

DECEMBER 4, 2017 6:30 PM

REGULAR MEETING OF SWOYERSVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting called to order by Council President Ron Alunni

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call was taken, those present: Mr. Cwalina, Mr. Keating, Ms. O'Donnell, Mr. Olejnick, Mr. Onzik and Mr. Alunni. Also present was Mayor Concert. Atty. Yeager was absent.

A motion to accept the minutes of the November 6, 2017 meeting was made by Mr. Keating and seconded by Mr. Cwalina. The vote was 6-0 in favor.

Monthly bills totaling \$19,582.92 were paid on a motion made by Mr. Olejnick and seconded Mr. Cwalina. The vote was 6-0 in favor.

The 2018 annual budget was voted upon. The budget was made available for inspection for 10 days and advertised as the Borough Code requires. The budget keeps real estate taxes at 1.55 mills, no fee increases and no reduction in services. A motion was made by Mr. Onzik and seconded by Mr. Cwalina to pass the budget as presented. The vote was 6-0 in favor.

An ordinance setting the real estate tax millage for 2018 at 1.55 mills was adopted on a motion made by Mr. Keating and seconded by Mr. Cwalina. The vote was 6-0 in favor.

A resolution was passed authorizing the borough to submit a Local Share Account (Casino grant) for \$1,083,441 for road improvements on a motion made by Mr. Onzik and seconded by Mr. Keating. The vote was 6-0 in favor.

BOROUGH COORDINATOR'S REPORT

- Code Enforcement report for November; \$1,658.26 in fees was taken in
- A letter from Pennsylvania Family Council was read. The PA Family Council would like Swoyersville Council to pass a resolution prohibiting Category 4 casinos in the town. However, the resolution needs to be passed by December 31, 2017 and the letter was received on November 20, 2017. Council decided to hold off on any action with the resolution.
- A force main on Slocum Street needs to be repaired. Bids were solicited from 3 companies. After repeated attempts to get a bid from one of the companies the remaining 2 bids were opened:
Neal Lynn, Luzerne - \$7,612.00
Holena Excavating- \$4,970.00

There was discussion as whether or not Holena Excavating could do the job properly on a state road. Mike Amato, PennEastern Engineering, will review the bids to see if they address all aspects of the job. Amato suggested awarding the bid to the lowest, responsible bidder in the event the Holena bid does not include everything needed and required. A motion was made by Mr. Onzik and seconded by Mr. Olejnick to award the bid to Holena Excavating. In the event the Holena bid is invalid the lowest responsible bidder would be awarded the job, Neal-Lynn. The vote was 6-0 in favor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance: Mr. Olejnick: Read the October 2017 financial reports: General Fund: beginning checkbook balance: \$51,260.95; transfers and revenue for October: \$68,371.70; expenses and transfers for October \$106,492.82; ending checkbook balance: \$13,139.83. Liquid Fuels: beginning checkbook balance: \$172.52; transfers and revenue for October: \$5,300.11; expenses and transfers for October \$5,435.11; ending checkbook balance: \$37.52. Refuse Fund: beginning checkbook balance: \$14,434.17; transfers and revenue for October: \$23,752.22; expenses and transfers for October \$6,450.24; ending checkbook balance: \$31,736.15. Sanitary/Storm Sewer Assessment Fund: beginning checkbook balance: \$29,088.71; transfers and revenue for October: \$11,720.69; expenses and transfers for October \$28,959.52; ending checkbook balance: \$11,849.88.

Liaison Officer: Ms. O'Donnell: She thanked all residents, employees and council members during her 4 year term as council member. Her term is ending on December 31. Ms. O'Donnell said it was a pleasure serving everyone.

