

**CASTLE SHANNON BOROUGH  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

November 13, 2023

The following elected officials were present: N. Kovach, D. Swisher; W. Oates; M. Randazzo; D. Seiler; D. Baumgarten; E. O'Malley. The following appointed officials were present: M. Foote, Borough Manager; K. Truver, Police Chief; P. Vietmeier, Code Official; D. Biondo, Solicitor; J. Stanton, Borough Engineer.

**Public Notice:** Ms. Kovach announced that council met in executive session on October 30<sup>th</sup> for the purpose of collecting information on educating agency members about an issue; November 6<sup>th</sup> to address personnel and collective bargaining matters; and this evening at 6:00 pm for the purpose of collecting information or educating agency members about an issue.

Mr. Foote announced that agenda item VII A 2 will be moved to new business, and agenda item VII B will be removed.

**Public Comment – Agenda Items:** Jerry Coombs, Belleville Street – asked a question regarding Hamilton Park, and Mr. Biondo responded.

Mr. Coombs questioned if residents would be notified about the new trash contract and regulations/restrictions. Mr. Foote answered that once the contract is approved later this evening, the borough will be working with Waste Management's marketing department to provide residential information.

Mr. Coombs suggested that free public parking signs be installed at the former Vitte's property. Ms. Kovach noted that business owners are advising their customers about the available parking. Mr. Foote stated that this subject will be reviewed internally.

Bryan Gigliotti, Poplar Avenue – revisited a problem with raccoons in his neighborhood from a nearby home that is dormant. Neighbors have to secure their garbage cans with weights to keep the raccoons out, and a dead raccoon was found on his neighbor's property. Mr. Vietmeier stated that he has visited the property in question several times. The dormant house is on a list for condemnation, and the property owner can be contacted about the animals. The borough manager will meet with staff on this subject.

Mr. Gigliotti stated that the library is a gem of the borough and needs to publicize more. The staff does a wonderful job and has many programs for children.

Mr. Gigliotti reported that he and Tom Beck had a great meeting with Mr. Foote, and the CSYA looks forward to working with him and borough council in the future.

Ms. Kovach responded that library information is published in the newsletter and via emails and social media, and Ms. Randazzo does a good job with public relations for the library. Ms. Randazzo stated the library board is working towards being more innovative and forward-thinking into programming. Ms. Randazzo appreciated Mr. Gigliotti's comments and stated that the library has a very strong Board of Trustees who are very enthusiastic and want to do great things.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the October 23, 2023 council meeting were presented. Mr. Swisher motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Oates seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Administration:** Ms. Kovach presented Resolution #733 to appoint Keven Brannon as council member. Ms. Kovach explained that this term will end in January when the newly elected officials take office. Mr. Swisher motioned to adopt Resolution #733 and appoint Kevin Brannon to fill the vacancy of council member Jason Maloney. Mr. Seiler seconded; all in favor; motion carried. Mayor Baumgarten proceeded to give Mr. Brannon the oath of office.

**Bid Opening & Contracts:** Mr. Foote presented the Articles of Agreement for a five-year solid waste collection, removal, and disposal service from Waste Management. Mr. Oates motioned to authorize the council president and borough secretary to execute the contract. Mr. Swisher seconded. Mr. Brannon abstained. Motion carried.

Ms. Kovach presented Resolution #735 to request a Local Share Assessment grant to be used for planning and community engagement for the Vitte's property. Mr. Foote explained that since the property is now public domain the best course of action would be to hire a consultant to implement a plan. Mr. Swisher motioned to adopt Resolution #735 and authorize the council president and borough secretary to submit the grant application and execute all documents related to the Vitte's Project.

Ms. Kovach presented Resolution #736 to request a Local Share Assessment grant in the amount of \$365,000 for pedestrian bridge improvements on Smith Road. Mr. Foote related that there was some community input regarding needed improvements for this bridge; therefore, staff worked with the borough engineers to pursue this grant. Mr. Seiler motioned to adopt Resolution #736 to authorize the council president and borough secretary to submit a grant application and execute all documents related to the Smith Road Pedestrian Bridge Improvement Project. Mr. Oates seconded; all in favor; motion carried. Mr. Swisher noted that Mr. Stout and Mr. Brooks listed their concerns about this bridge at the October 23<sup>rd</sup> council meeting.

Ms. Kovach presented Resolution #737 for a Community Development Block Grant to address blighted properties. Mr. Swisher motioned to adopt Resolution #737 and the concurring resolution to submit a grant application and execute all documents related to an Allegheny County Economic Development Grant to address blighted properties in the borough. Mr. Oates seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Ms. Kovach presented Resolution #738 appoint Michael Moog as Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Swisher noted that Mr. Moog was hired for this position. Mr. Biondo advised that the commonwealth requires a record of all appointed code officials for enforcement of citations through the courts. Mr. Swisher motioned to adopt Resolution #738 to appoint Michael Moog as Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Seiler seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Real Estate Tax Collector:** Ms. O'Malley reported October collections of \$11,144.13 with year-to-date collections of \$3,796,950.95. Letters will be mailed to property owners for delinquent real estate taxes.

## **Council Committee Reports**

**Building & Ground/Public Works** – Mr. Foote reported that paving will begin on Wednesday on Willow Avenue from Connor Road to Rockwood Avenue.

Leaf collections for Hoodridge and Vermont will continue next week. After that time, the trucks will be prepared for winter maintenance. Ninety tons of rock salt were recently purchased, and we are close to completing the purchasing requirements for the 2023 contract.

Military banners will be removed for the season, and main street banners will be installed.

Public Works will be installing holiday decorations before Light-Up Night on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Ms. Kovach reported that Park Avenue will be closed November 14<sup>th</sup> for paving by the water company from 6 am to 1 pm.

