**CASTLE SHANNON BOROUGH**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

February 27, 2023

The following elected officials were present: M. Heckmann, J. Maloney; R. Astor; N. Kovach; W. Oates; M. Randazzo; D. Swisher; D. Baumgarten; E. O’Malley. The following appointed officials were present: K. Stringent, Borough Manager; K Truver, Police Chief; P. Vietmeier, Codes Official; D. Biondo, Solicitor.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the February 13, 2023 council meeting were presented. Ms. Randazzo motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Maloney seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Public Comment – Agenda Items:** No comments were received; therefore, the public comment section was closed.

**Bid Openings:** Ms. Stringent presented results of the bid opening of February 9th for Phase I Library Improvements – Hardscape and Prospect Park Landscaping Wall Project. Three add alternate bills were received for the focal point at the library seat wall. Mr. Swisher reviewed the bid package and noted that four add alternates were originally proposed. Ms. Stringent advised that add alternate four was eliminated because it would not be aesthetically pleasing. Mr. Swisher also noted that Lucia Palombo was not attested on page six of the bid documents. Mr. Swisher also stated that he would like to have a hard copy of bids submitted to the borough office for review. Ms. Stringent recommended awarding the base bid of $149,572 and Add Alternate #1 of $7,200 to the lowest responsible bidder – Palombo Contracting Inc. once the contract documents are attested. Mr. Maloney motioned to accept the manager’s recommendation. Mr. Swisher seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Real Estate Tax Collector:** Ms. O’Malley reported that the borough 2023 real estate tax bills have been mailed, and funds are being received.

**Council Committee Reports**

**Public Relations/Communications –** Ms. Stringent announced that the summer recreation program will be moving from Hamilton Park to Riehl Park this year. A tent will be rented to provide additional space and cover. The program will run from June 22nd to July 27th. Registration dates in May are to be determined. More information will be available on the borough’s website and Facebook page.

Due to construction at Hamilton Park this year, Community Day will be combined with the Castle Shannon Volunteer Fire Department Carnival from Wednesday, July 26th through Saturday, July 29th. Food vendors and bands will be participating.

Ms. Stringent, Bob Ausman and Chief Truver met with Columbia Gas representatives to discuss their legacy cross-bore program, i.e., televising of sanitary and storm sewer lines in the borough to determine if gas lines are going through sewer lines/laterals. Traffic impact will be minimal. The contractor for Columbia Gas is Hydromax. More information is available on the borough’s website and Facebook page. Concerned residents can contact borough administration or the police department.

Ms. Stringent thanked Senator Brewster for hosting a welcome to the district dinner. Ms. Stringent, Ms. Kovach, and Mr. Astor attended from the borough. Paul Salvayon and Mike Warhold attended representing the CSRC. Borough and CSRC representatives are looking forward to working with Senator Brewster. Ms. Stringent noted that a representative from Senator Brewster’s office will be available at the borough’s municipal building the third Monday of each month to meet with residents and officials.

Ms. Stringent urged residents to visit the borough’s Facebook page and website. The information is updated regularly by Victoria Copenheaver, Community Engagement Coordinator, who is also creating e newsletters each month. Ms. Copenheaver will also be creating the semi-annual newsletter and digitization of the administration office and a welcome folder and a talent bank form for volunteers interested in serving on the borough’s various boards.

**Buildings & Grounds/Public Works** – Mr. Maloney stated that the public works staff have expressed interest in attending CPR/AED training through MRTSA. Borough administration employees and members of the CSYA are interested also.

Public works crews continue to televise sanitary sewer lines and are removing equipment from parks for future renovations.

Mr. Maloney motioned to post a surplus vehicle (a 2013 Ford F550 dump truck) on Municibid for sale. Ms. Oates seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Maloney motioned to post the crack-sealing machine for sale on Municibid. Ms. Randazzo seconded. Ms. Kovach questioned future crack-sealing programs. Ms. Stringent answered that a crack-sealing machine would be rented.

**Public Safety** – Mr. Astor reported that on February 13th, the CSVFD had a quarterly drill with both Mt. Lebanon Fire Department and Dormont Fire Department at the Pittsburgh Regional Transit Building in Bethel Park. Topics covered were: 1) how to respond to emergencies involving PRT light rail cars and the PRT electric buses and 2) a hands-on anatomy of PRT light rail cars and the new PRT electric buses.

On February 20th, CPR certifications and recertifications were held for CSVFD members.

For outside training, SHACOG held two fire training sessions in both the Fireman Hall and Memorial Hall. On February 2nd, an instructor from Mercy Behavioral Health discussed peer support for firefighters. On February 25th, instructors from FDNY and PBF taught classes on lithium-ion batteries and the risk to first responders.

Mr. Astor noted that the fire department responded to 25 total calls in January with 16 in Castle Shannon. In February, the department responded to 14 total calls, of which 9 were in Castle Shannon.

