



**BOROUGH OF SWISSVALE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

March 6, 2019

1. Meeting called to order at 7:00PM.
2. Invocation – Pastor Dai Morgan
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Councilwoman Julie Grose
4. Roll Call – P. Gionta – here, D. Petrarca – here, J. Grose – here, D. Rapp – here, T. Ward – here, A. Salisbury – here, D. Swartzwelder – here, M. Stanton – here.
5. Public Comment
 1. Ron Buchanan (Owns several properties in Swissvale)
 - i. Mr. Buchanan is representing the East End Business Association. Swissvale Borough does not have a good reputation with several of the real estate investors in the area. Mr. Buchanan says that they feel undervalued and that the Borough is too strict. The community needs to increase its number of investors. He believes that one way to do that is to be clear about the Borough's plans so that investors can be informed of the changes that are coming.
 2. Calvin Yoder (1605 Miriam)
 - i. In the presentation of the proposed new municipal building and the subsequent written plan, there were no concrete numbers regarding the cost of renovating the current municipal building. Mr. Yoder would like to see proof of why it is more cost effective to move rather than to renovate.

3. David Smetak (2101 Lloyd)
 - i. Mr. Smetak would like to bring to Council's attention the plans Norfolk Southern Railroad Company have put together to raise bridges in order to run double stack trains through areas of Western Pennsylvania including Swissvale. Mr. Smetak is concerned about the potential hazard that double stack trains present to Swissvale and wants to know if the borough plans to address the issue with Norfolk Southern. Mr. Smetak also noted that the railroad company has had recent issues with defective railroad ties causing problems for trains passing over them.
 - ii. Mr. Wilhelm has contacted Senator Costa in the past to ask him to help facilitate a meeting with Norfolk Southern for Swissvale residents. He has not yet received confirmation for any meetings.
4. Tina Bullen (48 Lilmont Drive)
 - i. There has been a lack of communication during this discussion about a new Borough Building. Mrs. Bullen believes that the current Borough Building is a centerpiece of the community. She requests that the community have more input in the process. She wants to know if the borough had considered other locations for the new municipal building and if other locations were considered she wants to know why they were not accepted.
 - ii. Mr. Wilhelm has responded that the Borough was trying to find buildings that were primarily vacant that wouldn't require the borough to take them over through eminent domain. They also looked into locations that would keep the municipal building close to the business district
5. Amy Kennedy (7460 Schoyer)
 - i. Suggests that money allocated to a new borough building might be better spent on programs for the youth in our community.
6. Mike Epitropoulos (1131 LaClair)
 - i. As a former member of Council Mr. Epitropoulos is aware of the severe disrepair of the current municipal building.

- ii. Mr. Epitropoulos would like to express his respect for Mr. Wilhelm and the rest of council. During his time on council he didn't always agree with the decisions that were made but he is certain that those decisions have worked to the benefit of Swissvale.
7. Miranda Crotsley (7930 St. Lawrence)
- i. Requests that council delay the vote on any motions to move forward with the new municipal building project. This is, to Ms. Crotsley, the most complicated part of the process and it would harm local business owners. She has presented to council a handout from ECO Districts, an organization that helps cities and municipalities keep in mind sustainability and equity as they move through the development process.
8. Laura Kuster (7463 Schoyer)
- i. Ms. Kuster was present at the Agenda meeting that took place a week ago. She is disappointed that council did not take the time to ask for public input related to the new municipal building and that they chose to plan everything behind doors instead. Ms. Kuster wants council to know that residents do care and they should be heard.
9. Holland Barmer (7930 St. Lawrence)
- i. Ms. Barmer would like to request that council delay their vote and provide a public forum dedicated solely to the new building so that residents can ask questions. It is a very expensive project that will have massive impacts on the borough. This is a breach of trust that residents place on their elected officials that Ms. Barmer has seen before. Information is not readily available and when it is, it is often incomplete. Wants to emphasize that openness and transparency make the community stronger. It is no longer acceptable to do the bare minimum. There are many ways to release information to the public in seconds and the borough can still rely on more traditional means of communication.
10. Nathan Shaulis (8000 Westmoreland)

- i. Requests that council delay voting on the motions to move forward with the new municipal building project to give residents a chance to have input in the plans. Whether legal or not, the borough should have engaged with the public rather than discuss plans for a new building behind closed doors. It is difficult but not impossible to have public listening sessions so that people can approach council with ideas and get answers to their questions.

11. Jonathan Guldenschuh (7618 Roslyn)

- i. Mr. Guldenschuh believes that there aren't enough hard numbers in the written proposal for the new borough building. He wants to know what the borough plans to do with the existing borough building in the event that the new building is on Irvine Street. Mr. Guldenschuh doesn't want to see the current building sit vacant and possibly fall into further disrepair or attract a criminal element. He would also like to know if the borough has considered selling the current property and using those funds to offset the cost of the new building.

12. Ron Vesci (1927 McCague)

- i. Mr. Vesci is here representing Whip Appeal Auto Detailing. Whip Appeal has been in the borough for three years and they have been successful. Mr. Vesci has had problems with zoning related to auto repair work in the past and wants to know why the borough is willing to move an auto repair shop into their current location.

