

JULY 2, 2018 6:30 PM

REGULAR MEETING OF SWOYERSVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council President Alunni calls the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A moment of silence was observed for 1st Ward Council Member, Joe Onzik, who passed away on June 30.

Mayor Concert read a statement regarding the passing of Joe Onzik: Joe always had the best interest of the town at heart and would do what he could to help the residents. Even though a few did not see eye to eye with him on some issues, Joe would do his best to make sure the town's best interests were met.

Roll Call was taken, those present: Mr. Cwalina, Mr. Keating Mr. Olejnick and Mr. Alunni. Mr. Christian was absent. Also present were Mayor Concert and Atty. Yeager, Borough Solicitor.

A motion to accept the minutes of the June 4 and 12, 2018 meetings was made by Mr. Keating and seconded by Mr. Cwalina. The vote was 3-0 in favor. Mr. Olejnick abstained.

Monthly bills totaling \$30,934.54 were paid on a motion made by Mr. Olejnick and seconded Mr. Cwalina. The vote was 4-0 in favor.

BOROUGH COORDINATOR'S REPORT

- An update was given on the Harry E coal bank removal. The company removing the bank has submitted all the paperwork necessary to DEP for the permit and is waiting their approval. The target date for starting the removal is still July, August or September. As soon as the approval comes from the state they will contact the borough.
- The multimodal grant application for street paving is just about complete except for some technical drawings the engineer will provide. Support meetings from Sen. Yudichak and Rep. Kaufer have been arranged. The grant is for paving 13 roads throughout the town with a cost over \$1 million. Deadline for the grant is July 31.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance: Mr. Olejnick: Read the May 2018 financial reports: **General Fund:** beginning checkbook balance: \$41,874.42 transfers and revenue for the month: \$394,032.03; expenses and transfers for the month: \$299,545.89; ending checkbook balance: \$136,360.56. **Liquid Fuels:** beginning checkbook balance: \$50.14; transfers and revenue for the month: \$9,900.16; expenses and transfers for the month \$9,883.30; ending checkbook balance: \$67.00. **Refuse Fund:** beginning checkbook balance: \$27,105.35; transfers and revenue for the month: \$136,391.43; expenses and transfers for the month \$135,335.50; ending checkbook balance: \$28,161.28. **Sanitary/Storm Sewer Assessment Fund:** beginning checkbook balance: \$1,230.60; transfers and revenue for the month: \$35,563.25; expenses and transfers for the month \$36,443.26; ending checkbook balance: \$350.59. There is a vacancy on the Street Department and an advertisement was run looking for applications. Dakota Deininger, Kingston, was hired at a rate of \$10/hour on a motion made by Mr. Olejnick and seconded by Mr. Cwalina. The vote was 4-0 in favor.

Liaison Officer: Mr. Christian: Absent. No report.

Street Department:

Police Department: Mr. Keating: A letter from Chief Latoski was read and asked to hire Andrew LaBar, Nanticoke, as a part time officer. Background checks were done and all other qualifications were met. A motion was made by Mr. Keating and seconded by Mr. Olejnick to hire LaBar. The vote was 4-0 in favor. The Police report for June 2018 was read and the Crossing Guard's times were read. Fines totaling \$157.00 received for the month were placed in the proper fund on a motion made by Mr. Keating and seconded by Mr. Cwalina. The vote was 4-0 in favor.

Fire Department: Mr. Cwalina: No report.

Mayor Concert: Movie Night will be held on August 18 at Loveland Playground from 7 PM – 11 PM. The mayor reported about the change in the fireworks law. The state changed the laws concerning what types of fireworks are now considered legal and the criteria for purchasing fireworks. Also, the law states that fireworks cannot be set off no closer than 150 feet from any house or business.

Atty. Yeager: No report.