Street Department: Mr. Onzik: The Street Department is in need of a tractor for grass cutting. The current tractor is very old and costing a lot of money for repairs. Quotes were received from 3 area companies for a Zero turn tractor on state contract price: F&S Supply- \$10,804.69 was awarded the bid based on the fact that their model was a much superior tractor then other company's models. The maintenance required was much less, reliability and durability was greater. The Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority had purchased several of the machines in the past and is impressed by the quality of the tractor. A motion was made by Mr. Olejnick and seconded by Mr. Onzik to purchase the tractor for 2018. The vote was 6-0 in favor. Mr. Onzik thanked Gene Breznay; Mike Amato, PennEastern Engineering; the Street Department and all involved in the paving of Noyes Avenue and Tripp Street. The Street Department, starting the first of the year, will be issue uniforms. It is for safety of the employee as well as the residents. The residents will be able to recognize the uniform whenever a worker is on the street or doing work on the streets. Work boots will also be issued to the workers. Mr. Onzik made a motion to reinstate Russ Singer to borough's representative on the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority effective January 1, 2018. However, Mr. Keating said a position cannot be filled in advance so the motion was withdrawn.

Police Department: Mr. Keating: The Police report for November 2017 was read. There was no report for the amount of fines received for the month. A letter from Chief of Police Dave Latoski asked council to hire Richard Vaow, Scranton, as a part time police officer. Vaow has worked for the borough as a part time police officer in the past. A motion was made by Mr. Keating and seconded by Ms. O'Donnell to hire Vaow. The vote was 6-0 in favor.

Fire Department: Mr. Cwalina: Hose Company #2 is financially good. Having bingos and fundraisers to generate money; bills are being paid.

Mayor Concert: There will be a Santa parade throughout the town on December 17 starting a 2 PM; on December 11 there will be a menorah lighting on Borough grounds with Swoyersville resident Ed Connor; would like to have audio reports of council meetings so nothing is lost or overlooked when the meetings get a bit hectic, Mr. Breznay is doing a good job transcribing the minutes and this not a reflection on him. A proclamation was given to Administrative Secretary Shirley Gavlick for 40 years of service to the town. A letter from TransMed was sent to council about the Swoyersville Ambulance responses and problems; the ambulance owes TransMed \$5,200. Bob White, President of the Swoyersville Ambulance Association objected to the letter being sent to council, stating the letter has nothing to do with council.

Atty. Yeager: No report.

Mr. Breznay- Gave an update on the Harry E Coal Bank removal project. A meeting with borough officials, various state agencies, federal agencies and other local groups was held on Thursday, November 30. Rep. Kaufer was present as well as a representative from Sen. Yudichak's office. The meeting was to update everyone on the status of the project. If all goes well, the bank removal may start in 6 months. The borough will receive a 7 acre parcel in return for having the project in town; the parcel will be across from the Roosevelt Field. The removal of the bank will be done in phases and different loading stations will be needed in the project area, this will be worked out with the company and the borough. A Town Hall Meeting will be held in January to address questions or concerns residents and borough officials may have about the project. It will most likely be held at Swoyersville Hose Company #2 hall since attendance is expected to be large and the council room is too small to accommodate the anticipated large crowd; more on the date of the meeting to follow. There are approximately 8 million tons of coal refuse in the project area and will take about 12-15 years to remove it all. Joe Ruscavage, former zoning officer also remarked about the project and the transfer of property to the borough. The conveyance of the 7 acres of land will need to be taken care of first. Atty. Yeager will be given the contact's name and number at Pagnotti Enterprises to make the necessary arrangements. Without the conveyance of the land the project cannot move forward. The Borough will benefit greatly from the reclamation project as will the residents. As the planning of the project continues to move forward everyone will be kept informed on the latest developments.

Mayor Concert commented that the Swoyersville Ambulance financial situation continues to improve. The ambulance was further in debt in the past then they are currently. He will continue to try and do what he can to save the ambulance.