Fire Chief Bill Reffner continued the CSVFD report and displayed a $10,000 equipment cutter tool that was purchased. The cutter has a capacity of 312,000 cutting strength for vehicle accidents. It replaced a cutter that was very cumbersome and 17 years old.

Chief Reffner noted that lithium-ion batteries are now used for cars, electric bikes, scooters, lawn mowers, weed cutters, etc. and have a very high risk of thermal runaway for fires from damaged batteries or overcharged batteries. Over 160 firemen from many municipalities attended the SHACOG class held at the Memorial Hall.

The CSVFD has applied for several grants in 2023: State Fire Commissions Grant, Fire House Subs First Responders Grant, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighter Grant, and a NiSource Grant (Columbia Gas). The CSVFD has reached out to Senator Brewster for support of these grants. Ms. Stringent offered to compose a letter of support from the borough.

On January 24th, a house fire occurred on Broadway Avenue. The CSVFD received aid from Mt. Lebanon and Whitehall. No injuries occurred to civilians or fire fighters.

Ms. Kovach asked about preparedness for a train derailment since trains run through Castle Shannon. Chief Reffner responded that in 2022, representatives of the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad conducted a safety course with our fire department and neighboring fire departments. A flow study was prepared for the train running through the borough, and nothing was hazardous. This course will be conducted again in 2024. Chief Reffner has contacts for both CSX and Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroads. The hazmat team worked on a model train last summer in Green Tree for a weekend of training. Chief Truver questioned in an emergency train situation what mutual aid would be contacted and questioned their response time. Chief Reffner responded that the hazmat team would be assembled immediately, and mutual aid requests would be sent to Allegheny County, Bethel Park, Mt. Lebanon, Whitehall, and the City of Pittsburgh. Chief Truver noted we would receive immediate help from many agencies.

Chief Truver stated that the police department’s community outreach software is now RAVE Mobile for messaging by phone and social media. On Friday, an auto dialer will send a message stating that this is a test of the Castle Shannon Community Notification System. A URL will be created for residents to subscribe to sign up for emergency notifications.

Also, for community outreach, Chief Truver discussed a Convey 911 program for marginalizing non-English speaking residents to text to non-emergency lines at the police department or borough administration to get information on permits and parking. There will be a utility where police officers can use it in the field on a cell phone to text a nearby person, and the program will automatically respond in a language they speak. This would be a great assistance to our officers and non-English speaking residents.

There are video surveillance cameras at the library, Hamilton Park, and the borough building. The police department has been beta testing new technology of cameras for better utility and functionality. Two proposals were received for camera surveillance equipment at Riehl Park. Chief Truver recommends accepting the proposal for $11,663.35 for the Verkada camera by Reliant. This includes a 10-year warranty with facial and vehicle analytics to aid in investigations. Ms. Kovach motioned to approve the proposal by Reliant. Ms. Randazzo seconded; all in favor; motion carried. Chief Truver would like to upgrade cameras currently installed in the other locations.

Mr. Heckmann presented Ordinance #935 amending Ordinance #809 regulating the operation of motor vehicles and traffic and providing general traffic and motor vehicles regulations; to further establish a stop intersection on Smith Road at Willow Avenue in Castle Shannon. Mr. Heckmann opened the public hearing. Chief Truver noted that this ordinance was prepared due to a recommendation from a traffic study done by Trans Associates for Willow Avenue. Ms. Kovach noted that the ordinance does not appear to contain traffic calming measures. Chief Truver stated that there were no recommendations from the engineering firm regarding traffic calming. A speed monitor was placed on Willow Avenue for over month, and the data did not indicate an issue. Mr. Heckmann closed the public hearing. Mr. Astor motioned to adopt Ordinance #935. Mr. Swisher seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Finance** – Mr. Swisher reviewed the check registers for February 17th and February 24th and had no further questions. Mr. Swisher motioned to approve the check registers for February. Mr. Astor seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Community Activities/Planning and Codes** – Mr. Vietmeier stated that rental registrations are due at the end of March. Along that line, Debbie Bieber of Allegheny County 911 advised that multi-unit commercial buildings (strip malls) must have doors clearly marked with unit/suite numbers for the county’s new database.

Mr. Heckmann announced that a vacancy exists for a part-time or full-time codes official. Information will be posted on the borough’s website and Facebook page.

**Library –** Ms. Randazzo recognized Ms. Donna Phillips, President of the Library Board of Trustees, who attended the meeting. The next board meeting will be March 2nd.

Both the library board and staff are very excited for the renovations that are coming to the library. The library board is working on new endeavors, and they have a dynamic group of individuals who work well together.

The library has a website survey posted to determine interest in the library hosting a twelve-week session (2-hour classes) in U.S. citizenship.

