, 2024 in the Municipal Parking Lot after the Halloween Parade until 8:00 PM.*
- 3. Request a motion to approve Restoration Ministries Outdoor Service on September 8, 2024 at Claude Kehler Park from 9:00 AM-2:00 PM.*
- 4. Request a motion to approve Restoration Ministries Outdoor Service on October 19, 2024 at Illumination Station from 2:00 PM-6:00 PM.*
- 5. Request a motion to approve Shamokin Car Cruise on September 14, 2024 in Downtown Shamokin from 6:00 PM-10:00 PM, with a rain date of September 21, 2024.*
- 6. Request a motion to approve Shamokin Car Cruise on October 12, 2024 in Downtown Shamokin from 6:00 PM-10:00 PM, with a rain date of October 19, 2024.*
- 7. Request a motion to approve Police Recognition Event at Claude Kehler Park on September 14, 2024 from 2:00 PM-6:00 PM.*
- 8. Request a motion to approve Chestnut Street Italian Fest on September 21, 2024 in the 500 block of West Chestnut Street from 11:00 AM-8:00 PM.*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

SOLICITORS REPORT:

Request a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2024-05, amending Chapter 44, Fire Bureau Ordinance.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, adjourn the meeting.

City of Shamokin Regular Council Meeting
Monday, August 12, 2024
Minutes
6:00 PM

The Regular Monthly Meeting of Shamokin City Council was held this evening with Councilwoman Barbara Moyer presiding.

CALL TO ORDER:

PLEDGE TO FLAG:

PRAYER:

ROLL CALL: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer
Absent: Ulrich

PRESENTATIONS:

A Certificate of Achievement was presented to Oasis Community Recovery Club in recognition of their five-year anniversary and continuing efforts to help the citizens of Shamokin and surrounding areas.

Following the presentation, Council broke for executive session on personnel and contracts from 6:05-6:09 P.M.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

BIDS:

Solicitor Greco presented the bid received for the property at 721-723 N. Shamokin St. The public sale of the property was advertised in the News-Item and one bid was received at City Hall. The bid, from Anthony I. Mertz and Sheldon Point, in the amount of \$4,000.00 together with a check in the amount of \$400.00 made payable to the City of Shamokin, representing a 10% deposit, was opened at the Shamokin City Council Work Session on Wednesday, August 7. The successful bidder is responsible for all closing costs and transfer fees and is accepting the property as-is. Closing must occur within thirty days.

MOTION BY: Duganitz to accept the bid received from Port Island, LLC, in the amount of \$4,000.00, for the property located at 721-723 N. Shamokin St.

Second by: Kehler

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer
Nays: None
Absent: Ulrich

Councilman Duganitz asked whether the SEDA-COG funds that were assigned to this property could be deferred to another building. Betsy Kramer of SEDA-COG confirmed that they can be deferred.

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CORRESPONDENCE:

MOTION BY: Kehler to accept the letter of resignation of Councilwoman Tonya Leschinskie, effective August 1, 2024.

Second by: Duganitz

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

MOTION BY: Duganitz to advertise the acceptance of letters of interest for the council seat at City Hall until 3:00 P.M., August 19, 2024, and to hold a special meeting on August 19, 2024 at 6:00 P.M. to appoint an individual to the council seat.

Second by: Kehler

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

MOTION BY: Duganitz to table the acceptance of the Fire Bureau's recommendation of Jim Catino for Battalion Chief starting January 1, 2025.

Second by: Kehler

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

MOTION BY: Duganitz to approve the 2024-2025 Winter Maintenance Agreement between PennDOT and the City of Shamokin, for designated city streets owned by PennDOT.

Second by: Kehler

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

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

Joe Leschinskie spoke on the subject of Councilwoman Leschinskie's resignation, stating that he believes a public notice is not required and that appointments have been made in the past without public advertisement. Mr. Leschinskie stated that he believes only a majority of Council members need be present to make a decision, and asked whether Council could theoretically make an appointment today as long as there is a quorum of Council present. Solicitor Greco replied that a majority of three is needed to pass. Mr. Leschinskie asked Council to explain what would happen in the event a majority of three yes votes could not be obtained. City Administrator Slaby stated that while a disagreement of Council is theoretically possible, the City has thirty days from the effective date of the resignation to appoint a replacement. Councilwoman Moyer stated that rather than throwing names out, she is in favor of advertising the vacancy in the newspaper as she believes this process is more transparent and open to the public. Mr. Leschinskie asked if anyone has expressed written interest up to this time and whether they

would still count, or would need to resubmit their letters of interest. Mr. Leschinskie asked for the names of the interested individuals, which he believes to be public information. City Administrator Slaby responded that letters of interest have been received from two individuals, Michael J. McLaughlin and Joseph Leschinskie, and that they would count in the nominating process.