MEETING OPENED TO THE PUBLIC

Bob White, President, Swoyersville Ambulance Association- Talked about the letter from TransMed concerning calls and responses for the Swoyersville Ambulance; and the fact of the matter is the Swoyersville Ambulance is in distress. The ambulance averages over 500 calls per year. They are trying to pay all their bills as best as they can; they made a payment of \$2,500 to TransMed when they were asked to. Swoyersville residents always had ambulance service, either by Swoyersville or another ambulance and they will continue to do so. Their finances and books are in order and will be sending out the fund drive notices shortly. The money from the fund drive will go toward paying off TransMed completely. In the past certain employees did mismanaged funds. Investigations took place but no proof of any misappropriating funds could be found. The ambulance is in much better shape than it was in the past. Mr. Alunni questioned paying employees and much of the reason the ambulance financial condition is what it is in now. White said crews are all volunteers since April, but utilities, repairs to the truck, supplies costs money. The ambulance would like to buy the building because it has a lot of potential with the large hall. White feels the letter from TransMed is essentially a try at a hostile takeover and should have come to the ambulance not send the letter to council. White had remarked that the borough now gives \$20,000 per year to the 2 volunteer fire departments and questioned why doesn't the ambulance get the same? He asked council for a \$10,000 loan which would get them through the year. Mr. Keating said if the borough loans the ambulance \$10,000 and it is paid back with money from the subscription drive what will they do for money the rest of the year, back to square one again. White said the past fund drives were mismanaged. Mr. Onzik said the ambulance took money from Swoyersville residents without providing any service; White said of the 45 calls in November they went to 28. Mayor Concert- The \$10,000 loan would help with their past bills. Dave Prohaska, TransMed- Said this is not an attempt at a hostile takeover but just a letter about the calls and how many the ambulance responded to. There was a discussion about changing the BLS (Basic Life Support) Unit, but that action is for council to do only through Luzerne County 911

Center. TransMed would remain as the ALS (Advanced Life Support). White said that TransMed is a top notch ALS Unit.

Ann Marie Saunders, Milbre Street- In the past she has called for the ambulance numerous times for her husband but Swoyersville ambulance never showed, TransMed covered the calls instead.

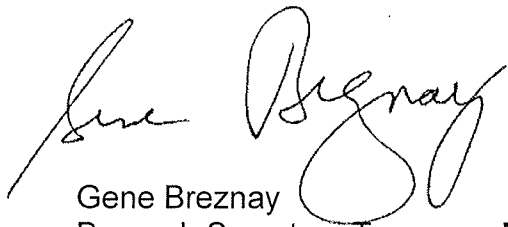
Kathy Breznay, President, Swoyersville Kiwanis Club- Asked council's permission for the Kiwanis Club to use the council room as a drop off location for a fundraiser on a Sunday and Monday late January and early February from 10 AM to noon. Council gave permission.

Mr. Cwalina noted there were 5 WWW students here to observe a council meeting as part of their civics class assignment. He asked them to come up and introduce themselves to everyone: Cameryn Forgash, Izabella Barber, Molly Moran, Samantha Gialanella and Serenity Black.

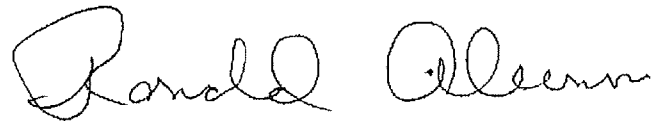
Mr. Lamereaux, 137 Jackson Street- TransMed does a great service but get the employees get paid for it. Volunteers, such as the ones for the ambulance, do not get paid.

Bob White, Swoyersville Ambulance- Said their tax problems have been straightened out. There are grant awards that are being held up because of the tax problems. The ambulance plans on adding 2 EMT's in the near future to cover the morning/afternoon hours. They will be paid \$9/hour and work 6 hour shifts, 7 days a week. There has been no paid crew since April 2017. White also explained that running an ambulance is not a cheap venture, there are many expenses that need to be paid to keep the ambulance functioning.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. O'Donnell and seconded by Mr. Olejnick. The vote was 6-0 in favor. Next meeting will be held on January 2, 2018, the reorganization meeting.



Gene Breznay
Borough Secretary-Treasurer-Manager



Ronald Alunni
Council President