

Stewartstown Borough Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 3rd, 2025

Members present

Pamela Almony
Roy Burkins
Donna Bloom
David Elwell
Kimberly Carl
Joshua Butler

Others present

Mayor Brittany Barnette
Craig Sharnetzka, Solicitor
Jason Brenneman, Engineer
Ira Walker, Jr., Water/Sewer
Stacy Myers, Recording Sec'y

Visitors

Linda Miller
Peggy Roscosky
Chief Boddington, SRPD

Aaron & Patty Manifold
Erica Rearich
Sgt. Teague, SRPD

Dawn Gillispie
Kevin Brunicke
Jeff & Joyce Ryer

Mark & Peggy Raulie
Wesley & Terri Gilberto

1. The meeting was called to order @ 7:00pm followed by the pledge to the flag.

2. **General Business**

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes**—Mr. Butler made a motion to approve the January 6th, 2025 Meeting Minutes; Mrs. Bloom seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
- **Approval of Financial Statements**
 - **General Funds**—Mrs. Bloom made a motion to approve General Fund bills dated Jan 3rd thru Jan 24th, 2025, totaling \$55,612.56; Mr. Burkins seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
 - **Sewer Funds**—Mrs. Bloom made a motion to approve Sewer Fund bills dated Jan 3rd thru Jan 24th, 2025, totaling \$495,113.94; Mr. Burkins seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
 - **Water Funds**—Mrs. Bloom made a motion to approve Water Fund bills dated Jan 3rd thru Jan 24th, 2025, totaling \$64,277.76; Mr. Elwell seconded All were in favor; motion carried.

3. **Public Comment/Visitors**—the following addressed Council:

- **Terri Gilberto, 40 N. Main Street** was present to address escalating problems in town regarding traffic safety, speeding on Main & other Borough streets & traffic congestion. Each concern is outlined below with Council response/discussion *in italics*.
 - **Traffic congestion** in town is a concern, especially on the main thoroughfares such as Main Street and intersections of Mill/Main and Main/W. Pennsylvania. This results in longer wait times & difficulties passing onto Main Street from residential driveways, which frustrates daily commuters & residents. Terri suggested Council conduct a traffic survey to collect vehicle counts, peak traffic times and traffic violations with accident history.

Speeding on Main Street & thru other Borough neighborhoods is an increasing concern. Terri suggested speed bumps or traffic calming measures to reduce speeding incidents & enhance safety in our community. In an effort to make our streets safer for pedestrian traffic, Terri mentioned the need for enhanced pedestrian infrastructure, such as installing more pedestrian walkways/crosswalks and even four-way Stop Signs at critical intersections. *As Borough residents, Council members agreed with Terri's concerns, some of which aren't in their control. Main Street is a state road & speeding on Main is not patrolled by Southern Regional Police. In addition, PA municipal police departments cannot use RADAR to control speed. Council urged residents to contact their local representatives urging them to pass this legislation that has been stalled for some time. Speed bumps, as well as four-way Stop signs cannot be installed without traffic studies & Ordinances (so they can be enforced). Borough Council recently placed the thermoplastic "25mph" speed limit applications in several areas of the Borough. Solar speed signs were also installed in several areas to deter speeding. Chief Cunningham & Sgt. Teague explained that the current method of speed control often takes two officers, but it CAN possibly be done with one. Unfortunately to control speed accurately, the officer must be in the right place at the right time.* Terri stated that, while she believes SRPD does a great job, they don't have the technology needed to patrol all the municipalities they do. *Council disagreed with that, stating that we have more officers & more police coverage with SRPD than when we had a Borough Police Department. In addition to having better police coverage, costs are now lower than operating a Borough department.*

Also, before a new development goes in, a traffic study is typically required. And crosswalks are not allowed in certain intersections. The Borough tried to get a crosswalk installed near the Rutter's (W. Pennsylvania) but was told by PENNDOT that, unless there is a "certain number of fatalities" at a certain intersection, crosswalks would not be allowed or supported.

