

February 3, 2026

**HARMONY BOROUGH
COUNCIL MEETING
February 3, 2026**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Greg Such

Phyllis Metz

Frank Luek

Dave Szakelyhidi

Joe Dippold

Don Sims

Beth Bruker Walos

Mayor Cathy Rape

OTHERS PRESENT:

Susie Altemus

Bob Leonberg

Chief Jim Miller, ZPD

Denise Rodgers

Tom Thompson

John Ziegler

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CALL TO ORDER:

Council President, Greg Such called the February 3, 2026 Council Meeting to order at 7:00PM. This meeting was held in-person and remotely through Teams 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 January 5th Reorganization and Regular Council meeting minutes.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Solicitor Matt Racunas reported that he drafted a Street Opening Ordinance to include curb-to-curb paving. It will need to be compared to the existing Street Opening Ordinance to decide to rescind that ordinance in its entirety and just adopt the new ordinance, or make sure that it doesn't have overlap or conflict. Matt will work with Greg on which way is going to be the easiest and cleanest way to move forward with the Street Opening Ordinance. Matt also reported that the vote for the Disaster Declaration needs to be ratified. In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Dave Szakelyhidi, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved to ratify the Disaster Declaration. Solicitor Matt also reported that there will be a Status Conference next week regarding the ZHB issue and he will give an update next month.

BOARD REPORTS/APPOINTMENTS:

Appointments:

Greg Such reported that no appointments were needed at this time.

Southwest Butler County Council of Governments (SWBC CoG):

Greg Such reported that the COG approved their 2026 budget. The paving bids were discussed and Don Sims commented that he would like to wait until April to commit on what road(s) the Borough will pave. Dave Szakelyhidi commented about the gas company destroying roads in town. Don Sims would like to meet with the gas company. Amy will contact the gas company to request a meeting in March and Greg Such will let CoG know that Harmony will be an add-on for the paving project. Greg Such reported that CoG will propose an oversight committee to work with the Harmony EMS similarly as they do with the Harmony Fire District. Greg also reported that they are putting together a job description for the new EMA Coordinator, Bonnie Forsythe, and there might be some more paperwork that we need to do on that, based on an e-mail that she sent stating that the County might want to see something. Joe Dippold commented that he appreciated hearing from Amy (EMA Coordinator) before the big snowstorm. Cath Rape inquired if the Borough has an Emergency Plan. Joe Dippold responded that he doesn't think it's very specific, that it is more about who has what roles, and who can call an emergency, the chain of command and anything for an evacuation would come at the County level.

HARB:

Dave Szakelyhidi reported that there wasn't any new business at last night's HARB meeting.

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Harmony Water Authority:

Dave Szakelyhidi reported that the Water Authority purchased a new low service pump that has been installed and a second low service pump has been ordered. A new backwash pump has also been ordered. Dave reported that the Water Authority applied for a grant that was administrated by the County for the Chlorine Loop which is over \$400,000.00 and required by the DEP. The Water Authority received \$100,000.00 from that grant and will need to get a loan for the remaining cost of the project.

Parks Board:

Susie Altemus reported on getting a quote from Lance Welliver for limestone for the walking trail for the grant. Jackson Township will spread it as in-kind contribution. Evans City, Harmony, Zelienople and Jackson will do an inventory of all the parks. Seneca Valley talked about the need for an indoor facility for the basketball courts and indoor playground. Susie reported that she would like to order signs for Wood Street Park, an example of the signs was given to Council, the sign with the white bottom was the design chosen. Susie will order the signs. Susie also reported that the Silvester report is in Council's packet.

Library Board:

John Ziegler reported that the Library will be hosting a Cowboy-themed Trivia Fundraiser on March 21st at 5:30PM at Glade Run. There will be a western dinner, best dressed prize, and cash prizes. John also reported that they are waiting on the grant and that it is to be in by March.

Planning Commission:

Greg Such had nothing to report.

WBCA:

Greg Such reported that work continues on the new plant design, they are now in the third design phase and moving forward.

Storm Water Authority:

Greg Such reported that 71% of Harmony residents have paid their Stormwater bill from last year. The next bill is going to go out in March and any old balances will carry forward. There was discussion about a credit policy for some of the larger organizations that may not have been able to pay the fee, the credit has not been implemented. Greg also reported that the Borough turned in their capital plan, now all of the capital plans from the four communities will be reviewed and prioritized.