- 1. Mr. Wilhelm has explained to Mr. Vesci that Mark Vesci (the owner of Whip Appeal) was made aware of the application process to have the auto body shop re-zoned and that it was decided not to move forward at that time.

- ii. Mr. Vesci has stated that Mark Vesci and others at Whip Appeal are not happy with the way they were informed of the borough's intentions and if necessary they will pursue it

13. Rachel Thompson (7113 Schoyer)

- i. Mrs. Thompson feels that council is not encouraging of public comment. She has said that council has a reputation of enriching each

other rather than listening to their citizens. The borough's first priority should be communication with residents. Maybe the borough needs a communications committee to ensure that the correct information goes out to the public in a timely manner. Mrs. Thompson wants to know if the proposed structures at memorial field will obstruct the view. She would also like to see drawings so that she can better understand how they will affect the layout of the park.

- ii. Councilwoman Salisbury has asked the public if they would be interested in a live feed of council meetings that would be available for residents. She has stated that it is an issue worth looking into.

14. Geoff Critzer (2234 Woodstock)

- i. Mr. Critzer wants to know if it would help police response time to move to the proposed location.
 - 1. Chief Watson has explained that police officers spend their shifts out on patrol and that they only come to the station to write reports or complete other tasks. Councilwoman Gionta has added that the benefit to officers would be to have an office that is all on one level as well as secure cells to hold individuals.
- ii. Mr. Critzer wants to know if there are any plans at this point for the current building
 - 1. Mr. Wilhelm has explained that there are no formal plans in place but there have been requests in the past regarding the land that the current building sits on as well as the borough owned plots located behind the building. He would recommend that council sell the property to offset the costs of the new building.
- iii. Would like to personally vouch for Mr. Wilhelm and Mr. Busch. Mr. Critzer thinks that the personal attacks on social media are wrong and does not believe that they were ever working to the detriment of the community.

15. Weldiane Scales (7360 Schley)

- i. Requests that council delay the vote on the motion to proceed with the new municipal building project. Mrs. Scales believes that the impact of

the new building has not been properly explored. She feels that if we don't take the time to do this now with this project it could create issues for future projects. People need transparency and inclusivity in these matters.

6. Approval of Minutes – Motion to approve the minutes for the Council Meeting on December 19, 2018, the Council Meeting on January 2, 2019, and the Council Meeting on February 6, 2019. Motion by P. Gionta, second by T. Ward. All ayes, motion carries.
7. Agenda Items –
 1. Motion to approve **Resolution #19-03** accepting TAP Grant funding in the amount of \$1,639,243.42 and authorizing Greg Bachy as the signator on all TAP related documents. Motion by D. Petrarca, second by J. Grose. All ayes, motion carries.
 2. Motion to add Utility Pole Replacements to the 2019 Fee Schedule at a fee of \$100.00 per pole in accordance with the Ordinance 12-02. Motion by T. Ward, second by P. Gionta. All ayes, motion carries.
 3. Motion to approve the hiring Bernard Robinson as a Temporary Employee in the DPW effective March 4, 2019 at the contractual rate of \$17.01/hour. Motion by D. Petrarca, second by P. Gionta. All ayes, motion carries.
 4. Motion to approve the hiring of Nathan Swierkosz as a Part-Time Patrolman at the contractual rate of \$17.25 pending the results of a criminal background check. Motion by P. Gionta, second by D. Petrarca. Roll Call: P. Gionta – yes, D. Petrarca –yes, J. Grose – yes, D. Rapp – yes, T. Ward – yes, A. Salisbury – no, M. Stanton – yes. Ayes have the majority, motion carries.
 5. Motion to approve the hiring of Robert Gowans as a Part-Time Patrolman at the contractual rate of \$17.25 pending the results of a criminal background check. Motion by P. Gionta, second by D. Petrarca. Roll Call: P. Gionta – yes, D. Petrarca –yes, J. Grose – yes, D. Rapp – yes, T. Ward – yes, A. Salisbury – no, M. Stanton – yes. Ayes have the majority, motion carries.