- **Enhancing Community Reporting Channels/Crime Rate Increase**—Terri spoke of a recent incident where she encountered a Main Street tenant in possession of a sawed-off shotgun. After reporting the incident, she faced backlash online. She doesn't believe others should be afraid to report such incidents. She suggested possibly developing a discreet & supportive reporting channel, enabling citizens to report to a safety-assigned Council member without the fear of repercussions.
- **Community Awareness Campaign**—Terri suggested launching a Mass Notification System that would enable residents access to Crime Watch, real-time emergency alerts, storm alerts, community events and like situations when time is of the essence. Savvy Citizen is a great tool to use for this type of thing.
- **In addition**, Terri suggested facilitating real-time meetings & providing online Meeting Minutes to foster greater transparency & encourage increased involvement from Borough citizens. Council thanked Terri for attending tonight's meeting & voicing her concerns. *As the meeting minutes are approved, they are posted on the Borough's website under the Borough Government" tab. Mr. Butler reported that plans to conduct Council meetings via Zoom are in the works. All Council thanked Terri for bringing these important issues to the forefront. We want to continue to do what we can to keep the community safe.*
- **Joyce Ryer, 55 S. Main Street**
 - Also voiced her concerns about speeding on Main Street & stated that several accidents (a 2020 accident resulting in the driver's death) take place in the southern end of town. She also reported on a traffic accident where the young driver admitted to driving under the influence of drugs & alcohol and Joyce said a breathalyzer test wasn't done. His mother was called to pick him up at the scene. So, speeding still continues to be a concern. Chief Cunningham said, even if incidents don't result in deaths, all traffic accidents (on state roads) are reported to PENNDOT.
 - The issue of the recent Planning Commission that was cancelled & proper notification had not been given to the public. A note of cancellation was to be posted on the office door, and that wasn't done. Ms. Almony said that's a personnel issue that has been addressed.
- **Aaron Manifold** wanted to address Council as a member of Stewartstown United Methodist Church regarding the letter they received about a noise complaint. The complainant said the parking lot at the church was being plowed outside the noise ordinance timeframe (on 2 separate occasions). Aaron, although a Hopewell Township resident, owns a property in the Borough and he wanted to know if it was common practice for letters of complaint to come from the Borough Office & not a Zoning Officer or from Council. Complaints must be made to office staff in writing, no verbal complaints are accepted or acted upon. Atty. Sharnetzka said, although the letter says "letter of violation" of the Ordinance, no fine or citation accompanied the letter. Staff is authorized by Council to send "courtesy" notices that stem from written complaints. If further action (fines, etc.) would be necessary, Atty. Sharnetzka said the Zoning Officer would send written notice. If no response is received from that notice, it's filed with the District Magistrate where fines would ensue.

Aaron said the section of the Nuisance Ordinance that was noted in the letter prohibits "heavy equipment & machinery". He said the church's parking lot is plowed using a pick-up truck with a plow on the front (or a small piece of equipment with a bucket on the front), not what he considers "heavy equipment". The church has a daycare & a senior center at the premises so it's important to have snow cleared as soon as possible. In addition, during a snow emergency, parking isn't permitted on Borough/State streets/roads so the lot must be cleared. Council agrees that snow events are out of our control and plowing is not something that takes hours, so in the two instances that this complainant was "inconvenienced", it would not have been frequently or for a long period of time. Ms. Almony apologized for this letter being sent because of the "inconvenience" being infrequent and out of our control because of the weather.

Aaron spent time reviewing the above Nuisance Ordinance & several other ordinances on the website, which he stated aren't very user-friendly. He suggested updating the website & those Ordinances to be more "searchable" & modernized. He also mentioned the Ordinance requiring landlords to notify the Borough when a new tenant moves into a property. That requirement is not really made aware to anyone, unless they're reading it on the website. Staff/Council said this was enforced more often when the Borough collected per capita taxes, and the Tax Collector needed current & proper tenant names/addresses. Each year, office staff sent tenant registration forms to all property owners in an effort to update those records for the tax collector. The Borough no longer collects per capita taxes, but most landlords/property managers continue to update the Borough staff when having a tenant move in/out.

Aaron also mentioned the section of the Nuisance Ordinance prohibiting vehicles parking within the clear sight triangle. He noted Carroll Fuel parks commercial vehicles within 5-10' of a Stop sign that hinders the sight distance pulling onto Main Street from Fulton Avenue.

Borough Council is aware of several Ordinances that need to be updated in order to be enforced properly & efficiently.

- **Louise Roscosky, 30 Poplar Springs**, asked if the solar speed signs take pictures of license plates, but they do not; they only monitor speed.

4. **Engineer's Report**—Jason Brenneman reported:

- **13 Mill Street**—Planning Commission will review & make a recommendation (of approval or denial) at their February 18th meeting, contingent on the developer's engineer submitting all necessary plans & paperwork.
- **2025 Street Projects**
 - The executed contract for the LSA Grant has been received. Jason said these grant funds would cover most proposed improvements for E. Pennsylvania Avenue & his office will begin survey work next week. Sewer & stormwater survey work will be conducted this year & curb, sidewalk & street surveying will be conducted next year. We have 3 years to use the grant funds, and it will be a time-consuming project.
 - CDBG Grant—income surveys were sent to all E. Pennsylvania Avenue residents. The completed surveys are to be returned directly to York County Planning Commission. Jason will check with YCPC to see if any have been received and how many responses are required to qualify for the grant funds. These funds would be in addition to the LSA grant funds for E. PA Avenue work.
- **Storm Inlet/Pipe Inspection Proposal**—we'll wait for Columbia Gas to complete the cross-bore work to evaluate anything outstanding.

