



**BOROUGH OF SWISSVALE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**

JUNE 3, 2020

1. Meeting called to order at 7:04 PM.
 2. Roll Call – W. Scales – here, C. Ansell – here, D. Petrarca – here, W. Price – here, M. Stanton – here, S. Alfonso Wells – here, A. Salisbury – here, D. Swartzwelder.
 3. Public Comment –
 - a. President Salisbury read public comments from two residents into the record. Copies of the public comments are attached to and incorporated into these minutes.
 4. Approval of Minutes – Motion to approve the minutes from the May 6, 2020 Council Meeting. Motion by D. Petrarca, second by S. Alfonso Wells. All ayes, motion carries.
 5. Agenda Items:
 - a. Interview of candidates for appointment to the Civil Service Commission.
 - i. Members of council interviewed Frank Berry, Blaz Bravar, and Nathan Shaulis for a position on the Civil Service Commission.
 - ii. S. Alfonso Wells made a motion to table the appointment, second by M. Stanton. All ayes, motion carries.
 - b. Motion to approve formally joining CONNECT and paying dues in the amount of \$723.00. Motion by S. Alfonso Wells, second by M. Stanton. All ayes, motion carries.
 - i. Ms. Alfonso Wells has expressed interest in becoming the Borough representative at future CONNECT meetings.
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- c. Motion to award a contract to Traffic Control & Engineering Company in the amount of \$44,126.01 for the replacement of the traffic signals and controller at the intersection of South Braddock Avenue with Waverly Street and Edgewood Avenue. Motion by M. Stanton, second by W. Price. All ayes, motion carries.

6. Finance Report –

- Paid Bills as of **May 31, 2020** in the amount of **\$230,993.11**
- Unpaid Bills as of **May 31, 2020** in the amount of **\$8,049.88**
- Motion by D. Petrarca, second by S. Alfonso Wells. All ayes, motion carries.

7. Police Report – Chief Watson

- a. The Police report is on file in the Borough Manager’s Office.
- b. The Chief read a statement from the Swissvale Police Department condemning the death of George Floyd.
 - i. Ms. Scales thanked Chief Watson and the police department for this letter condemning what happened in Minneapolis, MN.
- c. The police department is working to obtain funding to purchase body cameras. They already use cameras in their cars and look forward to using body cameras as well.
- d. The Chief re-stated the laws surrounding the use of fireworks in the state of Pennsylvania and in Swissvale Borough. Fireworks are effectively not to be used in Swissvale because state law requires them to be set off at least 150 feet from an occupied dwelling. There are no spaces in Swissvale that meet this requirement. If you hear or see anyone using fireworks you are encouraged to call 911 rather than confront your neighbors directly.
- e. Ms. Stanton asked Chief Watson to explain a program that Swissvale PD has expressed interest in joining. Chief Watson described the LEAD Pilot Program run through CONNECT. The goal of the program is to provide low level offenders assistance rather than having to arrest them. This is a new program that hasn’t started yet but Swissvale is excited to be involved.

8. Code and Fire Report – Chief Wilhelm

- a. The Code & Fire Report is on file in the Manager’s Office.
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- b. As previously reported the EMS calls have been low since the COVID-19 pandemic but they are starting to return to the normal volume. Fire calls have returned to the normal volume.
- c. In the last month the department issued 42 building and zoning permits. Code enforcement has also been busy; they issued 40 complaint notices.
- d. Chief Wilhelm has been working on a federal “SAFER” grant application. He has applied for \$484,000 for a recruitment and retention program to attract new volunteer firefighters to Swissvale.
- e. Ms. Alfonso Wells asked if Swissvale FD has a Junior Fire Fighter Program. Mr. Wilhelm said that there is a Junior Firefighter program in Swissvale that is open to kids who are 16 and older.

9. Public Works Report – Greg Bachy

- a. The parks in Swissvale have been closed to the public since March 25, 2020. Now that the state has announced that parks can open during the Green Phase of reopening, steps have been taken to sanitize the facilities and playground. The goal is to have the parks open by Friday June 5th but no later than Monday June 8th. Mr. Bachy is waiting for signs that he is required to post in the parks during the green phase.
 - i. Ms. Scales expressed interest in creating a park attendant position. This individual, paid or volunteer, would keep an eye on children who are playing in borough parks without parents present. Ms. Scales said that parents have approached her with concerns about leaving their children unattended at borough parks.
 - b. The residents of Peggy Lou Lane have expressed difficulty exiting their street onto Delaware Avenue due to cars that are parked on both sides of the street. After looking into the issue, Mr. Bachy recommends that council pass an ordinance prohibiting parking on one side of Delaware Avenue that is closest to Peggy Lou Lane. The solicitor has already started preparing the ordinance and advertisement of the ordinance. This will allow for residents of Peggy Lou Lane to exit their street safely and it will also accommodate emergency vehicles and garbage trucks. The residents in that area who would be affected by the changes to parking will be notified.
 - c. The changes to garbage collection that were instituted during the COVID-19 Pandemic caused some initial confusion for residents and an increase in complaints. Given time to adjust, residents are complying with the new rules and complaints have returned to a normal volume. Because the majority of the changes were actually a stricter enforcement of the solid waste collection ordinance, some of them are likely to stay in place. Those changes include: putting trash in a bag that is sealed tight with no rips,
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putting garbage out in a can, and refraining from throwing out loose items in cans without bags. The limitation on bulk items was put in place to minimize the number of trips to the landfill and will be removed as soon as possible.

