

**CASTLE SHANNON BOROUGH
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

October 23, 2023

Borough Manager C. Michael Foote noted that Vice President Dan Swisher will preside over the meeting.

The following elected officials were present: D. Swisher; B. Oates; M. Randazzo; D. Seiler; D. Baumgarten; E. O'Malley. Council President N. Kovach and Council members J. Maloney and R. Astor were absent. The following appointed officials were present: M. Foote, Borough Manager; K. Truver, Police Chief; P. Vietmeier, Code Official; D. Biondo, Solicitor; J. Callender, Borough Engineer.

Public Notice: Mr. Foote announced that council met in executive session prior to the meeting for the purpose of collecting information for educating council members about an issue.

Public Comment – Agenda Items: Mike Stout, Willow Avenue – stated he contacted Mr. Foote regarding gas line construction on Willow Avenue from Connor Road to Hastie Road. Mr. Swisher advised that since this subject is not an agenda item, council will take comments at the public comment period at the end of the agenda.

Minutes: The minutes of the October 9, 2023 council meeting were presented. Mr. Oates motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Seiler seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Administration: Mr. Oates motioned to accept the resignation of Council Member Jason Malone. Ms. Randazzo seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Oates motioned to accept the resignation of Council Member Robert Astor. Mr. Seiler seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Foote stated that staff has provided information to council regarding park rentals for 2024. Due to the construction schedule for Hamilton Park, various options are being considered in terms of accepting reservations for that park. Park rentals will be accepted starting November 8th for Riehl Park with a wait list compiled for Hamilton Park.

Bid Opening & Contracts: Mr. Callender reported that four bids were received for the rebid of Contract No. 23-PK11 Splash Pad Preparation, Storm Sewer and Utilities for Upper Hamilton. The bid opening was held October 18th. Mr. Swisher questioned the proposed budget for the project. Mr. Callender answered that this is one segment for Group 3 Parks and is within the overall anticipated budget. Mr. Oates motioned to award the bid to the lowest responsible bidder – Tedesco Excavating and Paving Inc. for \$428,800.00. Mr. Seiler seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Callender reported there was also a bid opening on October 18th for the rebid of Contract No. 23-PK12 Trails and Splash Pad Concrete. One proposal was received, and the bidder has requested to withdraw their bid due to a clerical error in a unit price. The engineers recommended allowing the contractor to withdraw their bid. Mr. Biondo advised that the motion would be to allow the bidder to withdraw their bid. Mr. Oates made the motion. Ms. Randazzo

seconded; all in favor; motion carried. Mr. Biondo also advised that staff can look into the issue of negotiating with an alternate contractor.

Real Estate Tax Collector: Ms. O'Malley reported that the deadline to pay Keystone Oaks School District taxes at face value is October 31st. Delinquent tax notices will be mailed.

Council Committee Reports

Public Safety/Fire: CSVFD Chief Bill Reffner presented the October Incident Report. The fire department responded to 15 total calls – 9 in Castle Shannon, 1 in Baldwin Township and 5 Mutual Aid. The department is averaging 1.5 calls per day this month.

Chief Reffner advised that with residents starting to turn on their furnaces, the department will see an increase in CO detector calls. Chief Reffner advised residents to check their batteries in their smoke detectors and CO detectors.

On October 9th, CSVFD members participated in quarterly joint training with mutual-aid friends at Mt. Lebanon and Dormont fire departments. Crews reviewed and familiarized themselves with one building in each district learning the layouts and potential hazards of these buildings including locations of stand pipe connections and utility shut offs. Castle Shannon used 500 Hoodridge Drive for training which included elevator rescue training.

On October 16th, a crew ran commercial fire evaluations at the Vitte's building. The building was fogged to simulate smoke. The crew practiced hose line advancement/management, ladders, maydays, radio communications and firefighter accountability. Chief Reffner thanked council for allowing the CSVFD to use the building for training.

For outside training, the BVR (Basic Vehicle Rescue) class was concluded, and two officers attended a Blue Card Conference on the command system in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Regarding membership, two new firefighter members will be joining the organization bringing total new members for 2023 to 13.

Chief Truver stated that this is solicitor season. Reports of solicitors claiming to be from Duquesne Light have been canvassing houses as energy suppliers. The police department has no active solicitation permits; therefore, residents should call 911 to report any solicitors without a borough permit. Residents can download a no trespassing sign from the police website to post on their property or sign up on the police website to be included on a Do Not Solicit list.

Finance: Mr. Swisher reviewed the October 13th and October 20th check registers. Mr. Swisher noted an expenditure to the postmaster for \$1,778.99 and questioned if it was a duplicate payment from a previous check run. Ms. Miller explained that the original check was not received by the post office for the newsletter mailing; therefore, the second check was cut and hand delivered to the post office to ensure timely mailing for the publication.

Mr. Swisher also noted an expenditure to Someone Else's Pickup. Mr. Vietmeier posted the house at 938 St. Anne Street as uninhabitable, and this contractor was engaged to remove excessive garbage, waste, and debris on the outside of the property for code and health compliance. Mr. Biondo advised that the property should be liened for the cost.

Library – Ms. Randazzo announced that annual Halloween event was held and had average attendance. The participants enjoyed the activities. Thanks to the library staff for hosting/organizing the event and the police and fire department for attending. The children’s librarian rode in the parade on the fire truck. Ms. Randazzo also thanked the Library Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, and Castle Shannon Revitalization Corporation for hosting tables.

The library will be closing on October 31st for Halloween at 5 pm.

The Library Board of Trustees will be meeting next week.

MRTSA – Mr. Swisher noted that the board of directors will be meeting October 25th and are finalizing the 2024 budget.

SHACOG – Mr. Oates stated that Chief Truver, Mayor Baumgarten and David Seiler attended the SHACOG annual dinner meeting.

Mr. Oates plans to attend the board of directors meeting at Bethel Park in November.

Mayor’s Report: Mayor Baumgarten read a note from a resident regarding Sgt. Gary Watkins thanking him for his service, presence, and compassion during a traumatic medical call for his family.

Mayor Baumgarten added that the Castle Shannon Police Department officers are very involved in the community with the DARE program at Myrtle Avenue Elementary School and a Toys 4 Tots program. Mayor Baumgarten affirmed that the borough has a great police department.

Planning Commission: Mr. Vietmeier announced that a vacancy exists on the planning commission board. Information on applying for the position will be available on the borough’s website and Facebook pages.

Ms. Randazzo motioned to accept the planning commission meeting minutes of September 18th. Mr. Oates seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Other Business: Nothing to report.

Public Comment:

Mike Stout, Willow Avenue – discussed several concerns. He stated that the LRT platform is sinking near the end of Willow Avenue towards Smith Road. A person fell at that location last spring, and Port Authority was notified and sent representatives to review the site; however, no action has been taken. Mr. Stout submitted photos to Mr. Foote of the deteriorating conditions and would like the borough to intervene with the Port Authority.

Mr. Stout said he was speaking for eight different households on Willow Avenue and listed problems with the gas company’s construction on Willow Avenue between Smith Road and Hastie Road. The project has been going on for seven weeks. Mr. Stout also sent photographs of this project to Mr. Foote. Mr. Stout listed concerns regarding scattered gravel, dust, a large hole around a manhole, lack of construction cones, damage to residential yards, uneven blacktop,

etc. The gas company broke a water main during construction. Mr. Stout did meet with a construction company representative who blamed many of the problems on the water company. Mr. Stout also stated that construction continued throughout the evening for two nights thereby disrupting neighbors.

Mr. Stout requested that the police department address speeding traffic on Willow Avenue during rush hour and suggested closing down Willow Avenue (except for local residents) until the project is completed and repaved. Mr. Stout admitted that the road is closed during construction hours. Mr. Foote stated that staff has made a site visit today, and he hopes to schedule a meeting with PAWC and Columbia Gas representatives to discuss the project.

Chester Balistreri, Willow Avenue – agrees with Mr. Stout regarding the problems on Willow Avenue and noted that it is dangerous for children exiting the school busses. Even as an active construction zone, the road patchwork is substandard with sinking patches. In addition, vehicles are driving down the wrong side of the road to avoid the patched roadway.

Mike Warhold, Middleboro Road – discussed the park rentals for 2024 and noted that Hamilton Park, both upper and lower, are always in demand for rentals. Mr. Warhold suggested that perhaps Upper Hamilton Park (along with Riehl Park) could be available for rentals depending upon the park's construction schedule.

Nancy Dempsey, Willow Avenue – noted a temporary fix on the railing on Willow Avenue by McMinn's Pub and asked for an update. Mr. Vietmeier answered that the owner was contacted, and the railing is shored up until the concrete contractor can complete the project.

Ms. Dempsey discussed the Holiday Food Giving Program. The banking account and program information was previously transferred to Mr. Dempsey. Ms. Dempsey stated that they are not comfortable having donation checks coming to them. There is a lack of sponsors for donation letters, and the recipient list has dwindled from 75-80 to approximately 25 people in Castle Shannon. Ms. Dempsey stated that the fund has enough money to supply those recipients with gift cards for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Ms. Dempsey is looking for the borough to handle the financial administration part of the program by accepting and recording donations, although the committee would retain check writing authorization. Ms. Dempsey is concerned with the liability of accepting donations and accountability of the funds and the future of the program. Mr. Foote suggested scheduling a meeting with Mr. & Mrs. Dempsey to discuss the program.

Mr. Warhold added that the Holiday Food Giving Program was originally initiated by Council Member Ted Kirk and suggested that the administration could be coordinated between borough staff and the committee's volunteers to keep the program operating.

Michael Brooks, Willow Avenue – questioned who is owner of the Smith Street Bridge that was closed in 1992. Mr. Brooks is concerned about the stability of the bridge and reported that motorcycles still cross the bridge. Mr. Brooks suggested replacing the bridge with a pedestrian bridge. Mr. Foote will contact Port Authority for a discussion.

Mr. Brooks also showed a photograph of a section of Willow Avenue and said that in the winter the public works department does not plow curb to curb since 2017. The driver veers off to the center of the street from the Strain's driveway to the stop sign; thereby leaving piles of snow in his driveway. Mr. Foote will address with staff.

Mr. Brooks also stated that the gas contractor advised him that Willow Avenue road restoration would not happen until next spring; therefore, Mr. Brooks had concerns about how the uneven road would be plowed from winter snow. Mr. Foote will have more information after meeting with water and gas company representatives.

Mr. Swisher closed the public comment section.

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

Approved as presented this 13th day of November 2023.

C. Michael Foote
Borough Manager

Nancy Kovach
Council President