

March 3, 2026

# HARMONY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING March 3, 2026

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Greg Such

Phyllis Metz

Dave Szakelyhidi

Joe Dippold

Don Sims

Beth Bruker Walos

Mayor Cathy Rape

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Susie Altemus

Bob Leonberg

Brendan A. Linton

Chief Jim Miller, ZPD

Denise Rodgers

Tom Thompson

John Ziegler

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**CALL TO ORDER:**

Council President, Greg Such called the March 3, 2026, Council Meeting to order at 7:00PM. This meeting was held in-person and remotely through Teams virtual meeting.

**PLEDGE OF ALLIGANCE:**

**MOMENT OF SILENCE:**

A moment of silence was observed in memory of Jason Sarver, former Harmony Borough Council Member and friend who passed away on February 13th.

**MINUTES:**

In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Phyllis Metz, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the February 3, 2026 Council meeting minutes.

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT:**

Solicitor Matt Racunas gave condolences to the Harmony and Zelenople communities on the loss of Jason Sarver, adding that he was a good man, a good public servant and that he will be missed. Matt reported on the Harmony Fire District's resolution and amended guaranty note that will extend the maturity date. They have requested that the communities pass these documents extending the maturity date from October 2025 to April 30th of 2026. Greg Such commented that this is because the grants that the fire company was expecting got delayed, first of all because of the prior government shutdown and then because the state didn't have a budget for about four months. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Don Sims, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the resolution extending the maturity date on the guaranty note for the Harmony Fire District. Matt reported on the Street Opening Ordinance, the main purpose of looking to amend the street opening ordinance is to deal with street openings and hopefully incorporate curb to curb paving. Greg did a comparison of sample street ordinances that Matt had sent him to our existing Chapter 21 Street Opening Ordinance. Greg's summary indicates both the things that are already incorporated in both ordinances and then some of those things that we may want to incorporate into something new. There is a section on performance bond requirements and some inspection items that we may want to incorporate. Dave Szakelyhidi commented that the paving company was marking roads to replace gas lines so we should move quickly. Solicitor Matt commented because of the time constraint we could do both motions, separately. The first motion would be to advertise the ordinance and the second ordinance would be for adoption.

This will all occur prior to our next meeting and then at our next meeting in April, there will be a motion to ratify both the advertisement and adoption of the Street Opening Ordinance. Solicitor Matt and Greg Such will work on the Street Opening Ordinance on Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am via telephone. Don Sims inquired on the old truck route ordinance that had been rescinded. Matt will look for the old ordinance and will add it to items to discuss with Greg on Thursday.

**BOARD REPORTS/APPOINTMENTS:**

**Appointments:**

Greg Such reported that there are two appointments for the Parks Board, Chuck Welsh and Kelli Hillwig. In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Phyllis Metz, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the appointment of Chuck Welsh and Kelli Hillwig to the Parks Board.

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**Southwest Butler County Council of Governments (SWBC CoG):**

Greg Such reported that Bonnie Forysthe, who was the CoG administrator and the stormwater administrator, resigned to go to Lancaster Township to be the Borough Manager. The capital improvements list is to be prioritized, that list has not yet been released. Cath Rape commented that Bonnie (Forsythe) received recognition in the Borough News for doing a wonderful job in Mars Borough.

**HARB:**

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

**Harmony Water Authority:**

Dave Szakelyhidi reported that there are a couple of repairs going on and reported that the Water Authority is applying for a loan with WesBanco to fund the balance of the chlorine loop project.

**Parks Board:**

Susie Altemus thanked Council for appointing Chuck and Kelli to the Parks Board. The fireworks contract has increased by \$500 to \$3,500. In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Dave Szakelyhidi, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved to continue having fireworks with the \$500 price increase. The Butler County Reno Grant has been submitted, items requested from the grant were limestone for the walking trail, a swing and a new picnic table for the Schoolhouse playground. Susie Altemus commented that limestone is needed for the trail even if we do not get the grant. Susie reported that the Wolf Creek invoice needs to be paid and the contract needs to be renewed. Amy let Susie know that the Wolf Creek invoice was paid last month. Susie reported that the Color Run will be on August 15<sup>th</sup> and the Shamrock Shuffle will be on March 21<sup>st</sup> and they will be using Wood Street Park.

**Library Board:**

John Ziegler reported that the Library is still waiting for the grant from the State. Construction will be able to begin pretty quickly after the grant is received, there will be a demonstration kitchen for teaching, it will be audio-visual with demonstrations projected on a big screen TV. John also reported that the Library will be hosting a Cowboy-themed Trivia Fundraiser on March 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:30PM at Glade Run, tickets are \$60.

**Planning Commission:**

Greg Such had nothing to report.

**WBCA:**

Greg Such had nothing new to report.

**Storm Water Authority:**

Greg Such reported that the new bills will be mailed out soon. As reported last month 71% of Harmony residents have paid their Stormwater bill from last year, that number may have improved but Greg missed the last meeting. Cath Rape inquired if they hired anyone to

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**Storm Water Authority Cont.:**

replace Bonnie. Greg Such reported that there is a consultant filling in temporarily. Cath commented that there were complaints about residents getting large bills. Greg Such reported that the bills were generated by satellite photos of impermeable surfaces, if there was something that looked impermeable, that wasn't they could have got billed, but there's not a lot of adjustment on those things. There is a procedure where you talk to the administrator and the administrator identifies if there's a correction needed or not. Then if she can't determine, then it goes to the borough engineer. Tom Thompson commented that he has not had any request for adjustments.

**Shared Services:**

Bob Leonberg inquired about buying Zelenople's old salt spreader. Greg Such reported that he touched base with Andrew, they did not yet have a price. Dave Szakelyhidi commented that he too talked to Andrew and Andrew suggested Harmony come up with a price.

**Parking and Signage:**

Greg Such had nothing new to report.

**Historic Harmony:**

Denise Rodgers reported that Historic Harmony has engaged with an organization called Getaways on Display, had a volunteer produce a new brochure, and that the brochure will to be placed in all the Pennsylvania Turnpike visitor centers. The brochure is focused on the history with the reference to the museum (a draft sample was provided). Denise also reported that the museum has decided to engage a social media consultant who will be working on an hourly basis to try and focus on their webpage, and also on Facebook. The idea is to appeal to a younger crowd. Denise also reported that they may have a Paul Revere come through with a horse on History Day. Greg Such commented that Paul Revere may be part of the answer of how to get people from Zelig to Harmony for History Day on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Harmony Business Association:**

Greg Such reported that he and Cath Rape attended a Lower Harmony Business Association meeting, they are planning to have a concert on August 29<sup>th</sup>. It is a music and arts festival; the arts will have vendors setting up and selling their wares and the music will have three different stages, one at Union Brothers, one at WunderBar, one behind the salon building. It is still in the planning phase and there is not a plan to close streets.

**Other Meetings:**

Greg Such reported that the Safe Streets Study Meeting will be March 9<sup>th</sup> at 1:00PM. The Stormwater Authority Meeting, and probably CoG, will be March 11<sup>th</sup> at 4:00PM. The Commissioners Communications Meeting will be March 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00PM and the BCBA Spring Dinner will be March 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00PM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Brendan Linton** – Connoquenessing Township – Brendan is here to request that Council postpone the adoption of the Safety Action Plan that is on the agenda. Brendon previously mailed a letter to the borough requesting the Safety Action Plan be rejected. Brendon's concern is that the plan does not comply with the law. It does not comply with rulings from our Supreme Court pertaining to bicycle safety. Those issues pertain specifically to other municipalities that were a part of the study, the plan was proposed as one vision, one region.

**PUBLIC COMMENT CONT.:**

**Brendan Linton Cont.:**

In Brendon's opinion, there is a belief that cyclists should not be allowed to ride on the road. That's not what the law says, it's not what our Supreme Court has said. Brendon is the cyclist who took that case to the Supreme Court and won that decision. The contents of that plan may result in and likely will result in more injuries, more deaths, and more safety issues. Maybe not necessarily here at Harmony Borough, but the region one. Brendon was hit by a car while riding a bicycle in 2017 in Washington County, he flew 39 feet in the air and the driver took over 150 feet to stop because she was texting. Brandon believes if he was riding on the shoulder of the highway, as the plan suggests, he would be dead; and if Harmony adopts this study, you will have more people in crashes like this. The plan is unsafe because there are recommendations in that plan, not necessarily related to what's proposed in Harmony Borough, but there is language that directly contradicts the vehicle code and the ruling by our Supreme Court. Solicitor Matt Racunas commented that it sounds like Brendon doesn't have an objection to the provisions that necessarily pertain to Harmony. The idea of the plan would be to adopt something that would enable Harmony Borough to apply for grant funding. Greg Such asked Brendon to provide edits for the plan.

**Joe O'Reilley** – 274 Mercer Street – Joe would like to put up a mural for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our country, George Washington and the history of the 1753 journey and 1754. Joe introduced Dave Giuliani. Dave is a retired art teacher from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and is going to help Joe with the mural. Mr. Wolfslayer, a school teacher at Seneca Valley High School, thought that the mural would be a great project for the school. Joe would like the mural to be painted on a plywood wall, 8'x24'. Joe is trying to figure out how to get donations for the students, he thought about a 501c but that will take months. Mr. Wolfslayer said that maybe they could go through the high school art department. Greg Such suggested working with the museum on the mural, there is the George Washington Cabin on Main Street that has some history already in it that could give some ideas.

**BOROUGH STAFF REPORTS:**

**Police Report:**

Report submitted via email.

**Office:**

Amy Brown reported that the audit is wrapping up.

**Borough Director of Operations:**

Bob Leonberg reported that PA One calls were put in by the gas company for replacing gas lines between Pittsburgh and Division streets with excavation plans from the 5<sup>th</sup> thru the 14<sup>th</sup>. The Wood Street Park signs have been put up; he and Melanie patched a few holes. Bob will contact Voelker to get a price and get on the list for patching in the spring. The mower is ready with new blades and the oil has been changed. Unloaded anthracite and the pumps for the Water Authority, they are being stored in the storage garage. Dave Szakelyhidi made a patch for the man door, Bob and Melanie did the repair. