

THE CITY OF SHAMOKIN COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, September 9, 2024
6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER:

PLEDGE TO FLAG:

PRAYER:

ROLL CALL:

PRESENTATIONS:

Swearing in of K9 Chip.

BIDS:

CORRESPONDENCE:

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

MINUTES:

*Motion to accept the minutes of The City of Shamokin Council Meeting of August 12, 2024
(Regular Council Meeting).*

BILLS:

Motion to approve the bills from August 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:

NEW BUSINESS:

1. *Request a motion to approve Music in the Park Fall Festival on October 6, 2024 at Claude Kehler Park from 12:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.*
2. *Request a motion to approve the 2021 City of Shamokin Façade Grant Program Application of Frank W. Garrigan.*

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:****SOLICITORS REPORT:**

Request a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2024-10, Establishing Criteria for Obtaining Administrative Search Warrants Within the City of Shamokin.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

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

THE CITY OF SHAMOKIN COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, September 9, 2024
6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER:

PLEDGE TO FLAG:

PRAYER:

ROLL CALL: Moyer, Duganitz, Kehler, McLaughlin, Ulrich
Absent: None

PRESENTATIONS:

The new K9 officer, Chip, accompanied by his handler Corporal Alexis Temple, was duly sworn in by Mayor Ulrich.

Corporal Temple thanked the public for their support for the K9 program. Anyone interested in donating can address donations to the Shamokin Police K9 Program, or contact Corporal Temple or Administrative Clerk Amy Mulhall. Donations can also be made through Venmo and Paypal. New T-shirts will also be available for purchase soon.

BIDS:

CORRESPONDENCE:

The Solicitor explained that due to an oversight, the motion needed to approve the second reading of Ordinance 24-05, amending Chapter 44, Fire Bureau Ordinance. was not added to the agenda. A motion is needed to amend the agenda to add this item.

The City Administrator stated that he has received correspondence from Tonia Troup of SEDA-COG concerning the bid received for the removal of debris at 710-712 N. 6th St. As the bid was received on Monday, a motion to approve could not be added to the agenda prior to the meeting. A motion is needed to amend the agenda to add this item.

MOTION BY: Kehler to amend the agenda to add a motion needed to approve the second reading of Ordinance 24-05, Fire Bureau Ordinance; as well as a motion needed to approve bid to clean up 710-712 N. 6th St.

Second by: Duganitz

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

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Councilman McLaughlin inquired whether the letter from the EDA read at the last workshop should be included in the correspondence. The Solicitor and the City Administrator agreed that it should be recognized but that it does not raise any issues which require a vote. The City Administrator stated that he would make a copy of the correspondence.

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

MINUTES:

MOTION BY: Kehler to accept the minutes of the City of Shamokin Council Meeting of August 12, 2024 (Regular Council Meeting).

The Solicitor inquired as to whether there were minutes prepared for the Special Meeting of August 19, 2024. The Administrator replied that these will be available for approval at the next meeting.

Second by: Duganitz

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, Moyer, Kehler, Ulrich

Nays: None

Abstention: McLaughlin

Councilman McLaughlin abstained from the vote as he was not elected to Council at the time of the August 12 meeting.

BILLS:

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

Second by: Kehler

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, McLaughlin, Moyer, Kehler, Ulrich

Nays: None

DIRECTORS' REPORTS:

Accounts & Finance

Councilwoman Moyer presented the treasurer's report for the month of July. Total balances to August 1 are as follows: General Fund, \$884,898; Motor License, \$285,704.21; Library Fund, \$201,515.68; Sinking Fund 1: \$264,787.89; Recreation Fund, \$289,455.82; Street Lighting Fund, \$6,177.93; American Legion, \$93.84; Neighborhood Mitigation Fund, \$18,688.96; Code Department Credit Cards, \$3,914.50; Police Credit Cards, \$1,098.26. Total across all funds: \$1,956,326.09.

Councilman Duganitz inquired as to the notation "working on" found on the Treasurer's Report. Councilwoman Moyer replied that these items are in progress.

Councilman McLaughlin inquired as to whether the DCED loan is not included because it happened after August 1. Council confirmed this.

