

**CASTLE SHANNON BOROUGH
MINUTES OF REORGANIZATION MEETING**

January 2, 2024

The January 2, 2024 reorganization meeting of Castle Shannon Borough Council was called to order by Mayor Baumgarten, who noted some changes in the order of the agenda.

Mr. Foote stated that agenda items III. Roll Call and VI. Council Members will be moved to after VII. Reorganization of Borough Council. Items VIII, IX and X 2 and X 3 will be removed from the agenda, and Eileen O'Malley will be added to the staff and voluntary board list for 2024 Appointments.

Mayor Baumgarten introduced the Honorable Judge David Barton who attended to give the oath of office to the elected officials.

Judge Barton stated that it is his pleasure to attend the meeting. All across Pennsylvania, the first business day of an even numbered year, judicial officers are called upon to do one of their most important duties - which is to administer the oath of office to elected officials in local government. Judge Barton has had the pleasure to perform this duty many times in his 28 years for Castle Shannon, Baldwin, Whitehall, and other communities.

Judge Barton described the history of taking the oath. The oath is a pledge to a higher being – God to do the right thing or have his wrath rain down. Judge Barton discussed how in medieval time, felons were branded on the right palm, and that is why we raise our right hand. The custom arose so that when a person took an oath, they had to prove they were eligible since felons could not take oaths as they were considered untrustworthy. Judge Barton also discussed how people in early government took an oath before participating in the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention of 1776 which meant they were committing high treason against the crown, punishable by death. Persons have been taking these oaths since the earliest recorded time. The first mention of taking an oath in English law is the coronation of King Edgar in 973.

Great men and great women have taken the same oath as those tonight. They have had the courage to make the difficult decisions required. They have had the patience to listen to their colleagues and to consider competing thoughts. We know it is the collective wisdom that is better than any single members. Judge Barton stated that he has a great deal of confidence that each council member will do the same.

Judge Barton proceeded to give the oath of office to Nancy Kovach and Kevin Brannon and presented the signed copies to Mayor Baumgarten.

Mayor Baumgarten asked for nominations for Council President for the next two years. Mr. Swisher nominated Nancy Kovach. Being no further nominations, the Mayor asked the Borough Manager to cast a unanimous vote for Nancy Kovach as Council President.

Mayor Baumgarten then asked for nominations for Council Vice President for the next two years. Ms. Kovach nominated Daniel Swisher. Being no further nominations, the Mayor asked the Borough Manager to cast a unanimous vote for Daniel Swisher. Mayor Baumgarten then turned the meeting over to Ms. Kovach as Council President.

Roll Call: The following elected officials were present: N. Kovach, D. Swisher; K. Brannon; D. Seiler; D. Baumgarten; E. O'Malley. Council Member W. Oates was absent. The following appointed officials were present: M. Foote, Borough Manager; D. Biondo, Borough Solicitor; K. Truver, Police Chief; P. Vietmeier, Code Official.

Public Notice: Ms. Kovach announced that council met in executive session this evening at 6:30 pm for the purpose of collecting information or educating agency members about an issue.

Mr. Biondo stated that it is appropriate to note for the record that Kevin Brannon submitted a notice of resignation for his previous appointment to finish a two-year term from a council member that resigned. The record should reflect that Mr. Brannon is now sitting as an elected member of council from the prior municipal election, and his resignation from the prior appointment leaves a vacancy on council for that position.

Mr. Biondo also stated that it would be appropriate for the minutes to reflect that a third person was elected at the most recent municipal election for a term as a member of council – Tom Beck. There is no indication that Mr. Beck has taken the oath of office or submitted an affidavit of residency. Mr. Swisher noted that the borough code requires the elected official to take the oath and submit his residency within 10 days. Ms. Kovach added that if Mr. Beck does not take the oath of office by January 12th, he will have forfeited his position, and council would then need to appoint a representative to council. As two positions remain open on council, the board is not prepared to name committee members and appoint various association board members at this time. This will be undertaken at the January 8th council meeting.

Mr. Swisher motioned to approve the 2024 Staff Appointment as follows:

Michael Foote – Borough Manager/Secretary/Treasurer/Agency Open Records Officer/Allegheny County Tax Collection District (alternate)
Lori Miller – Assistant Treasurer/Assistant Manager/Recording Secretary
Ken Truver – Chief of Police
Dennis Biondo – Borough Solicitor
Lennon, Smith, Souleret Engineering – Borough Engineer
Paul Vietmeier – Flood Plain Administrator/Zoning & Code Official/Building Code Official
Michael Moog – Code Enforcement Officer
Building Inspection Underwriters of Pa, Inc. – Building Inspector
Robert Myers – Civil Service Commission
Clarence Soles – Zoning Hearing Board
William Grand – Planning Commission
Eileen O'Malley – Allegheny County Tax Collection District (primary)
Lt. Lane and Lt. McKeown – Police Pension

Mr. Brannon seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Public Comment: Bill Gross, Home Avenue – discussed garbage cart collection with a public works employee who advised that carts for many residences on Home Avenue will be placed in the alley (Ridgeton) and asked if this was true. Mr. Foote asked Mr. Gross to call him to discuss the proposed accommodations for one side of Home Avenue.

Administration: Mr. Brannon motioned to approve the Borough Manager’s contract from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025. Mr. Swisher seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Swisher motioned to adjourn the reorganization meeting. Mr. Seiler seconded; all in favor; motion carried.

Approved as presented this 8th day of January, 2024.

C. Michael Foote
Borough Manager

Nancy J. Kovach
Council President