

# CASTLE SHANNON BOROUGH MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

December 28, 2020

The December 28, 2020 meeting of the Castle Shannon Borough Council was held as a virtual meeting using Zoom Meeting technology in compliance with the disaster emergency proclamation of the Governor of Pennsylvania related to the coronavirus pandemic, including the closure of non-essential businesses, stay-at-home order and social distancing directives.

The following elected officials were present: R. Astor; M. Heckmann; N. Kovach; J. Maloney; B. Oates; M. Randazzo; D. Swisher; D. Baumgarten; E. O'Malley. The following appointed officials were present: K. Truver, Police Chief; D. Biondo, Solicitor; P. Vietmeier, Codes Official. Borough Manager T. Hartswick and Junior Council Representative A. Lyda was absent.

The minutes of the December 14, 2020 Council Meeting were presented. Ms. Randazzo motioned to approve the minutes; Mr. Swisher seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Real Estate Tax Collector:** Ms. O'Malley reported that year end real estate payments are being received.

## **Council Committee Reports**

**Public Relations/Communications:** Mr. Heckmann stated that COVID-19 vaccines are now available for healthcare workers and emergency medical staff. Chief Truver is working with the county to identify timelines for vaccine distribution to police officers. People in the healthcare field are expecting a difficult January due to holiday get-togethers, thereby spreading the pandemic. We urge people to abide by federal and state encouragements for safety by social distancing and limiting group gatherings.

**Building & Grounds/Public Works** – Mr. Maloney reported that the public works department has been diligent in snow removal from borough roadways, and he personally commended them on their dedication. Chief Truver stated that Public Works Foreman Bob Ausman has a great work ethic and is working with a reduced crew. Mr. Astor added that social media posting have many accolades for our road crew.

**Public Safety/Fire** – Mr. Astor noted two commendable actions posted in council's mail. Chief Truver described the incidents which commended Officer Kress for his diligence on a crime investigation utilizing the license plate reader system and Officer Recker on deescalating a threatening situation with a resident with mental health issues.

Mr. Heckmann thanked the Castle Shannon Volunteer Fire Department for hosting Santa while he visited borough streets on the fire truck.

Mr. Astor motioned to authorize the appropriate officials to execute the proposed collective bargaining agreement between Castle Shannon Borough and the Service Employees International Union Local 32 BJ for 2021-2024; Mr. Swisher seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Finance** – Mr. Swisher reviewed the check register for December 16<sup>th</sup> and had no further questions. Ms. Kovach motioned to approve the check registers for December; Mr. Maloney seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Community Activities/Planning and Codes** – Mr. Vietmeier noted that recently the number of house sales has increased.

Letters were mailed to residents that failed to remove snow from their sidewalks.

**Library** – Ms. Randazzo stated that the library continues with curbside and lobby pick-up.

The library has prepared several free “Homey” New Year kit bags for staying at home this year.

**MRTSA** – Mr. Heckmann stated the board passed a deficit budget due to a number of constraints. Transports are down which reduces revenue, and the reimbursement rate from healthcare and government plans continues to lag at approximately 40% of the cost. On a positive note, authorities are eligible for personal protective equipment loans. Despite these difficulties, MRTSA continues to maintain a full staff and is hiring emergency medical technicians.

Mr. Swisher added that some construction activities have been delayed for the winter. The roof project will be completed mid-March.

Starting in January, it will be Castle Shannon’s turn to provide a chairman for the MRTSA board. Mr. Heckmann will serve as Chairperson on the 2021 MRTSA Board of Directors. Dormont’s Mayor Jason Walsh will serve as Vice Chair.

**SHACOG** – Mr. Oates stated that the November board meeting was cancelled; however, the board participated by providing mail in votes on topics to close out the year. The January meeting may be held virtually.

Mr. Astor motioned to appoint Bill Oates as delegate to the board of directors and Ms. Kovach as alternate; Ms. Randazzo seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Manager:** Mr. Heckmann stated council is finalizing Thomas Hartswick’s employment with the borough. Council thanked Mr. Hartswick for his many years of service and some of the great work he has done. In addition, council wishes him the best as he transitions into his new opportunities. Ms. Kovach motioned to authorize the appropriate officials to execute an employment agreement and release for Thomas Hartswick; Mr. Maloney seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Ms. Randazzo is spearheading the plan to fill the manager’s position. A personnel committee meeting was held today, and the job description is being finalized. The plan is to reach out to some professional organizations for distribution. Council encourages interested parties to apply.

Mr. Maloney motioned to approve IRS recommended amendments to the borough’s FSA Section 125 Plan; Mr. Astor seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Mayor's Report:** Mayor Baumgarten received a telephone call from Senator Wayne Fontana, who was happy to announce that the borough received a \$700,000 RCAP grant through the governor's office to complete a section of the streetscape project. Mayor Baumgarten commended Tom Hartswick for enlisting an appraisal company to assess the valuation of property to use as a match for the grant. Mayor Baumgarten discussed the project with our local legislators at a recent political rally to engage their support. Mayor Baumgarten thanked Tom Hartswick for his dedication in obtaining this grant in addition to Senator Wayne Fontana, State Representative Dan Miller, and Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald for their support.

Mr. Heckmann described the sections targeted for streetscape improvements with two approved grants. The recent grant award will allow for the continuity of design aesthetic, the infrastructure, the street furniture, etc. throughout the corridor.

**Public Comment:** Jon Solosky of 920 Maple Avenue asked about installing speed bumps on local streets to slow traffic. Chief Truver will respond to this inquiry.

**Other:** Mr. Heckmann responded that Council will meet in executive session to discuss a personnel matter.

Ms. Kovach motioned to adjourn; Ms. Randazzo seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Approved as presented this 11th day of January 2021.

---

Loretta J. Miller  
Assistant Manager

---

Mark J. Heckmann  
President