Parks and Public Buildings

Councilman Duganitz reported that the pool is now closed. 268 season passes were sold. There were two free swims and two night swims, with 1,274 attendees. 18 dogs participated in the dog swim. 4,599 pass holders and 6,089 non-pass holders visited the pool this year, for a total attendance of 10,688. The free lunch program during the months of June, July and August served 3,065 lunches. Councilwoman Moyer asked for a comparison to last year's attendance, but Councilman Duganitz stated that information is not available at this time. Councilman Duganitz thanked Chief Siko, the police department and all pool employees for their support. This was the pool's first year without Larry Strausser. The preparation of the pool's financial report is in progress.

Trick-or-treating this year will be on October 31st from 6-8 P.M., instead of on a weekend.

The 9/11 memorial ceremony commences at 7:00 P.M. Wednesday in front of City Hall. Councilman Duganitz thanked R. Craig Rhoades for his assistance with the preparations and added that former New York City firefighter Chris Edwards will be a guest speaker at the ceremony, with a book signing to follow at the Rescue Fire Company Museum.

Streets and Public Improvements

Councilman McLaughlin introduced himself to the public and gave a speech on transparency, respect and accountability in government. McLaughlin also stated that since his appointment to Council he has met with the Street Department and discussed their seasonal preparations such as leaf cleanup and pool winterization. A supply of salt and cinders is ready to go for the winter. McLaughlin added that he was impressed by the extensive responsibilities and excellent work performed by the Street Department in maintaining over twenty-six miles of roadway, as well as the various city parks, meters, and the pool. The Street Department is also responsible for basic maintenance on all their own vehicles and equipment.

Public Safety

The Code Department reported \$3,447.50 in revenue for the month of August and addressed 109 complaints.

Chief of Police

The Police Department reported 1,510 total calls for the month of August and 4,179 miles patrolled.

Chief Siko commented on the exceptional character of everyone who serves on the police force, which is currently hiring for a full-time police officer. He shared a letter from the Pennsylvania Firefighter's Association, recognizing volunteer firefighter Wesley Jordan, who is now a Shamokin patrolman. Jordan's actions in rescuing a fellow firefighter from entrapment on February 23, 2024 demonstrated exceptional service and valor in the line of duty, and prevented a tragedy.

The Chief thanked everyone for their assistance with National Night Out despite the fact that the event was curtailed by rain. The organizers have planned a second police recognition event, separate from National Night Out, which will provide an opportunity for the vendors to return. The event will take place on September 14 from 2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. at Claude Kehler Park.

Councilman Duganitz inquired as to the status of the graffiti investigation. The Chief replied that there has been an arrest made. Details about the charges have not been made public, but police are seeking to gather

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restitution costs. The Chief also commended Officer Roughton for his thorough investigation which led to an arrest.

SEDA-COG

Betsy Kramer discussed the \$500,000 in Congressional appropriations through HUD for the American Legion building. She has received a sample contract, but is still waiting on the preparation of a final contract. The building will need an environmental review and the State Historic Preservation Office will be involved before work can be commenced. In response to a question from the Treasurer Ms. Kramer responded that a bank account will probably need to be established as SEDA-COG will not be directly involved. Ms. Kramer added that the \$50,000 MORE grant was approved and that no account will be needed for that project. As to the Independence Street makeover, Stromberg, Garrigan & Associates are working on the plan and property owners have been notified. A public meeting for the Safe Streets for All project will be held October 3, 2024 from 6:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. at the Shamokin-Coal Township Public Library. The objective of this project is to create a safety action plan for city streets and traffic concerns. Citizen input is greatly needed to help supplement crash report data as the plan is developed. The public is encouraged to fill out a survey posted on the Shamokin Facebook page, GoShamokin, and around the city via QR code. About \$4M in various other grants is still pending. Justin Bainbridge discussed the progress of the Volunteer Park and bridge plan, for which Larson Design has been selected.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION BY: Moyer to approve Music in the Park Fall Festival on October 6, 2024 at Claude Kehler Park from 12:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

In response to an inquiry by Councilman McLaughlin, the motion was made contingent upon there being no conflict with any other events on that date. Councilwoman Moyer added that she believes the timeframe of the event was already changed to accommodate the Coal Region Winery's event.

Second by: Kehler

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, McLaughlin, Moyer, Kehler, Ulrich

Nays: None

Absent: None

MOTION BY: McLaughlin to approve the 2021 City of Shamokin Façade Grant Program Application of Frank W. Garrigan.