Robert Boyce spoke on the matter of the 504 compliance requirements contained in the CDBG agenda items, and asked whether the CDBG development projects would take measures to preserve the architectural integrity of older buildings which may not be ADA compliant. Mr. Boyce also asked whether the 504 Compliance Officer is a paid position, and if so, whether it is an unfunded mandate from federal or state government or whether there will be funds provided to Shamokin. Ms. Troup of SEDA-COG explained that the Compliance Officer is a role typically assigned to the City Administrator, pending tonight's vote on the resolution, and not a hiring position open to applications. Mr. Boyce inquired as to how broadly the sale of the property at 721-723 N. Shamokin St. was advertised, and Council replied that it was advertised in the News-Item and on the City's Facebook page. Mr. Boyce also asked when the Independence Street Makeover would break ground. Ms. Kramer responded that there is no date as of yet, but that she would be discussing the project in her remarks during the meeting.

MINUTES:

MOTION BY: Duganitz to approve the minutes of the City of Shamokin Council Meeting of July 8, 2024 (Regular Council Meeting).

Second by: Kehler

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

BILLS:

MOTION BY: Kehler to approve the bills from July 2024, as listed on the Bill List.

Second by: Duganitz

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

DIRECTORS' REPORTS:

Accounts & Finance

Councilwoman Moyer stated that there is no report available yet due to the Treasurer's absence. The report will appear on the City's Facebook page as soon as it is available.

Parks and Public Buildings

Councilman Duganitz reminded the public that the summer free lunch program ends this week, and thanked everyone who assisted. The K9 Swim, which closes the swim season, is scheduled for

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September 7. The Councilman added that the pool has been doing very well this year and there have been no problems.

Streets and Public Improvements

The Director of Public Works council seat was vacant as of this meeting.

Public Safety

The Fire Department reported 41 calls for the month of July.

The Code Enforcement Office collected \$7,134.98 in revenue for the month of July.

Chief of Police

Chief Siko had nothing to report.

Controller

Controller Dave Kinder commented on the challenges to the downloads and uploads of payroll records due to the loss of Larry Strausser, who was responsible for many administrative tasks in the city, and the medical absence of the Administrator last year. Mr. Kinder reported that the new administrative accountant has assisted in the process and that payroll uploads to the accounting system are now up-to-date as of July 31. Speaking for the Treasurer, he added that the financial reports will be available next month.

SEDA-COG

Ms. Troup called to order the Community Development Block Grant Program Final Public Hearing at 6:35 P.M.

The purpose of this hearing is to review projects selected for the 2024 CDBG Application. The City has selected the following projects for funding: Street Reconstruction Phase 2, \$176,675; Removal of Blighted Structures Phase 2, \$75,717; and SEDA-COG administration, \$53,700 for a total of \$306,092.

The city has created a list of the most hazardous blighted properties and will work to gain control of the properties, and demolish private property when it poses an emergency situation, with the Removal of Blighted Structures Phase 2 funding. All properties selected for demolition have negative property value and will have been vacant for at least a year. Upon completion lots will be restored to grass.

Street Reconstruction Phase 2 covers Washington Street between Independence and Water, and 8th from Commerce to Independence, and this would consist of a milling to keep the utility lines accessible and 25mm base repair to extend the life of the paving. The paving will consist of a tack coat, a scratch coat and a final wearing coat. The road work will result in extending the useful life at least seven years.

The drafted Resolution to Apply, which will be formally considered and approved during the City Council meeting this evening, officially directs SEDA-COG to submit the application to the Department of Community and Economic Development on behalf of the City.

The Fair Housing Resolution for 2024 lists the number to call for any complaints or grievances regarding Fair Housing issues.

The Section 504 Drafted Resolution for 2024 names Robert Slaby as the official 504 Officer and contact for any 504 complaints.

There being no further comments, Ms. Troup adjourned the CDBG hearing.

MOTION BY: Kehler to approve CDBG projects and allocations for FFY 2024 funding consideration, as presented.

Second by: Duganitz

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

MOTION BY: Kehler to approve Resolution 2024-07 to submit the City of Shamokin FFY 2024 Community Development Block Grant Application to the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Second by: Duganitz

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

MOTION BY: Kehler to re-adopt the following resolutions and plan for the City of Shamokin, in accordance with the federal and state regulations of the Community Development Block Grant Program, as submitted by Tonia Troup of SEDA-COG: Resolution 2024-08: Section 504 Resolution; and Resolution 2024-09: Fair Housing Resolution; both previously adopted on July 10, 2023.

