

SHARPSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
June 25, 2020

Honorable Mayor
Members of Council

The Regular Business Meeting of the Sharpsburg Council was held June 25, 2020 at 6:30pm.

President Reno called the meeting to order and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call found the following members present; Greg Domian, Jonathan Jaso, Karen Pastor, Joe Simbari, Brad Truman, Adrienne Laing, Brittany Reno, Mayor Rudzki and Chief Stelitano.

Citizen Comments (Agenda items Only):

Kathy Mercer – Permits – Handicap Parking on Penn Street. How many spots are going to be approved on that street?

Chief Stelitano addressed Mercer and said he did a site check before approving the spot.

Citizen Comments (Registered)

Lindsay Huff – Community Art Project. Ms. Huff gave her presentation on her metal art which she would like to create for Sharpsburg. She would like to put art at the gateway at the 62nd Street Bridge and at Heinz Baseball Field.

Officer Brian Hoebel – De-escalation Training – Hoebel explained the class he would like to attend and what he would be learning. After completion of the class, Officer Hoebel would receive a two (2) year certification. He would also be able to train all our officers and those in the surrounding boroughs and townships. The cost of the training is \$940.00. CC's Café owners Cindy and Anita generously offered to pay for Officer Hoebel's training.

Officer Jon Kimmel – Body Camera's – Officer Kimmel gave a detailed presentation on two (2) different proposals from Axon on body cameras and the accessories that come with each package. Axon is a buildable system. Package #1 is the basic package, camera's, docking stations, and storage. Package #2 is the top of the line package. It includes all the mentioned equipment plus the Axon Signal and the TAP program. Axon Signal automatically turns on the body cam (example; if the car door opens) and the TAP program is the free upgrades of the body cams when available. An extensive conversation about the implementation of the body camera's ensued.

Chief Stelitano said he would like to get more feedback from other Chiefs in the surrounding areas using the body camera's before they are implemented. Rossey said that policies and procedures need to be put in place before the use of the cameras. Simbari asked Mayor Rudzki when he would like the cameras put into use? Rudzki replied as soon as possible as they can be used as a tool. He said that the total cost for the purchase would be approximately \$10,000 and then \$2,300 a year thereafter. Rudzki explained that the information is downloaded to a 3rd party cloud and maintained. The Chief and Officer Kimmel will have the licensing to be able to redact information and release information as needed from the 3rd party cloud. The Right to Know came into question. Rudzki said as long as the footage is not part of a criminal investigation the information can be disclosed. Rudzki asked the Solicitor to confirm. The

Solicitor confirmed that that is correct. Officer Kimmel asked to speak. He said the Right to Know and Act 22 go together with cameras and wiretaps. He said any evidence that is under the Right to Know must clear Act 22 and then the evidence would have to go to the district attorney's office for approval. Reno said she feels that we have the best police department in the county. She feels they will protect the officers and it is the right thing to do for public safety. Pastor was concerned about cost and jumping into something too quickly. Other council members were concerned about the cost as monies are not included in the current budget. Ruzki said he is fine tabling the conversation until Officer Kimmel has time to finish the policies and procedures and to check on grants available and the possibility of funds from the District Attorney's Office. Other council members were concerned about the cost as these monies are not included in the current budget.

Committee Reports

W. Rossey – Manager

Rossey explained each consent agenda item.

B. Truman – Zoning/Planning/Code

Nothing to report.

G. Domian – Personnel

Stated that they are one step closer to getting the painting and repairs done at the Linden Gym. He also mentioned that Adidas wants to have their basketball tournament at the gym on August 1st & 2nd.

Pastor – Public Safety

Calls: May 21

Reno asked Pastor about the fire truck repair bill. Pastor responded and said it was for the ladder truck and it was for inspection and repairs that needed to be done to pass the inspection. As of the meeting date, an invoice for cost was not available. Will advise next meeting.

Pastor said in addition to training, the fire department has continued doing maintenance around the building. Painting and replacing fluorescent lights with LED lights to save energy.

Let the record show G. Domian was excused at 7:56pm.

J. Simbari – Public Works

Simbari thanked CC's Café for donating money to pay for Officer Hoebel's training.

He also thanked Kathy Mercer from the fire department on her time maintaining the flowers around the building.

Simbari mentioned the work that is being done by Verizon and Duquesne light on the utility poles around town. We are in touch with Duquesne Light on the repairs to the concrete. Verizon has been repairing the holes with concrete and is supposed to send a different crew to complete the concrete repairs.

Simbari talked about a Main Street project – 2 Electric Car Charging Spots. He and Rossey have spoken with the owners of AmGuard and they are allowing the borough to use the first two spots in their parking lot for the two (2) charging units. Charge Point is the company that will supply and install the charging stalls.

Simbari addressed Solar Garbage Cans – they compact the trash by using solar energy. The cans will notify you that the cans are full and ready to be changed. The cost for a can is between \$3,000-\$4,000.

Simbari talked about the new DPW maintenance building saying the project is going very smoothly.