Mr. Keating asked for a representative of the Swoyersville Ambulance to appear before council. Wendy Specht, President, stepped forward. Mr. Keating asked who is on staff for the ambulance. There are a few EMT's and they recently hired 2 more EMT's. Mr. Keating asked why the call response amount is so low. Specht answered EMT's were in school and during the daytime, and being a volunteer organization, it is hard to get a crew. That number should rise in the coming months. Dayshift is covered Mon-Fri. Mr. Keating said there were 55 calls for the month and responded to 22% of them, but responded to quite a few of calls out of town. Trans Med handled 66% of the calls; too many. The recent bazaar took in a profit of \$1,142.00. Not too bad for first time according to Specht. Mr. Keating asked how much money was taken in for the subscription drive- \$28,000 was received. Mr. Keating questioned that the ambulance took money from the residents but the ambulance is not considered a nonprofit organization. Mr. Keating said the borough has been asking for an audit for years but never received one, the question is whether the audit is a regular one or forensic audit. Specht said she was not aware of that until recently and it is being looked into, and she said that there is about \$30,000 remaining on a loan taken out a few years ago and various other bills have either been paid off or paid down, Trans Med has been paid in full and is paid current. The rent for the building they are using is \$1,000/month; if they purchase the building there would be no bank involved and it would take 10 years for payment in full for the building. Specht said the ambulance is making progress and is self funded since it gets not support from the borough. Mr. Keating asked how they would pay for the building if call volume is down and not much money being brought in. Mr. Keating was told that if Swoyersville ambulance was dropped as a 1st responder it would cost the residents thousands of dollars if they needed an ambulance. He knows this because a person circulating a petition from the ambulance gave his wife this information. Mr. Keating said that the amount of money he has given to the subscription drive over the years totaled \$1,400.00. If Council put Trans Med in as a first responder it would cost a resident \$72 to have an ambulance respond after insurance (Medicare and private insurance) pays their portions. Mr. Keating made a motion to remove Swoyersville Ambulance as primary responder for Swoyersville. The motion was removed until the August 6 meeting. Atty. Yeager asked Specht about the part president, Kim Casterline and the money in the accounts, where did that go? Also, if you are set to hire drivers at \$10/hour and EMT's at \$12/hour how can that be done based on income. Paying for workers and not having a sufficient call volume is what got the ambulance in this bind to begin with. Mr. Keating also commented that the ambulance financial situation has been going downhill for 4 years. Again, Atty. Yeager said that the new hires would begin on August 1, but Specht said that date is not set in stone.

MEETING OPENED TO THE PUBLIC

Suzanne Koch- Thanked council for having the tree by her house cut down. But, the bigger problem, and ongoing problem, is the weed growth in the creek alongside her house, the weeds are still not cut. She said the borough had enough time to prepare and do something about the weeds. She talked to Mr. Breznay about this and he told her his job was finance not making arrangements for weed cutting. She did hear that the weeds won't be cut down until the end of August which is unacceptable. Perhaps it is time to hire someone to cut them instead of waiting for the inmates to do it each year. Mr. Breznay said it is coming to that.

Dave Zasada, 348 Main Street- Asked who is responsible for the storm drain at 360 Main Street, there is a problem with it. The Borough is responsible for maintenance on all storm drains in town. There is a pile of dirt too, if he can get a bucket he'll clean it up.

Celia Connor- She's been the treasurer for the Swoyersville Ambulance for 2-3 months. Bills are being paid on time. She questioned why someone didn't tell the ambulance about not holding a nonprofit status when they found out.

Barb Brody 67 Perrin Street- Had sewer line repaired in January and the pave cut from that repair is sinking. Mr. Breznay said he'll tell Jeff Zupko about it. Neil-Lynn, the company who did the work may be out to fix it. She was curious as why other cuts were fixed but not this one. The other pave cuts that were restored where water company pave cuts and they have a contractor fix them.

Mark Nenichka, 77 Brook Street- Seems like it's been council versus the ambulance for 3 years now as that is how long he's been hearing this by attending council meetings. He asked how much money is spent on emergency services and how much is given to the ambulance; he said the ambulance needs borough support as they currently receive nothing from the borough.

Larry Kruczka, 32 Jay Street- When turning from Kossack Street o Jay Street cars are parked near the Jay Street corner making the turn difficult. Can that be looked into to try and correct this before there's an accident?

Charles West, Chief Operations Manager, Swoyersville Ambulance- Borough liaison officer does not come to meetings. Asked if there was a vendetta against the ambulance and asked council for more time to straighten things out and show some improvement. He questioned council's relationship with Trans Med, and asked if council members are getting money from Trans Med. He sent a letter to Atty. Yeager's office detailing the plan. Atty. Yeager said he did not have the letter with him. West said money is given to the fire departments; council should support the ambulance and give them some money, why don't they get any money; they will make it work.

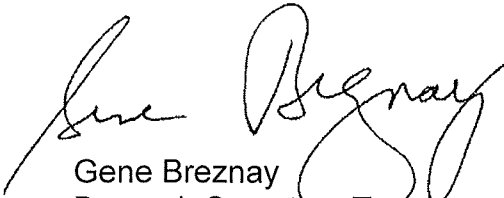
Council went into an executive session at 7:40 PM and returned at 7:50 PM.

Mr. Alunni announced that Mr. Cwalina will now be the liaison officer for the Swoyersville Ambulance.

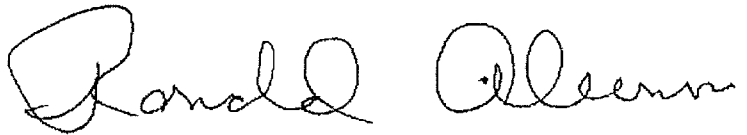
Mayor Concert stated that it was written that he wanted to shut the ambulance down and does not support them. The mayor wanted it on record that that is not true. He has done as much as he could to support the ambulance and attend their fundraisers. So it is completely false he wanted them shut down.