**Public Safety/Fire:** Chief Truver announced that the CSPD received the AAA East Central Community Traffic Safety Award. Chief Truver, Mayor Baumgarten and Lt. McKeown attended the award ceremony. This is the 13<sup>th</sup> year the department has received the platinum award.

Chief Truver stated that Officer Christine Platt completed certification as a Motor Carrier Safety Officer. Sgt. John Kiefer is a Drug Recognition Expert for DUI-Drug cases. Castle Shannon Police continue to partner with Mt. Lebanon DUI Task Force, MLPD, NHTSA and Buckle Up, PA for increased enforcement of seatbelt laws, DUI, and aggressive driving.

The police department is participating in Stuff-A-Store by collecting new unwrapped gifts. Drop off stations are available at the municipal center, library and Coffee Etc. The police department is looking for local families in need of assistance.

Chief Truver reported that concrete was poured last week on the PennDOT bridge project on Castle Shannon Boulevard. The road should reopen in mid to late December.

**Finance:** Mr. Swisher reviewed the check registers for October 27<sup>th</sup>, November 3<sup>rd</sup> and November 13<sup>th</sup> and had no further questions. Mr. Swisher motioned to authorize the payment of all outstanding bills and invoices. Mr. Brannon seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

**Planning & Codes** – Mr. Vietmeier stated that an art center may open on Grove Road.

**Library** – Ms. Randazzo announced that the library is adding a young adult space with tables, chair, and a television.

Donations to the Love Your Library Campaign totaled \$9,982.24. Eighty-four donations were received. Donations are matched by the Buncher Foundation on a pro rata basis.

Friends of the Library Flea Market made \$1,100.00. The Friends of the Library board meeting will be November 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. The public is welcome to attend.

The Board of Trustees meeting is December 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. The public is welcome to attend this meeting also.

The Castle Shannon Library Vendor & Craft Fair will be held November 18<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 3 pm.

**MRTSA** – Mr. Swisher reported that the board will meet on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the board is nearing the end of budget discussions. Mr. Swisher noted that municipal contributions will be increased slightly.

**SHACOG** – Mr. Oates will attend the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting in Bethel Park.

**Police Pension/Non-Uniformed Pension** – The agenda contained the third quarter statement of accounts.

**Mayor's Report:** Mayor Baumgarten stated that he is looking forward to working with Mr. Brannon as the newest council member along with all other members of council. Mayor Baumgarten believes that this council will work very well together for the betterment of the community.

Mayor Baumgarten agreed with Mr. Gigliotti and Ms. Randazzo that the library is truly a gem of our community, and he added that MRTSA is also a gem of this community. MRTSA is one of the highest-ranking emergency medical services in the state. Residents are fortunate to have a great library, great medical service, great public works, and great police department.

**Keystone Oaks** – Mr. Brannon asked about this section of the agenda. Ms. Kovach responded that this section is reserved for a junior council person; however, the borough has been unable to find a student willing to accept the position.

**Manager:** Mr. Foote provided a discussion and gave a presentation of the proposed 2024 budget. Mr. Foote completed a mill assessment based on Allegheny County's real estate valuation which provided the basis for real estate tax revenue projections. Mr. Foote stated the proposed budget includes moving the ARPA funds to the general fund as recommended by the National League of Cities and the PA Municipal League. These funds must be obligated by 12/31/24. Mr. Foote also noted that the general fund balance forward projected for 2023 was much higher than actually received. Based on discussions between Mr. Foote and Ms. Miller, the 2024 projected fund balance is more realistic.

Mr. Foote identified each department's expenditures and noted appropriate adjustments based on prior experience. Mr. Foote advised that health care costs increased 16%. Staff explored other health care options with our current broker and other brokers and believe the coverage we are maintaining is the best option. Software licenses and website maintenance were budgeted in the general fund. The budget includes expenses for a part-time administration employee and an additional police officer as part of Chief Truver's retention and recruitment policy.

The waste collection contract has a significant increase that is impacting the budget. Trash bins are paid for over the contract term, and then will be the property of the borough. Mr. Swisher noted that the waste collection costs will increase annually over the five-year contract.

Mr. Foote reviewed the proposed budget for the other funds. The capital budget will include costs for replacement of the shingled portion of the library roof. A discussion continued on various types of roofing materials. The capital fund also includes the purchase of a dump truck, streetscape, and park improvements.

Mr. Foote noted that both the proposed general fund and library fund budgets are running a deficit. Mr. Foote will continue to work with council on strategies in preparation of the 2024 budget for presentation at the November 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. O'Malley questioned whether taxes would increase. Mr. Foote answered that he cannot comment on this question until council has finalized the budget. On another matter, Ms. O'Malley questioned if staff knew the website was down. Mr. Foote answered that staff has been working with our vendors to have this fixed.

Mr. Brannon questioned where the revenue from the fire department warehouse sublease was recorded. Ms. Miller answered that those funds are applied as a negative expenditure to the warehouse lease line. Mr. Brannon questioned who pays the utilities. Ms. Miller answered the borough pays the utilities.

**New Business:** Mr. Oates submitted his resignation from borough council for his term that expires December 31, 2023. Mr. Swisher motioned to accept Mr. Oates' resignation. Mr. Brannon seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Swisher motioned to appoint William Oates to fill the vacancy of Robert Astor. Mr. Seiler seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Swisher motioned to adopt Resolution #734 for William Oates to fill the vacancy of Robert Astor. Mr. Brannon seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Brannon motioned to adjourn. Mr. Seiler seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Approved as presented this 27<sup>th</sup> day of November 2023.

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C. Michael Foote  
Borough Manager

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Nancy Kovach  
Council President

Post meeting, Mayor Baumgarten gave the oath of office to William Oates.