

January 7, 2025

HARMONY BOROUGH Council Meeting January 7, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Greg Such

Joe Dippold

Frank Luek

Phyllis Metz

Jason Sarver

Don Sims

Dave Szakelyhidi

Mayor Cathy Rape

OTHERS PRESENT:

Susie Altemus

Melanie Dodson, ZPD

Bob Leonberg

Matt Racunas, Solicitor - Virtual

Larry Reynolds

Nancy Reynolds

Tom Thompson

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CALL TO ORDER:

Council President, Greg Such called the January 7, 2025 Council Meeting to order at 7:00 pm. This meeting was held in-person and remotely through Zoom virtual meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLIGANCE:

MINUTES:

In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Dave Szakelyhidi, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the December 3, 2024, Council meeting minutes.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Solicitor Matt Racunas reported there was nothing new to report, Matt is working on a stormwater easement issue with Tom (Thompson) and Greg (Such).

BOARD REPORTS/APPOINTMENTS:

Appointments:

Greg Such reported on the list of appointments that were needed.

Building Inspector: T.W. McCosby

In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Jason Sarver, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved T.W. McCosby as the Building Inspector.

Engineer: Tom Thompson of Gannett Fleming

In a motion made by Joe Dippold and seconded by Jason Sarver, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved Tom Thompson of Gannett Fleming as Borough Engineer.

Solicitor: Racunas Law Group

In a motion made by Phyllis Metz and seconded by Frank Luek, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved Racunas Law Group as Borough Solicitor.

HARB (Harmony Architectural Review Board): Jane Skelley

In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Phyllis Metz, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved Jane Skelley for a 5-year term on HARB.

WBCA (Western Butler County Authority) Tom Tomayko

In a motion made by Frank Luek and seconded by Phyllis Metz, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved Tom Tomayko for a 5-year term on the WBCA Board.

Parks Board: Ron Goehring, Jen Janssen, and Greg Such

In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Frank Luek, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved Ron Goehring, Jen Janssen, and Greg Such for a 4-year term on the Parks Board.

Vacancy Officer: Karen Sharrar

In a motion made by Frank Luek and seconded by Phyllis Metz, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved Karen Sharrar for a 5-year term as the Vacancy Officer.

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BOARD REPORTS/APPOINTMENTS:

Appointments:

Harmony Borough Water Authority: Dave Szakelyhidi

In a motion made by Frank Luek and seconded by Jason Sarver, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved Dave Szakelyhidi for a 5-year term on the Harmony Borough Water Authority Board.

Planning Commission: Larry Reynolds

In a motion made by Jason Sarver and seconded by Don Sims, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved Larry Reynolds for a 4-year term on the Planning Commission Board.

Zoning Hearing Board: Jim John

In a motion made by Frank Luek and seconded by Joe Dippold, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved Jim John for a 3-year term on the Zoning Hearing Board.

Zelienople Library Board: John Ziegler

In a motion made by Phyllis Metz and seconded by Frank Luek, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved John Ziegler for a 3-year term on the Zelienople Library Borough.

Southwest Butler County Council of Governments (SWBC CoG):

Greg Such reported on the administrative help for the Fire Department and the Storm Water Authority, this is coming through the CoG. The thinking is that it will be a 65/35 split; 65% funded through the municipalities and 35% funded through the storm water.

Each communities expected contributions were allocated based on the amount of fire tax that gets provided. Harmony provides \$22,000 worth of fire tax a year, or 5%. Jackson Township is 52%, Lancaster Township is 25%, and Zelienople Borough is 18%. It was decided that each community would contribute accordingly, Harmony's share is \$3,250 a year. Mary Hess and Chris Rearick are taking care of the interviewing process. Evans City will need to pay something as they are part of the Storm Water Authority but have their own fire department. Jason Sarver inquired if the position would be grant writing, Greg Such responded the position would be responsible for grant administration. Frank Luek inquired if it was in our budget. Greg Such commented not yet, but we're looking pretty good income versus expense wise as of the end of November. We are collecting a lot of tax money, there's some per capita tax, income tax is high and real estate taxes have gone up. There is a new real estate tax system which may have something to do with that.

In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Jason Sarver, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the \$3,250 to support the Fire District and Storm Water Authority Administrative Position. Cath Rape inquired about the oversight that was to be over the fire department. Greg Such responded that it comes through the CoG meetings and that Kevin Behun, President and the Vice President of the Fire District gives a report every quarter.

HARB:

Dave Szakelyhidi had nothing new to report.