5. **Solicitor's Report**—Atty. Sharnetzka presented the advertisement for bids for the Hopewell Area Recreation & Parks Playground Improvements Project which must go through the Borough as the "grantee". This ad will run in the February 10th & 14th editions of the York Daily Record & York Dispatch. Bid opening is scheduled for February 27th @ 2pm. Mr. Burkins made a motion to authorize advertising for bids of HARP's Playground Improvement Project; Mrs. Bloom seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.

6. **Sewer & Water Supervisor Report**—Ira Walker, Jr. presented his report. All sewer & water expenses will go before the Authority for action. Ms. Almony mentioned the two recent emergencies that resulted from the extremely cold weather. She complimented Ira and Sewer & Water staff on their time and efforts to resolve these problems.

7. **President/Vice-President's Report**—Ms. Almony & Mr. Burkins reported:

- **Rental properties in Borough**—a list of all rental properties was provided to Council. Ms. Almony requested this list for review in preparation of a possible Ordinance update regarding tenants & rental properties. Instituting inspections of rental properties was previously discussed, but more information will be gathered.
- **HR/Employee Handbook Update**—This Wednesday, staff will finish the 2nd round of review of the updated handbook.
- **Letter of interest to serve on Planning Commission**—Ms. Almony made a motion to accept Dawn Gillispie's (43 High St.) letter of interest to serve on Planning Commission for a term expiring 12/31/2028. Mr. Elwell seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.

8. **Treasurer's Report**—Stacy Myers reported:

- **Fire Police requests**—Mrs. Bloom made a motion to approve the following requests; Mr. Elwell seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
 - Dallastown Borough—Various events in 2025
 - Fawn Grove Borough—Four events in 2025
 - Red Lion Borough—Four events in 2025
- **Building maintenance issues**
 - Both upstairs apartments were without heat for several days during the extreme cold. A part for the boiler system was ordered by Hopewell Plumbing. Hopewell also provided 3 space heaters which the tenants used in the meantime. The part was installed & things seem to be operating well. Although the boiler's age has been a concern for some time and two quotes were received for the replacement, it may not be necessary right now. Mr. Burkins believes replacement should be built into the 2026 Budget.

- Mold remediation in the basement
 - Orkin quoted \$2,160 to remediate the white mold in the basement. Mr. Burkins made a motion to approve Orkin’s quote & move forward with this work; Mr. Butler seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
 - REL Concrete quoted \$9,400 to treat & remove the black mold in another portion of the basement. Portions of the stone foundation that are falling down will also be repaired. Ms. Almony made a motion to approve REL Concrete’s quote & move forward with this work; Mr. Butler seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
Mr. Burkins suggested Orkin’s work wait until REL completes their work.
- **Church Street/signage to identify 18A, B & C properties**—brought to staff’s attention after a recent medical emergency, the private lane off Church Street that serves 18-A, 18-B & 18-C, is not marked clearly. Only 18 Church Street faces Church directly, so in order to help identify A, B & C, it was suggested that we install a signpost at the end of the lane that notes each address & an arrow to identify what properties are back the lane. Memory Lane is another area of town where a signpost would be helpful identifying 9A, 9B & 11 Memory Lane. Ira stated we already have posts that can be used, and Water/Sewer staff will install them. Ms. Almony made a motion to move forward with the sign purchase, not to exceed \$500; Mrs. Bloom seconded. All were in favor; motion carried.
- **Informational items**
 - Christmas lights/First Energy—the proposed upgrade of the 30 additional streetlights (for Christmas decorations) is going to a design team at Met-Ed. Jason Roberts supplied the pole numbers for the 30 poles and that has been submitted to them also. Borough staff will be in touch as this process continues.
 - Trash Contract—Refuse Committee plans to meet February 11th to discuss options in preparation of bidding the next contract.
 - PA Liquor Control Board sent notice to the Borough that Stewartstown Railroad applied for a Public Service (Liquor) license.
- 9. **Mayor’s/Police Report**—Mayor Barnette reported:
 - Next Police Commission meeting is scheduled for February 5th.
 - SRPD warns residents about fraudulent home improvements companies & urges residents to ask for references, conduct research on the contractors, search for reviews, etc.
 - FYI—keep an eye on elderly people & pets that may not have adequate heat during cold weather.
 - SRPD’s newest officer (formerly with York City) is doing great!
 - Civil Service Committee may soon be seeking volunteers as some officers are nearing retirement & some may be eligible for promotions. Civil Service volunteers go through testing & training; however, they don’t meet regularly, only when necessary. Prior law enforcement experience helps but is not necessary to serve.
 - Final patrol numbers were received for 2024 & came in 6.98 hrs. over budget.
- 10. **Committee discussion/Other business**—nothing further
- 11. **Adjournment**—With no further business before Council, Ms. Almony made a motion to adjourn the meeting @ 8:58pm. Mrs. Carl seconded. Motion carried, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Stacy Myers, Recording Secretary