The library will hold a fundraiser at Primanti’s on Washington Road on March 30th with twenty percent of sales being donated to the library. Use code DINE2DONATE or download the flyer at the library’s website.

Ms. Randazzo reported that the Little Free Pantry is increasing in use.

Ms. Stringent acknowledged the library’s financial contribution to the library’s improvements and thanked them for being such good partners for the community. Ms. Randazzo agreed that we have a good working relationship and can do great things when partnered together.

**MRTSA** – Mr. Heckmann stated that Castle Shannon Police Officers Recker and Platt were honored at a recent board meeting for their actions in a cardiac arrest save at the Ice Castle. Statistics show that a cardiac arrest success save rate is 8%; however, in the MRTSA area the success rate is 36% because of the excellent equipment, extensive training, and quick response time.

**SHACOG** – Mr. Oates attended the Board of Directors Meeting held February 16th in Mt. Lebanon. Mt. Lebanon Fire Chief Nicholas Sohyda gave a presentation on the status of fire departments and creative ways to provide incentives to volunteers.

Board members discussed the 2024 Solid Waste Contract which is proposing automated collection in most areas. Kevin Brannon, Home Avenue attended the council meeting and noted that on Home Avenue residents park vehicles on both sides of the street; and an automated system may not be feasible for residents with several tiers of steps between their home and the street. Mr. Oates replied that some communities will use a hybrid system of both mostly automated and non-automated collection for different streets. Mr. Oates added that the size of the cans does vary making them easier to carry.

**MS4:** Ms. Stringent stated that the borough is required to complete a pollution reduction plan by the end of 2023. The last easement agreement was secured for the Saw Mill Run Pollution Reduction Plan project. Bids will be opened March 8th.

**Public Comment:** Bryan Gigliotti, Poplar Avenue – stated the CSYA’s enrollment numbers are very good this year with numerous teams of all ages. The annual Kick-Off Party will be held April 1st at the fire hall from 6 pm to 11 pm. Good food, music, refreshments, and raffle baskets are planned.

The CSYA Annual Golf Outing will be held October 7th at the Butler Golf Course. The CSYA is very happy to be partnering with the borough on this event. The event budget and financial costs are being finalized.

Numerous families have contacted Mr. Gigliotti regarding the summer recreation program. It will be held at Riehl Park this year. Information will be posted on the Castle Shannon Summer Recreation Facebook page and borough’s Facebook page. Ms. Kovach suggested having buses available for transportation to the program. Mr. Gigliotti noted that most children do not walk to the program, and transportation is not an issue.

Carolyn Marsili, Rebecca Street – stated that many of her neighbors do not use social media and are unaware of plans for Hamilton Park. She is excited for the park improvements but concerned about safety in the park and parking/traffic going in and out of the park. Ms. Marsili suggested updating the map in the park to show the proposed improvements and would like to explore other ways to get information out to the neighboring residents. Mr. Heckmann advised that borough council meetings are open to residents to ask questions or provide concerns. In addition, the library has many resources available to residents, and residents can call or visit the borough offices for updates. A public meeting could be held once the construction calendar is finalized; however, information will be provided in the spring newsletter that will be mailed to homes in April.

Dave Seiler, Arch Avenue – discussed the e-newsletter that is being provided to residents. Mr. Seiler was disappointed to see that the traditional castle logo was not used, and the name of the newsletter is “Shannon News”. The borough has been Castle Shannon since 1919.

Debbie Gallo, Lyndell Street – was an original member of the Six Parks Plan Committee and asked council to reconsider the installation of a turf field at Hamilton Park. Ms. Gallo had several independent scientific studies that concluded that: 1) a turf field is more dangerous for causing injuries; 2) the composition provides chemical exposure through micro dust; and 3) the surface retains heat which is a danger for heat stroke. Ms. Gallo noted that a grass field does not cause these additional health problems. In summary, Ms. Gallo stated that a turf field is less attractive, and a grass field is always the best option. Ms. Gallo asked council to accept her reports and consider voting to change the field surface back to grass. Mr. Heckmann noted that council will accept copies of her research. Many athletic fields are using turf instead of grass, and borough representatives have made site visits to communities with turf fields. The newer turf fields and subbases are made with different engineering than the Astroturf designed ten years ago.

Bryan Gigliotti – stated as a physical education teacher for 17 years, he has been using turf fields. The injury rate during his classes was below 1%, and there were no issues related to field temperature from heat. Mr. Gigliotti believes that installing a turf field at Hamilton Park is one of the best things to happen for this borough.

Mr. Heckmann closed the public comment section.

**Other Business**: Mr. Astor will be attending the Allegheny County Southwest Tax Collection District meeting next week.

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

Approved as presented this 13th day of March 2023.

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Katie M. Stringent Mark J. Heckmann

Borough Manager Council President