Harmony Water Authority:

Dave Szakelyhidi reported on the water rate increase, the base rate is going up from \$46 to \$47 and the usage rate is going up from \$6.50/1000 gallons to \$8.50/1000 gallons. Operating costs have significantly increased, due to the price of supplies and materials needed. Water authority is

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Harmony Water Authority Cont.:

committed to managing those costs and staying efficient while striving to give our residents the best quality water at the most reasonable cost possible

Parks Board:

Susie Altemus reported that the Silvester went well, there were some traffic issues. Susie reported that there were 417 5k runners and 73 for the 1-mile fun-run. People could sign-up online right up to the start of the race. Check-in went a lot smoother due to a new mobile app. . There was a lot of traffic on Evergreen Road, we will need to work on traffic control, maybe limiting it to necessary traffic. Phyllis Metz suggested adjusting the time of closing and opening the streets.

Susie Altemus passed out a map of the route for the 1-mile run, there are problems due to cars trying to leave after the 5K and cars coming in for the ball drop and fireworks. Susie suggested changing the route and blocking off Liberty and Monroe Streets. That way cars that are trying to get to US Liner to park will not affect the kids. Susie also suggested changing the time of the 1-mile to be during the 5K race. Greg Such commented that some people do both. Jason Sarver commented that there are a lot of variables involved and recommended forming a group with a couple of representatives from the race that understand the needs and then a couple of police officers that understand the traffic to come up with a solution. Mayor Cath Rape suggested Spring Street, it is 1 mile back and out. Greg Such responded that Spring Street is used for traffic because we block off Mercer at Spring because we do not want traffic going through the Square. Jason will help coordinate a meeting with the Police and the Parks Board. Susie also reported that another grant (Butler County Park Renovation / Development Program) is coming up and applications are due February 20th. Susie also reported that we got a lot more exposure this year for the Silvester from Butler County Tourism and KDKA came in and did a piece, Greg Such commented there was also a little piece, an announcement, on Channel 11.

Library Board:

Frank Luek reported that the head librarian started, John Ziegler will now be the Library Representative for Harmony.

Historic Harmony:

Frank Luek reported that History Harmony will be closed until the end of March for renovations. They will give tours if you call.

Planning Commission:

Larry Reynolds had nothing new to report.

WBCA:

Greg Such had nothing new to report. Solicitor Matt Racunas commented that construction continues.

Shared Services:

Bob Leonberg reported that he borrowed a truck from Zelig for a couple of days while our plow truck was down. Bob also reported that Zelig came over and pushed back the salt. Greg Such thanked Zelig.

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Parking and Signage:

Cathy Rape reported that there is a letter in Council's packet from the Ryan Gloyer Middle School regarding Seneca signs and inquired if Council wanted to participate. Greg Such commented that the school would like help to identify where to put the signs at the edge of the Borough. Dave Szakelyhidi commented that they could put it on the water tank. Mayor Cath Rape suggested asking if there will be a sign in Zelig and back-to-back with one for Harmony; the same way with Jackson Township. Don Sims inquired if there was a cost involved. Cath Rape responded no. Jason Sarver read the part of the letter that stated "the costs for the signs will be covered entirely by our group, and will assume responsibility for their installation and maintenance." Greg Such commented there is a survey. Cath Rape will open the survey and ask the question about having back-to-back signs. Phyllis Metz inquired what type of event they want to have. Greg Such commented that it is a press opportunity. Jason Sarver commented it is to unveil the signs, reading from the letter, "where municipal leaders, school district officials, and students could come together to celebrate this partnership and the mutual respect between the community."

Harmony Business Association:

Cath Rape reported that HBA sent out a survey because they are looking for a new president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. The secretary is the only one that said she'd do it again, nobody else will step up. They have quite a few members in the HBA, but no participation. there is a member survey that asks numerous questions and maybe the HBA will end up disbanded if nobody will take over running events or at least participate. Cath Rape commented that they made her an honorary member and she commented that the two larger businesses that we have in town do not participate, Union Brothers isn't in town, but Union Brothers and the Harmony Inn have different events themselves; and everybody else is a part time. They do not keep the same hours, and it is hard to be a group if you're not on the same page and not wanting to stay open every day, all day. Jason Sarver commented that Council is always here if they have any concerns to address with us, we welcome to hear it. Greg Such commented that the Harmony Inn used to be pretty involved.

Other Meetings:

Greg Such reported that the Commissioners' Communications meeting is Friday, 1/10 at 10AM, and the Stormwater Meeting is now on 1/22 not 1/8.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

BOROUGH STAFF REPORTS:

Police Report:

Report submitted via email.

Dave Szakelyhidi commented that they had the bicycles out for the Silvester. Jason Sarver commented that they are pretty slick, could get up and down the streets quickly especially when there isn't room for a vehicle.

Office:

Amy Brown had nothing new to report.