- d. Mr. Price asked Mr. Bachy for an update on the repairs to the Borough Building. Mr. Bachy explained that the building is 90% complete and that the section of the building that posed a risk to the safety of employees and visitors has been taken care of. There are some last-minute tasks that the electrician will need to take care of and the condition of the cell block and the Police Chief's office still have to be addressed. The DPW employees continue to use the McCague Street Garage as their primary work space.

10. C.O.G. Report – none

11. President's Remarks – none

12. Mayor's Report – Mayor Deneen Swartzwelder

- a. The Swissvale Farmers Market will be back this summer starting Saturday June 6, 2020. It will run from 9 am until 1 pm in the Noble Street Municipal parking lot.

13. Water Authority Report – Tracey Crombie-Collins

- a. The shut-off moratorium and suspension of WPJWA fees are still in place.
- b. As of 6/1, the Drive-Thru window will again be available from 8 am to 4:15 pm and the office staff will be back at full force. The lobby remains closed at this time.
- c. Management has implemented processes based on CDC Pandemic Guidelines for the safety of the customers, staff and system.
- d. Payments are down and delinquent accounts are increasing.
- e. System-wide from 4/28 to 5/26, there were 13 breaks including 2 in Swissvale on Miriam Street.
- f. All meeting agendas and approved minutes are posted to the Water Authority's website and can be found at: www.wpjwa.com/meetings/
- g. The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 23 and may be via conference call. Public participation may be in-person or by contacting the Authority by the day prior to the meeting.

14. Planning Commission – Greg Bachy

- a. No report

15. Solicitor Report – Robert McTiernan

- a. No report

16. Engineer Report – Robert Zischkau

- a. No report

17. Borough Manager Report – Clyde Wilhelm

- a. The previous owner of the McCague Street property received the real estate tax bill from Allegheny County. The issue was rectified after it was brought to the County's attention.
- b. The municipal facilities report is nearing completion. It will include all of the options that were considered during the search for a new municipal building. The document is several hundred pages long and the tentative date of completion in June 15th.
- c. Since this is going to be the last virtual meeting, Mr. Wilhelm wants to plan for in person meetings. For now, the plan is to continue meeting once a month. Meetings can take place in the Fire Department garage where there is enough space for social distancing. Mr. Wilhelm will advertise that the location has changed. Council members who don't want to attend in person will have an option to call in and members of the public can request to have any public comment read at the meeting on their behalf.

18. Unfinished Business

- a. Mr. Price asked to revisit the Borough Manager hiring process. Mr. Ansell said he was working on consolidating the data received in the survey for residents. He is using that data to start writing a job description with the rest of the hiring committee. They will meet next week to finalize the job description. Once all of that is complete, other members of council will be given a chance to weigh in. Now that the borough building has been repaired and the COVID-19 Pandemic has calmed Mr. Wilhelm is prepared to step down and Mr. Bachy expressed that he is willing to fill in starting July 31st.

19. New Business

- a. The Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Committee:
 - i. The EIDC read a statement condemning the death of George Floyd.
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- ii. The EIDC would like to recognize June as PRIDE Month. A month designated to celebrate and uplift members of the LGBT community.
 - iii. The EIDC wants the Borough to recognize Juneteenth as a Borough Holiday. Juneteenth is June 19th and recognizes the end of slavery in America.
- b. Swissvale was recognized as the 5th healthiest real estate market in Pennsylvania. Mr. Wilhelm would like to thank all employees and elected officials, past and present, who have worked hard to make Swissvale a great community.

20. Motion to adjourn by M. Stanton, second by S. Alfonso Wells. All ayes, motion carries.

21. Meeting adjourned at 9:51 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT 1

Hello, my name is Rachel Thompson, and I am a Swissvale resident. Thank you to Swissvale Borough Council for reading this on my behalf.

Following the murder of George Floyd, our country has come to a reckoning with police misconduct, especially racial bias that ends in the deaths of Black Americans. We've seen escalating tensions between the public and police as this comes to a head.

It would be disingenuous to pretend that Swissvale is a stranger to police misconduct and racial bias. A simple web search surfaces allegations in major media outlets, including the death at the hands of Swissvale police of Andre Thomas, which Swissvale Borough settled a lawsuit for. Swissvale also employed Michael Rosfeld as a part-time officer when he murdered Antwon Rose II nearby, and our borough has refused repeated calls from the public to reassess police procedures and hiring standards since then.

It would also be naive to pretend that we are immune to unrest here, or that further incidents couldn't happen here, when our borough has done nothing extraordinary to prevent the kind of police misconduct that our entire nation must now reckon with. The status quo is unsustainable, and I am asking Swissvale to take steps that will prevent further harm, unrest, and death.

Many aspects of police reform are within Swissvale's control. One item that can make a big difference is the terms regarding conduct and termination that are specified in our police union contract. Tonight, I ask Swissvale to:

- Publish Swissvale's Police Union Contract publicly on the web,
- Specify when the current contract expires,
- Specify who conducts negotiations and who approves the contract, and
- Actively solicit wide and diverse public input on what is important to Swissvale residents for the next contract

Better union contracts for police accountability is one of several research-backed methods for reducing police violence. You can find more information on effective methods at JoinCampaignZero.org.

I hope we all recognize that Black lives matter, but that they are far too often treated as if they do not, or that they matter less than white lives. As part of the Swissvale borough government and administration, it is within your power to start demonstrating that Black lives matter to you.

Thank you,
Rachel Thompson

PUBLIC COMMENT 2

Could you please update us on the status of police body cams: Do we have any? How many? If not, are we getting them soon? What's the timetable? etc.

Thanks!

Amy P Kennedy
7460 Schoyer Ave