Second by: Duganitz

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

Betsy Kramer spoke on the Independence Street Downtown Makeover. Stromberg, Garrigan & Associates is the firm selected for the project. The total amount of the grant received from appropriations is \$2,675,000. While this will not fund the entire project, which is intended to cover the area at least from Shamokin Street to Market Street, or ideally to Sixth Street, Ms. Kramer will be requesting permission to apply for a PennDOT multi-modal grant in November to continue working on future phases of the project. PennDOT consultants are expected to work with the City in the near future to set up a steering committee. Ms. Kramer is also coordinating other street improvements including the railroad crossing at Independence and Shamokin Streets, the 8th Street bridge, and Aqua's water line project on Independence Street.

Ms. Kramer also discussed the kickoff of the Safe Streets For All project. During the first Safety Working Group meeting on August 2nd, possible discrepancies were noted between PennDOT's accident data and that of the local police and fire departments. The project team is working to verify this data, as

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it will impact the development of the action plan and funding application process. Ms. Kramer stated that a community event for public input is being planned as well.

Downtown Manager Bainbridge thanked everyone involved with National Night Out. The organizers are planning another event in the near future to make up for National Night Out having been cut short by rain. Mr. Bainbridge has received four proposals for the bridge at Volunteer Park. The City will be evaluating these proposals and making a selection this week. Mr. Bainbridge added that he is researching other grant opportunities which he will be bringing to Council's attention at the next meeting. Mr. Bainbridge also reminded the public that there are still funds available in the Façade Grant program for eligible property owners in the business district. Mr. Bainbridge reported that he has been continuing his training for his position, attending Downtown Center training in State College. He will be meeting this week in Shamokin with the director of the Downtown Center.

Matthew McMullen of Americorps Vista discussed the recent application for the MORE (Municipal Opportunities for Retrofits and Energy Efficiency) Grant, which would provide funds toward a Level 2 Energy Audit for City Hall and the American Legion Building. This project will focus on planning energy efficiency and sustainability improvements, and will include schematic design. Grant funds may also be applied toward a buydown should the City elect to pursue financing for the project.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION BY: Kehler to approve items #1-8 as listed on the agenda.

Second by: Duganitz

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

MOTION BY: Kehler to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2024-05, amending Chapter 44, Fire Bureau Ordinance.

Second by: Duganitz

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Kehler, Moyer

Nays: None

Absent: Ulrich

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

Tracy Petraskie addressed City Council concerning the condition of a neglected property in her neighborhood on Academy Hill, which she stated amounts to a severe health and sanitation issue, and violates waste management, animal control and vegetation control codes. In her remarks, Ms. Petraskie discussed the negative impact of code violations on the entire community. She pointed out that pests do

not respect property boundaries, and that infestations from the affected property have spread to her own home, leaving the financial burden of pest treatments to fall upon her and her family. Ms. Petraskie submitted photos of the property, showing build-up of trash and weeds. She added that the residents rely on space heaters, which she believes constitutes a fire hazard, and own multiple animals which they leave unattended in the home.

City Administrator Slaby informed Ms. Petraskie that he and Attorney Greco would meet with her personally to discuss her concerns in the near future. Ms. Moyer commented that when a situation becomes this egregious, it is important for citizens to be heard and for Council to try to offer a solution, which will be the objective of the meeting with Ms. Petraskie.

Bryan Linkoski addressed City Council to express his support for Ms. Petraskie, who resides across the street from him. Mr. Linkoski stated that he believes animal control should be involved as the owners of the neglected property own dogs that they allow to roam free without a leash.

R. Craig Rhoades spoke on the subject of city properties owned by Robert Gilligbauer and submitted images of two locations. Mr. Rhoades stated that the accumulation of trash, detritus, and abandoned vehicles on Mr. Gilligbauer's properties, especially the lot at Shamokin and Dewart Streets, is a hazard and a nuisance to the community, as the vehicles attract scavengers and stray cats, and pose a safety hazard to children playing in them. Mr. Rhoades referenced the actions taken by other communities in which Mr. Gilligbauer owns neglected properties and a past unsuccessful lawsuit against Mr. Gilligbauer.

City Administrator Slaby advised Mr. Rhoades that the City would reach out to discuss this issue with him further.

Robert Boyce commented on code violations and suggested that there may be a better chance of winning a case against violators if times, dates and infractions are recorded in detail. He expressed his own concern regarding property neglect in the City, and added that these kinds of violations are one of the pitfalls of owning a row home. Mr. Boyce also inquired as to the timeframe for completion of the Independence Street project. Ms. Kramer stated that the first phase only is expected to be completed in 2026. No streets will be torn up this winter unless in conjunction with other projects, such as the Aqua water line project.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting ended at 7:14 P.M.

Minutes taken by Valentine Mountjoy, Administrative Accountant