Councilman Duganitz inquired as to the 2021 date. The City Administrator and Justin Bainbridge replied the contract was initially drawn up in 2021 but has since been extended.

Second by: Ulrich

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, McLaughlin, Moyer, Kehler, Ulrich

Nays: None

Absent: None

MOTION BY: Duganitz to accept the bid of Robert Gusick for the cleanup of 710-712 N. Sixth Street, contingent upon review of the bid from SEDA-COG.

The City Administrator and Tonia Troup clarified that this bid is for the cleanup only, as the demolition has already taken place. The cleanup is being funded by grant money from SEDA-COG. The walls on the exterior of the connected houses will be separately funded from an additional source and should be done before winter. Councilman Duganitz asked whether action will be taken against the owner. Attorney Greco responded that there is a pending criminal case in county court and an outstanding bench warrant for the owner. The City may be able to place a lien on the property, but should the property be sold through a judicial sale, any liens would be extinguished. The City will need to take steps to acquire properties before they go to tax sales and ensure that any City liens remain in effect.

Second by: McLaughlin

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, McLaughlin, Moyer, Kehler, Ulrich

Nays: None

Absent: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

MOTION BY: McLaughlin to approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2024-10, Establishing Criteria for Obtaining Administrative Search Warrants Within the City of Shamokin.

Second by: Moyer

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, McLaughlin, Moyer, Kehler, Ulrich

Nays: None

Absent: None

MOTION BY: Duganitz to approve and adopt the second reading of Ordinance 2024-05, amending Chapter 44, Fire Bureau Ordinance.

Second by: Kehler

Councilman McLaughlin questioned whether the Fire Department approved this ordinance. Attorney Greco replied that they have and that their approval was a prerequisite before any action was taken.

ROLL CALL: Ayes: Duganitz, McLaughlin, Moyer, Kehler, Ulrich

Nays: None

Absent: None

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

James Kiehl thanked the City for addressing the hazardous condition of the property at 911-913 Clay Street. The work is on hold until it passes inspection. Mr. Kiehl expressed his appreciation for these efforts, but asked whether the City could have approached the matter differently and simply withheld approval for occupancy until the property is deemed up to code. The Code Officer replied that the matter is in the permit

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stage and that the inspector is waiting on engineering and architectural plans. Mr. Kiehl stated that he never met the property owner, but has heard from his own surveyors that the preparation of architectural plans will probably cost the owner about \$5,000, an additional expense on top of the substantial amount the owner has already put into building materials.

Councilman McLaughlin questioned the preparation of the meeting agendas and asked whether a proposed agenda could be provided to Council on the Thursday before the meeting. Attorney Greco commented that he usually receives a copy of the agenda before the meeting but overlooked the motion pertaining to the Fire Bureau Ordinance. The Treasurer added that anyone in attendance at the Wednesday workshop knows what will be on the agenda. Tonia Troup reminded Council that SEDA-COG did not receive the bids for the property cleanup until today, which is why that item was added to the agenda last-minute. McLaughlin replied that he understands the situation but feels that amendments to the agenda go against principles of transparency. Councilwoman Moyer stated she does not believe it is a matter of transparency, but that issues do arise that cause difficulties in coordination. Controller Kinder added that attempts have been made in the past to release a proposed agenda, but circumstances often prevent it, and there is only so much that can be accomplished with a limited amount of time and employees. Councilman McLaughlin commented that he assumes the agenda is complete by Friday, but the City Administrator pointed out that sometimes changes are being added on Saturday or even Sunday.

R. Craig Rhoades addressed Council on the Gilligbauer properties he discussed last month, stating that nothing has been cleaned up but that more vehicles have been added. Mr. Rhoades asked whether there was not an ordinance recently adopted concerning abandoned vehicles. Council replied that there was. The Solicitor stated that the City had a meeting with the police department to discuss Mr. Rhoades' concerns, but were unable to get the Chief's input as he was attending training out of town. Chief Siko stated that although an ordinance is in effect, it does not give police the authority to trespass on private property; the letter of the law must be followed. He does not believe any criminal charges have been generated at this time. However, the situation is being addressed, as is the issue of the feral cats. Mr. Rhoades stated that he hopes to see action taken as it affects not just the lot near his home but several locations throughout the city.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:23 P.M.

Minutes taken by Val Mountjoy, Administrative Accountant.