Shared Services:

Bob Leonberg had nothing new to report.

Parking and Signage:

Greg Such had nothing new to report.

Historic Harmony:

Denise Rodgers thanked everyone for their support of the Christmas Market. It was a great success and it raised almost 50% of the operating money. The 2026 Christmas Market will

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Historic Harmony Cont.:

be the second week-end in November. Historic Harmony hopes to add value to the community and focus on history and hoping that will help to pull people. The gift shop is going to become a display room with gift items for sale. Adding on to the history, two bulletin boards that will be used to publicize community events, both the museum as well as Harmony Borough's. The museum will be reopening the first Tuesday in March, it is going to be an 1800s general store. There will also be an open house on President's Day, February 16th at the Washington Cabin. The Washington 1753 Trail will be featured with cherry treats at Stewart Hall. The open house will be from 10AM-1PM. The Cherry Pie Hike will be on February 21st at Jennings Environmental Center starting at 9AM. Historic Harmony hopes to make a stronger historical presentation in the community and expand their collaboration and hope to work with Zelenople Borough on History Day in June. Beth Bruker-Walos commented that Grace Church of Harmony will be celebrating their 200th birthday and are planning special events throughout the year, so far two concerts have been planned, one in June and the other in December adding that maybe they could cross advertise and get a little more participation. Greg Such reported that History Day is June 30th and the hope is for it to be as big as Miracle on Main. There was discussion of what the activity should be but has not been nailed down. There will be something in Zelenople during the day, and then the plan is to move them over to Harmony in the evening. There is going to be an American 250 website built to help publicize events. Greg expressed some concern about closing the Square twice in the same week, on Tuesday for History Day and Thursday evening for the summer concert. Dave Szakelyhidi inquired if the Borough would have a new monument by then. Don Sims responded probably not.

Harmony Business Association:

Cath Rape had nothing new to report.

Other Meetings:

Greg Such reported that the Stormwater Authority Meeting will be February 11th at 4:00PM, and a Regional Stormwater Meeting at 3:00PM. The Commissioners Communications Meeting will be February 18th at 2:00PM and the BCBA Spring Dinner will be March 12th at 6:00PM. Cath Rape reported that Andrew Orient's service is Saturday at 1:00PM at Calvin Church and Jason's fundraiser will be on February 28th from 2PM-10PM at the Mars VFW.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment.

BOROUGH STAFF REPORTS:

Police Report:

Report submitted via email.

Office:

Amy Brown reported that the audit has started.

Borough Director of Operations:

Bob Leonberg reported that the borough building outside lights were rewired and are working again, a new battery was purchased for the dump truck. There was a hit and run at the borough garage that took out the bollard and stop sign, it was probably a semi turning off

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Borough Director of Operations Cont.:

of Spring Street onto German Street. Bob reported that he met with Penn Dot, Jackson and Lancaster regarding paving. We received a load of salt, there is a load at Jackson, and we owe Lancaster a load of salt; we have three more loads left to order to fulfill our commitment. Cath Rape asked if Bob would clear the lot behind the borough garage. Bob commented that he made one pass in, that is all he could do as there were cars parked there. Cath commented that it is a borough parking lot, even though residents park there, it should be cleaned up. Bob will keep an eye on it and if it opens up, he will take the skid steer and move the snow to clear the lot. Greg Such reported that the truck repair for tires and a rim needs to be ratified, it was around \$800. In a motion made by Joe Dippold and seconded by Don Sims, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the truck repair. Greg Such complimented Bob and Melanie on the great job of getting things cleaned up, adding that we were ahead of other communities. Cath Rape read a thank you note from Harry Charlier that read, Just a small note to wish a big thank you to Bob and Melanie for a good job on snow removal on Wilson Alley. Thanks again!

Zoning and Codes:

Report submitted. (attached)

Greg Such reported that a neighbor complained about water freezing on the street that was coming from another resident's house, 1114 Seneca Drive. Melanie sent a violation notice to the property owner and he has responded, and has questioned if he could tap into the storm drain as opposed to putting in a well. Our storm water ordinance forbids tapping into the storm drain. Dave Szakelyhidi commented that this goes back many, many, years. There was a swale when they built the upper development that goes down behind Don Pepe's house and comes down to the catch basin right down in the street, just down from Don's or at Don Pepe's. There were people on council that argued that some of the residents filled in the swale. The people on Seneca Drive end up with the water and there's really no place for the water to go if it doesn't make it to that catch basin that was put in there. Greg Such commented that the neighbor is asking the Borough to install a new catch basin but water from their lot running on the street is violating our ordinance. Tom Thompson agreed, adding that a new catch basin can be installed if it is street water. Dave Szakelyhidi inquired if a catch basin could be installed on the property. Tom Thompson inquired who would be responsible or who would own that catch basin. Don Sims suggested putting the catch basin in the street. Greg Such inquired if the Borough should have the property owner install a pit first. Dave Szakelyhidi commented that the Borough would be directing them to do something that won't work. Solicitor Matt commented that he would like more information on this.

Engineer:

Engineer Tom Thompson reported on the Stormwater Project, SET is coming in a couple of weeks to start the project. We had a change order to adjust the prices, we modified that change order to include time extension, essentially that time extension would mandate they finish the work by May 17th and finalize the work by June 16th. The 365 days on the contract was questioned as it appears that the contractor would have 365 days from today (February 3rd). Tom Thompson responded that the contractor was given notice to proceed on May 15, 2025, they would have 365 days from that date. Tom will change the language to include the completion date. In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Frank Luek, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the change order value, pending that

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Engineer Cont.:

the contract language is corrected with the end date. Tom Thompson also reported on the RACP Project, they're anticipating the end of February to have their details wrapped up with Verizon and should be able to go out to bid in March. Greg Such inquired if the Borough has what they need for putting the cable under the sidewalks. Tom Thompson responded that we do, the conduit will be the Borough's for them to come into. If the project does not include running of the lines in the conduit, it's just having it there. Dave Szakelyhidi inquired about the company that is running lines on Pittsburgh Street, if they want to come down into the square. Tom Thompson will reach out to them to see what their plan is. Greg Such commented that there are events scheduled in the Square in June. Tom Thompson reported that he spoke to Cory (Shaffer) regarding the Multimodal Grant and he is willing to work with us.

Public Safety:

Phyllis Metz reported on the Event Form for the I Love CVE Fun Run on April 25th from 8:55AM-9:20AM. In a motion made by Phyllis Metz and seconded by Frank Luek, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the I Love CVE Fun Run. Phyllis reported on the Event Form for Miles for Micha on April 11th from 8:00AM-11AM, it is the same route as the Silvester. The Certificate of Insurance and the Police Form were submitted with the Event Form. Greg Such commented that this will need to be coordinated with Jackson Township. In a motion made by Phyllis Metz and seconded by Don Sims, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the Miles for Micha contingent on Jackson Township's approval. Phyllis Metz reported on the Event Form for the Shamrock Shuffle on March 21st from 7AM -12PM. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded Don Sims, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the Shamrock Shuffle contingent on receiving the Certificate of Insurance. Amy will call Neil Jackson to request the Certificate of Insurance.

Business Development:

Cath Rape commented that she would like a newsletter done and suggested one every four months. Greg Such commented that the Borough is in the middle of an audit and are limited on manpower. Cath also reported on Zelenople's Plan for the Four Corner Park; the plan is to put a cement slab in and have a nice restroom there through the summer. The Rodgers Brother had something similar for their event and Cath would like to think about doing something like that in Harmony behind the Washington Cabin or the Borough Building instead of a porta-john. Joe Dippold commented that it is a porta-john, just a nicer one. Cath Rape also commented that she has some ideas for the Square but would like to see other people's concepts, but first we need to get truck traffic under control. Cath suggested signs out in Jackson Township on Mercer saying Local Deliveries Only to Evergreen Mill Road and another one right at the bridge, No Trucks and coming out of Evergreen Mill, Trucks - Right Turn Only. She stated we need to start getting those trucks out of our Square because it's not just the trucks on Main Street, trucks are coming off I-79 or they're coming from businesses on Evergreen Mill and making the left turn and coming through Harmony. Don Sims commented about the old truck route ordinance, Solicitor Matt will look to see if he has the old truck route ordinance. Greg Such reported that he contacted the Penn Dot LTAP but has not yet received a response. Cath Rape reported that in the Borough News, there was an engineering firm in Pittsburgh that promoted an individual specifically for traffic issues, Cathy emailed him but has not received a response. Cath would also like the remaining monument moved

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Business Development Cont.:

to the Borough building for the Memorial Day Service. Cath is to go to HARB for approval. Greg Such suggested having another meeting with Historic Harmony, HARB, Rodger Brothers, and Grace Church to get their input. Dave inquired about a barrier, added that the monument people wanted a barrier to donate to the project. Don Sims commented that the Mayor had a great traffic channeling idea. Joe Dippold inquired if there should be a town meeting similar to the one that was held for the RACP Grant Project.