Borough Street Manager:

Bob Leonberg reported that he has been keeping up with the snow, he had to take 2 loads of salt in December through the COG. Bob wanted it delivered to Jackson (we were out of room) but they couldn't deliver to Jackson as we signed a contract, but we got the salt pushed in. Bob reported they finished up the garage office, they need to build a doorframe so the temporary curtain is still up; it helps to keep the heat in. Melanie painted the bathroom at the garage. Dave Szakelyhidi commented that we have a DEP inspection coming up in February and he would like the plant cleaned up and would like the new employees to all meet the people from DEP. Bob met with Jackson and Lancaster about the paving bids. He told them he's stuck with just two people, everyone else has four; people do work but we can figure something out for line striping or patching cracks. Greg Such inquired if the paving bids went in. Bob responded not yet. Bob commented that we are waiting on the stormwater project. Greg Such commented that he doesn't think we are going to go across Mercer Street with it; we could do Mercer Street. Don Sims commented that we should wait until March to see how roads are after winter. Mercer Street is something we've wanted to do but we want the drainage done. Greg Such commented that he doesn't think we are going across Mercer Street with storm drains. Don Sims commented that there are pipes that are relatively disintegrating under the street, he will wait for the Engineer to be done with the drainage.

Zoning and Codes:

Report submitted via email.

Larry apologized for his absence; he spent 26 days in the hospital. Greg Such welcomed him back. Larry reported that his last notice sent to Mantia was 10/31. Greg Such commented that Jason (Sarver) Larry and Matt (Solicitor Racunas) need to get together to file a citation through the Magistrate. Jason Sarver commented at each violation is a separate citation, submit the citations to the Magistrate, the Judge will have everyone in and our goal is to have a court-order timeline set up. When the Judge sets the timeline up and it is not done, fines are involved. The next step is to cite them in court. It was suggested that Larry and Jason meet to go over the next step, Solicitor Matt commented that he can join by phone if he's needed. Officer Dodson commented that the Magistrate raises the court costs at the 1st of the year, she will get Jason a copy of the fees. There was also a discussion about Antonetti's building up their property with fill. Greg Such inquired where Antonetti's live, Frank Luek responded Bluff Street. Frank Luek commented that Antonetti showed him a map that the Borough owns a strip between the lots, Larry responded correct it is a paper street. Larry commented that he walked the whole site and he is right at the edge, he's not really encroaching on the paper street; we do not have an ordinance about putting dirt on your property without a permit. Greg Such commented that Mr. Antonetti would need to file a report. Jason Sarver commented a small project report, it gives the Borough an idea what is going on or what their intentions are.

Engineer Report:

Engineer Tom Thompson reported the contractor for the Stormwater Project, SET, has been in town finalizing their scope and approach on the project, doing certain details, and they're just about ready to get started, Tom expects them to come in and get started with certain sections, there are certain sections that we do not have the ability to work on yet, but they'll work around those at this point in time.

The RACP Project there still isn't a permit from Penn Dot, Tom expects to be able to go out to bid in February. Cath Rape commented on the grant list that Vogel sent via email. Cath inquired if the flood mitigation assistance would be something that we could do to help people. It said the

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Engineer Report Cont.:

borough would have to apply. Tom Thompson commented that some of those are restricted based on where they're at and what the mitigation measures are. Greg Such commented that he looked at one of those for down around Geis's house, Greg called about it but it was not applicable for what we wanted to do.

Public Safety:

Phyllis Metz reported that she talked to Rebecca Shinski, her event form was already approved for April 26, 2025, Phyllis got back to her and told her that if she needed anything to let Phyllis know. Phyllis will remind council of the event before it happens in April. Greg Such commented that the Shamrock Shuffle will be coming up.

Business Development:

Cath Rape reported that she received a request from the Mayor's Association to make January 27th an International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and inquired if Council was interested in making that a day of remembrance. If so, we would need to have a proclamation. The Proclamation reads, "This proclamation recognizes January 27th, 2025 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Harmony Borough, whereas the holocaust was the State sponsored systematic persecution and murder of an estimated 17 million people by the German Nazi regime. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, between 1933 and 1945. And whereas German Nazis not only targeted the European Jewish population, but countless others, including Romania, mentally and physically disabled individuals, homosexuals, Poles, Communists, Soviet citizens, Socialists and Jehovah Witnesses due to perceived racial and biological inferiority, and on political, ideological and behavioral grounds. And whereas on January 27th, 1945 Soviet soldiers opened the gates to Auschwitz Birkenau, the largest and deadliest concentration camp and liberated more than 6,000 prisoners, most of whom were ill and dying due to the horrors they were subjected to by their captors, and whereas, in 2005 in commemoration of the importance and significance of that event, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution establishing January 27th as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and whereas January 27th serves as both a day on which the lives of those who perished during the holocaust are honored, and on which a commitment to human rights is reasserted by rejecting any denial of the holocaust as a historical event and educating new generations of the atrocities that transpired in an effort to prevent future acts of genocide from occurring, and whereas the General Assembly of the United Nations also encourages, as part of its original declaration in 2005, that this day be used to condemn all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment, or violence against individual or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief whenever they occur. Now, therefore, I, Cathryn Rape, Mayor of the Borough of Harmony, Pennsylvania, with the support of members of Borough Council and the citizens of Harmony, do hereby proclaim January 27th 2025 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Harmony in memory of the victims of the holocaust and in honor of the survivors as well as the rescuers and liberators, and further proclaim that we, as residents of Harmony Borough, should strive to overcome intolerance and indifference through learning and remembrance. Proclaimed by Mayor of Harmony Borough on the 7th day of January of the year 2025." There was discussion regarding the proclamation. Don Sims suggested declaring it the International Holocaust Remembrance Day without the proclamation. In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Frank Luek, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved to declare January 27th as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day without the proclamation.

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Business Development Cont.:

Cath also reported that the Seneca Valley students are coming in May, we will need to get project ideas for them; they would like the teachers to do something for the communities on January 20th. Cath inquired if Council had anything for the teachers to come and volunteer their time. The suggestion was made to have the windows and blinds cleaned in the council room. Cath Rape also inquired if anyone was interested in having a neighborhood watch. Cath reported that someone asked her why there wasn't one. Dave Szakelyhidi commented that most people have Ring Cameras now. Cath commented the person who inquired does not live in town.

Personnel:

Jason Sarver recommended a 3% raise across the board for all employees. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Joe Dippold, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the 3% raise for all employees effective January 1st. Phyllis Metz suggested doing evaluations, Jason Sarver suggested Cathy (Funkhouser) prepare the evaluation and then the Personnel Committee would meet with the employees.

Finance:

Greg Such reported that we are hitting our marks on last year's budget. The audit will be coming up in February.

Streets:

Don Sims reported that they will talk about streets closer to March after winter. Dave Szakelyhidi commented that Division Street is in perfect shape, the Sewer Authority will pretty much destroy it with the new pumping line for the new pumping station is going to go, up across 68, up Division Street to Center Street or Spring Street and down through Zelig. Don Sims inquired if their intention is to patch what they destroy or is their intention to repave the street. Dave Szakelyhidi commented in Zelig they have to go curb to curb; Harmony does not have that requirement. Larry Reynolds commented that we do have curb to curb requirement but it is not backed up totally by ordinance. Larry also stated that we have some monies that protect us with the street opening permit, it was written that they get half back upon completion and the remaining half in 90 days.

Facilities:

Dave Szackelyhidi had nothing new to report.

Grants:

Greg Such had nothing new to report.

Training & Conferences & Correspondence:

Greg Such had nothing new to report.

BILLS PAYABLE:

Greg Such reported that the following lists of bills were presented to Harmony Borough Council for approval:

General Bills Payable in the amount of **\$17,686.24**

Payroll in the amount of **\$10,267.38**

Silvester Fund Bills Payable in the amount of **\$2,575.00**

General Bills Already Paid in the amount of **\$11,958.71**

Silvester Fund Bills Already Paid in the amount of **\$5,200.78**

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In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Dave Szakelyhidi, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved all bills for payment as presented on the lists.

Adjourned: 8:08PM

As there was no further business to discuss, the Harmony Borough Council adjourned the January 7, 2025 In-person meeting at 8:08PM. In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Jason Sarver, the Harmony Borough Council meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Brown".

Amy Brown, Recording Secretary

Monthly Activity Report
Harmony Borough Code and Zoning Enforcement and
Residential Multi-Unit Dwellings Fire Inspection

December 2024

Spoke with Michael Francic concerning his expired building permit for his garage framing and exterior walls. I indicated to him that the permit was still in force and I would get to his property to inspect the project.

Spoke with Mr. Doug Burkhart in reference to a dumpster permit. I recommended that he go down to Borough Hall and get a permit from Amy.

Spoke with Tracy Vaccarello concerning a deck permit. Unfortunately, she live in Cranberry Township so I could not help her.

Amanda Lee questioned the time frame for all of WBCA's permits to be paid in advance of starting work. I explained the we require the permit fees to be paid in full 30 days prior to starting work.

Spoke with Mr. Norb Dietrich of 1121 Seneca Drive complained about the numerous garbage bag dumped all over the property and an abandoned car with expired Florida plates on the property at 1123 Seneca Drive. I will prepare the required summons for the owners of the property.

Met with Mike Antonetti in reference to excessive storm water flowing onto his property from his neighbors. I am preparing the summons necessary for the neighbor to maintain any storm water runoff on his property.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry A. Reynolds