6. Motion to approve the low bid of \$243,500 from Eveready Contracting for the Borough-Wide Demolition Project, with the exception of 2115 and 2117 Noble Street. Motion by D. Petrarca, second by P. Gionta. All ayes, motion carries.
7. Motion to authorize a second appraisal of the McCague Street property on behalf of the Borough.
 - i. Councilman D. Rapp has expressed his disapproval of the way in which this motion was introduced to the public and has made a motion to table this motion. A Salisbury was second on the motion. Roll call to table: P. Gionta – no, D. Petrarca – no, J. Grose – no, D. Rapp – yes, T. Ward – no, A. Salisbury – yes, M. Stanton – no. Motion to table has failed.
 - ii. Roll Call on the initial motion: P. Gionta – yes, D. Petrarca – yes, J. Grose – yes, D. Rapp – no, T. Ward – yes, A. Salisbury – no, M. Stanton – yes. With 5 yes and 2 no, the motion passes.
8. Motion to authorize the Borough Solicitor to prepare a purchase agreement for the McCague Street Property to be considered by the owners.
 - i. Councilman D. Rapp has made a motion to table the motion. A Salisbury is second on the motion to table. Roll call to table: P. Gionta – no, D. Petrarca – no, J. Grose – no, D. Rapp – yes, T. Ward – no, A. Salisbury – yes, M. Stanton – no. Motion to table has failed.
 - ii. Roll Call on the initial motion: P. Gionta – yes, D. Petrarca – yes, J. Grose – yes, D. Rapp – no, T. Ward – yes, A. Salisbury – no, M. Stanton – yes. With 5 yes and 2 no, the motion passes.
9. Motion to authorize a survey and appraisal of property located at 1931 Monongahela Avenue and 7405-7415 Irvine Street on behalf of the Borough.
 - i. Councilwoman A. Salisbury has requested a tour of the two properties before the assessment is started and has made a motion to table this motion. D. Rapp was second on the motion. Roll call to

table: P. Gionta – no, D. Petrarca – no, J. Grose – no, D. Rapp – yes, T. Ward – no, A. Salisbury – yes, M. Stanton – no. Motion to table has failed.

- ii. Roll Call on the initial motion: P. Gionta – yes, D. Petrarca – yes, J. Grose – yes, D. Rapp – no, T. Ward – yes, A. Salisbury – no, M. Stanton – yes. With 5 yes and 2 no, the motion passes.

8. Finance Report – Councilman Tim Ward

- Paid Bills as of **February 28th, 2019** in the amount of **\$ 260,903.74**.
- Unpaid Bills as of **February 28th, 2019** in the amount of **\$ 114,538.42**.
- Motion by T. Ward, second by P. Gionta. All ayes, motion carries.

9. Police Report

1. On File in the Manager's Office

10. Code and Fire Report

1. On File in the Manager's Office
2. The Annual Lenten Fish Fry started today and will run every Friday until Good Friday (April 19th, 2019).
3. The Fire Department received a grant from the State Fire Commissioner's Office in the amount of \$14, 811.36 that will be used to purchase and replace bunker gear and fire hoses. The volunteers also received a similar grant in the amount of \$13,656.84 that will be used to pay down the cost of the fire station.

11. Public Works Report

1. On File in the Borough Manager's Office
2. Brandon Sepesy is currently a part time employee with the Public Works Department. He was hired as a part time employee under the condition that he could be made full time if he passed his test to become a CDL driver. He passed his test last week. Mr. Petrarca would like to enter a motion to hire Brandon Sepesy as a full time Public Works Employee at the contractual rate of \$17.38 effective immediately. P. Gionta has seconded the motion. All ayes, motion carries.

12. Outstanding Complaints – none

13. C.O.G Report – Tim Ward

1. Mr. Ward was not present at the last meeting but wants to thank the Manager, Assistant Manager, and Police Chief. They all attend meetings with the COG and the borough has representation through them.

14. President's Remarks – None

15. Mayor's Report

1. On March 28 the Swissvale Rotary Club will be having a public meeting to discuss plans for the park located at the corner of South Braddock Avenue and Church Street. The meeting will take place at 7pm at Goodfellas Bar and Restaurant.

16. Water Authority Report – Tracey Crombie-Collins

1. On File in the Manager's Office
2. It is worth noting that there were 80 water main breaks since the end of January and five of those breaks were in Swissvale.
3. Drawings have been crafted for the repaving of Woodstock Terrace. Mr. Rapp will contact Mrs. Crombie-Collins in order to get a copy of the plans for review.

17. Planning Commission – Greg Bachy – No Report

18. Solicitor's Report – Robert McTiernan

1. Wilkins School Community Center have asked to amend their agreement with Swissvale Borough to allow them more flexibility for renters and sub letters.

19. Engineer's Report – Robert Zischkau - Report on file

20. Borough Manager's Report – Clyde Wilhelm

1. The borough received notice that the collective bargaining agreement with the Teamsters Local 205 (Crossing Guards) expires at the end of August. Mr. Wilhelm and the solicitor will approach council with any requests that are a result of the negotiations.
2. Homestead Borough has approached the Manager and Assistant Manager regarding Garbage collection. Mr. Petrarca believes that this could make a nice cash flow for the borough. Mr. Rapp would like to know if this would be a burden on the Public Works Department. Mr. Bachy will prepare a plan showing the fees and the schedule.

3. Mr. Wilhelm was contacted by the contractors working on the Denniston School Rehab project. They told him that they have run into several problems and that the project will be significantly delayed. They are still committed to finishing the project but will need to reassess their current plan.

21. Unfinished Business - none

22. New Business

1. Councilwoman Grose wants to thank residents for coming to the meeting and engaging in a civil discussion. She is a proponent of communication and believes that tonight's meeting is a chance for the borough to move forward and have more community engagement in the process.

23. Motion to Adjourn – P. Gionta, second T. Ward. All ayes, motion carries.

24. Meeting Adjourned at 8:27PM.