Personnel:

Greg Such had nothing new to report.

Finance:

Joe Dippold reported on the final December numbers. The budgeted income was \$771,000. and we brought in \$912,000. Most of the big change was the Water Authority wages. That was money in and out, and didn't really affect us. The big thing that did affect us was the beautification, which was the insurance check for the damage to the monument. Taxes were about what we expected. We made a little more money on personal income tax, and the real estate tax was a little lower than budgeted. The budgeted expense was \$771,000. and we spent \$893,000. Most of that was in wages.

Streets:

Don Sims reported that Council needs to ratify the vote for snow removal, the amount was \$2600. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Don Sims, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the snow removal in the amount of \$2,600.

Facilities:

Dave Szakelyhidi had nothing to report. Cath Rape inquired about the truck damage in the Square when a truck hit the bollard. Greg Such reported that it was turned over to the Police along with pictures from Grace Church, but we did not have the license plate. Cathy Rape will ask Sam Hopkins if he has any pictures of the truck on his security cameras.

Grants:

Greg Such reported that the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) is out. That one is hard for us to apply for, they want proof that this is a low-income area or where the grant is going to go is a low-income area and I don't think we can make that case. You have to go door to door and get people to tell their salary.

Training & Conferences:

Greg Such reported that training and conferences are listed on the correspondence list.

Cath Rape asked if anyone saw the article in the Borough News about the Sunshine Law Supreme Court rulings. Solicitor Matt commented that the Supreme Court overturned the amending of the agenda during the public meeting, it was allowed and then it was not allowed and now it is allowed again as long as the majority wants to. First you have a motion to amend the agenda to add the item, and then you vote on the item.

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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 **\$26,203.27**

Payroll in the amount of **\$12,401.60**

Fire Tax Fund Bills Payable in the amount of **\$722.42**

Silvester Fund Bills Payable in the amount of **\$1,600.90**

General Bills Already Paid in the amount of **\$2,337.47**

Parks Board Fund Bills Already Paid in the amount of **\$5,000.00**

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: 8:25pm

As there was no further business to discuss, the Harmony Borough Council adjourned the February 3, 2026 In-person and Teams virtual meeting at 8:25pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Amy Brown, Recording Secretary

Zoning Report - January 2026

An anonymous resident brought to my attention that there was a build up of ice due to water runoff from 1114 Seneca Dr. that could potentially be hazardous to pedestrians and vehicles.

Upon further inspection, there is a discharge pipe at 1114 Seneca that is expelling substantial amounts of water out into the street. Water was running in front of the neighboring property's driveway and mailbox. Cold weather conditions created a dangerous sheet of ice.

I issued a violation notice on the grounds of the owner discharging water onto a public street and therefore creating a nuisance on January 15th.

I spoke with the owner a few days later who stated that he already called 811 to have some work done on the property, however, he was concerned with being fined, as doing ground work with impending freezing temperatures and predicted snowfall would be extremely difficult. I told him I had realistic expectations and did not expect the ground to be immediately dug up given the circumstances of the weather. This was right before the large snowstorm.

Despite the owner agreeing that the water issue needed to be remedied, he stated that this has been in place for 23 years and the water runoff was not an issue until the Harmony Heights homes were built. The following is directly from his email which I can share separately:

Thank you for keeping an open mind about this matter and for your desire to address storm water management in the borough. Regarding the matter in question, to be perfectly clear, the primary source of water runoff originates from the Harmony Heights properties. That runoff must be addressed, in order to assure properties below are not flooded. Indeed, that was reported to the borough 23+ years ago and resulted in the installation of the pipe that is central to this matter.

Remediation of the storm water runoff is not simply the responsibility of the owner of 1114 Seneca Drive. There exists a primary source that should be considered. That source is from properties on Harmony Heights Drive that should be required to have proper drainage that does not impact other homeowners below them on Seneca Drive.

If eliminating the source of the water runoff from Harmony Heights homes is not for consideration, given the supporting images in the addendum to this letter and the information provided herein, I trust that the council will address the matter with the installation of a storm

water drain at the corner of 1114 Seneca Drive where the pipe exits the property and has been in place for nearly a quarter of a century.

- Melanie Fessides