With the passing of Mr. Onzik, there is a vacancy in the 1st Ward on council. Council will accept letters of interest from any resident who qualifies for the council seat and the vacancy will be filled at the August 6 meeting. **(It should be noted that after checking with Harrisburg, there will be a special meeting on July 24 to fill the vacancy since August 6 would have been too late, there is a 30 day period to fill the vacancy.)**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Cwalina and seconded by Mr. Olejnick. The vote was 4-0 in favor. Next meeting will be held on August 6, 2018.



Gene Breznay
Borough Secretary-Treasurer-Manager



Ronald Alunni
Council President

JULY 24, 2018 6:00 PM

SPECIAL MEETING OF SWOYERSVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council President Alunni calls the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call was taken, those present: Mr. Christian, Mr. Cwalina, Mr. Keating Mr. Olejnick and Mr. Alunni. Also present were Mayor Concert and Atty. Yeager, Borough Solicitor.

The purpose of the meeting is to fill the vacancy in the 1st Ward as the result of the passing of Joe Onzik.

The residents from the 1st Ward interested in the vacancy are: Shawn Brown, George Prehatin, Deborah Layaou, Patricia O'Donnell and Joseph Opsitos.

Each interested resident was asked to give their background and a little about themselves.

Shawn Brown, 32 Poland Street: He is a police officer for the past 23 years for Edwardsville Borough; He is familiar with police contracts negotiating them and policy making and; has lived in town for the past 15 years; lived at his present house for 8-9 years. He is here for the people and will do what is good for the borough. Mr. Christian asked if he had experience with negotiating police contracts which he has.

George Prehatin: Not present.

Deborah Layaou, 218 Owen Street: Lifelong resident of Swoyersville; served on council for 20 years; is a registered voter; she meets all the qualifications for the position.

Patricia O'Donnell, 419 Hughes Street: Served on council for the past 4 years; retired police chief of Luzerne; served on various ambulance organizations as an EMT; police officer for 18 years; worked with Bloomsburg Police and 2 fire departments; was on Swoyersville Council for the past 4 years and would like to serve again. Mr. Christian asked that since her husband is a borough police officer is it okay for her to be on council. She replied she checked into it and if there is any disciplinary action against her husband she would abstain from any voting. She said Mr. Breznay checked with the Pennsylvania Association of Boroughs about this. Mr. Breznay said they would not comment about this and the person themselves would need to contact the Ethics Commission and informed Ms. O'Donnell about this. Mr. Keating said that in addition to any disciplinary action regarding her husband and issues or actions involving the police department she would need to abstain. Mr. Olejnick asked if he was just part time, no he has a full time job at Wilkes. Ms. O'Donnell also said she is Swoyersville EMS Director.

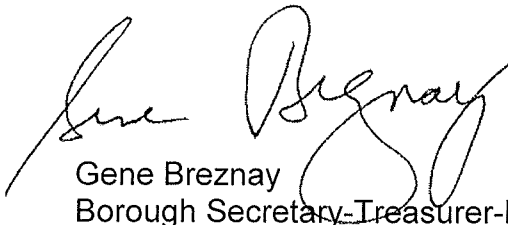
Joseph Opsitos, 40 Brown Street: 55 year life resident of Swoyersville; served on Borough Council in the 3rd Ward but got married and had to move out of the ward; serves in the past 20 years as Civil Service Commission; registered republican and at the time there were 4 democrats and republicans but did what was best for the town; was on council when the new borough garage was built and switched to 911; wants to give his time back to the town; Mr. Christian asked if being on the Civil Service Commission would be a problem is appointed to council, Mr. Opsitos answered that if it was a conflict he would resign the Civil Service position.

Mr. Alunni asked if there were anyone else in the audience who wants to be considered for the position. No one came forward.

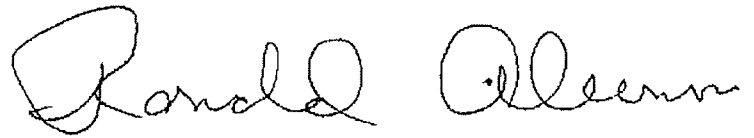
A motion was made by Mr. Christian to appoint Shawn Brown to the vacant council seat. Motion died for a lack of a second.

A motion was made by Mr. Olejnick and seconded by Mr. Cwalina to appoint Patricia O'Donnell to the vacant council seat. On the question Mr. Christian questioned whether or not there was a conflict of interest since Ms. O'Donnell's husband is a police officer. Atty. Yeager said that she should abstain from any police matters that council votes on. The vote was 3 in favor (Mr. Cwalina, Mr. Olejnick and Mr. Alunni) and 2 against (Mr. Christian and Mr. Keating.) Motion carried. Ms. O'Donnell was named to fill the vacancy.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Cwalina and seconded by Mr. Olejnick. The vote was 5-0 in favor. Next meeting will be held on August 6, 2018.



Gene Breznay
Borough Secretary-Treasurer-Manager



Ronald Alunni
Council President