Simbari also mentioned Riverfront 47. He has been in contact with Steve Mosites. The project has slowed down because they had to meet some state requirements before proceeding with the project. Things are moving a little slower than expected.

Simbari said a new police car and dump truck are coming soon.

A. Laing – Health/Property

Laing thanked the first responders, faith community, and residents for their continued efforts during the pandemic.

Laing thanked CC's Café for paying for Officer Hoebel's de-escalation training.

Laing mentioned that Sara Smith from Sara's Pets and Plants would like to sponsor science classes for adults and host them at the borough building. She would like to have 4-5 classes in September.

Laing talked about the Environmental Council. They are going to meet to figure out the future of council and review the updated Sharpsburg Climate Action Plan.

Laing said Etna Borough is working on an anti-discrimination ordinance. She is attended a few meetings and she will keep council informed on their efforts on the ordinance.

Laing had the opportunity to attend the Black Lives Matter Rally in Squaw Valley Park on June 11th. She said some of the speakers who shared their experiences in the Fox Chapel School District were powerful and moving. It was nice to hear what the school districts efforts are to curb the racism in the school district.

J. Jaso – Finance

Jaso went over the April budget report with the overtime from the police department and DPW for clarity.

Rudzki interjected and said the police department has \$5000 allocated in the budget for overtime.

Rossey said the overtime from the DPW is from the extra time they put into painting lines and crosswalks in town.

Jaso asked why are we putting up handicap spots before they are approved? Rossey said that was his error in the paperwork.

Lou Costanzo – Fire Chief asked to speak. He asked why are there so many handicapped spots? Rudzki answered Costanzo and said these are homeowners or renters who pay taxes in this borough. They also have legitimate health issues that warrants the spot. We must be ADA compliant.

A. Mack – Junior Council

Nothing currently.

J. D'Ambrosio – Public Works Director

Nothing/absent

M. Rudzki – Mayor

Rudzki thanked the first responders, non-profit organizations, and the faith community in all they have done and continue to do for the community.

SNO and Roots of Faith have approximately 200 boxes of fresh vegetables for distribution at the Family Worship Center every Wednesday from 5-6pm through the end of August.

Rudzki thanked Anita and Cindy from CC's Café for paying for Officer Hoebel's training.

Rudzki congratulated all the graduates and wished them good luck in their endeavors.

Rudzki reminded the community that the library is open for curbside pick up and drop off. Monday-Thursday from 12-6pm and Saturday 10am-2pm.

Rudzki thanked the Sharpsburg Market Garden. The garden is coming along. The first year they are donating all their produce and next year they will start charging for the produce but will use that money to reinvest in the garden.

Rudzki thanked the DPW for the great work keeping the parks grass cut, painting fire lanes and yellow lines are getting done and the crosswalks are looking good.

Simbari spoke to Rudzki about a letter that was received by the borough from a concerned resident about Rudzki's use of the #8can'twait campaign. He asked Rudzki for clarity. Are you specifically talking about the 8 principals or when you type in #8cantwait.org and you see all those other topics besides the first 8?

Rudzki replied that he supports the first 8 principals in the original campaign. He and the Chief put out a pamphlet that stated use of force policies. I only support the first suggestions and President Obama had it linked to his website and he has since removed it because of the changes that have been made. When we redid our policies in 2018, Officer Kimmel and Sculli did a great job. Out of the 8 suggestions we have met 6. When I took a look at the last 2, we do not have a ban on the use of choke holds, however today the PA Senate passed a law to ban choke holds and it is now in the house, so by the time we get to look at it again they may already be banned.

Reno asked if we could make a motion to ban choke holds from the police policies right now? Chief Stelitano interjected and said I gave everyone a copy of the policies and procedures in 2018. It has 339 pages. There is a ban on using choke holds. Rudzki said that when there is deadly force involved it is the last continuum to use.

Reno made a motion to remove the approval for the use of a choke hold at the top level of escalation in our policies and procedures.

2nd by Laing

All in favor

Truman – Nay

Simbari – Nay

Domian – Absent

Jaso – Nay

Pastor – Nay

Laing – Yes

Reno – Yes

4 Nays, 2 yays motion is lost.

B. Reno – President

Reno spoke with Sara Smith from Sara's Pets and Plants about a mural she wants to paint on the side of her building. Reno understood that when Smith visited the borough building that she was advised she needed a sign permit. Rossey said the question is what she is going to put there. If her name is in the mural, then she would most likely need a sign permit. Pastor said she needs to get permission from the building owner. Rossey then said it must be in good taste.

Reno said the Active Allegheny Grant opened again. She feels it would be an opportunity for us to get funded and a concrete plan in place for the small section of the Riverfront Trail. Reno is going to reach out to Mary Ellen, Etna Borough Manager, to see if she is on board with starting the application.

Reno is working with Penn State Connect intern for the last 9 months on the green gas emissions in town to find out how much is coming from Route 28, commercial buildings, and

homes in town whether it's high electric bills or gas bills. She would like to come up with some strategies to eliminate some of our burden to try and make the peoples lives better. She says it comes down to energy efficiency like insulation of a home. She has been working on a climate action plan. She sent it to Laing and Rudzki and the AEC. We will be working on a final draft to submit to all council members next month and hopefully adopt as a resolution.

T. Stelitano – Chief of Police
304 calls for May
3 Adult Arrest
0 Juvenile Arrest

Stelitano mentioned that overdoses are on the rise. He also said it is just not in Sharpsburg that it is everywhere. Stelitano also said the EMS calls are up, too. There were 50 calls last month. Stelitano commended Office Kimmel and Hussar on the robbery at the CoGo's. Within 24 hours, they found the suspect and he is now in the county jail. They did an excellent job.

Stelitano gave an update of all the changes in the police department since 2018.

1. Updated polices.
2. New police vehicles & K9 vehicle and K9 Officer & Jango
3. New Radios
4. New weapons (handgun, shotgun, taser)
5. New laptops in the vehicles
6. New computers in the station with new monitors
7. New camera system
8. New locks – station doors
9. Created a Training Board
10. He too has attended seminars. (Community Policing/Department Mgt./Leadership and Communication Excellence, use of force involving people with diminished capacity/Managing Civil Protests and Public Assembly/De-escalation and reasonable Use of Force/Enhancing Crisis Intervention skills.
11. In 2018, all officers had the following training: Tactics and De-Escalation/Planning for active assaults/officer safety avoiding Ambush/Enhanced Intervention skills. In 2019, all officers had the following: Advanced Interview/Criminal Technology/Officer Safety Vehicle stops. In 2020, all officers had the following training: Officer safety/personal leadership/operational planning crowd control. This all includes legal updates every year.
12. We have an officer that is in the North Hills SRT (Negotiator).
13. Officers in DANET
14. Officer trained in PA Childline (juveniles)
15. Officers trained in domestic violence lethality screens
16. In house armorer and firearms/taser instructor
17. Inform training computers Report writing and information sharing system
18. Two officers evidence custodians
19. Part-time officers' proficient firearms and assist with weapons cleaning
20. Part-time officer's vehicle maintenance equipment detailing all vehicles
21. Part-time officer has over 20 years' experience, great mentor and field training officer
22. We have employee meetings every other month to go over policy guidelines issues, reports etc.
23. During firearms training, we go over the use of force, de-escalation. We do this twice a year. One is in the spring during the day for 8 hours and one in the fall all day and night. Officers are put through stressful situations and they must maintain composure and think through the process.

Stelitano makes it a point to interact with all officers while changing shifts and go over all incidents. He makes sure all things are well with the officer. His door is always open. He believes the department is on the right path. He feels communication is the key. We communicate with each other very well. We are constantly training and staying up to date with all training requirements with the state and FBI. We are always willing to listen and train even harder. We have added Interaction with all officers while at training. Everyone is involved. It's no longer a "quick training" like it was in the past. There is a lot of communication and round table discussion during and after.

Stelitano wants council and the residents to know that we are here to serve and protect ALL members of this community and will strive to maintain peace and order and continuing education.

Simbari referred to a quote from Coach Tomlin of the Pittsburgh Steelers "The Standard is the Standard."

Pastor said to Simbari's point, our officers have integrity and treat our residents with respect. There have been zero complaints about our officers. She addressed Reno about the letters that were sent to the borough. Pastor said I am sure they were well intended but at the same time, I am not sure how long they have lived here, and they know nothing about our officers and our department. She feels that there are even some council members that do not know all of our officers. If they got to know them, they would see the integrity and respect they have for the community.

Jaso asked Stelitano where we are with the crosswalk blitz? Stelitano said now that the crosswalks have been painted, we can get on that.

Jaso said he had spoken with the Solicitor about the fireworks ordinance. Stelitano said that if we get calls, we give a warning and tell them that if we come back you will be cited.

M. Witherel - Solicitor

The Solicitor said to follow-up on Jaso's comment about the fireworks ordinance from 1981 is antiquated and replaced by the new 2017 state's law and to proceed to use the noise ordinance pertaining to fireworks.

Consent Agenda:

- a. Payment of bills due through July 23, 2020
- b. Minutes from the May 28, 2020 meeting
- c. Motion to pass Resolution 20-09 approving the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program (GTRP) grant application for the replacement of the gym floor at the Sharpsburg Recreation Center.
- d. Approve/disapprove request from Bettina Taylor to close Cecil and 18th Street on Saturday, August 15th, 2020 from 12:00-5:00 to hold a birthday party for her son who is turning 1 year old.

Motion by Pastor

2nd by Simbari

All in Favor: Yes

Simbari – Yes

Pastor - Yes

Domian – Absent

Jaso – Yes

Truman – Yes

Laing – Yes

Reno – Yes

Permits:

- a. Handicap Parking
- b. Cynthia Jefferson – 910 Penn St.
- c. Use Permits (NONE)
- d. Zoning/Building (NONE)

Refunds - None

Executive Session – None

Reno asked for a Motion to Adjourn at 9:03 pm
Motion by Jaso, 2nd by Simbari, All in Favor – Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

William Rossey
Sharpsburg Borough Manager

WR:ck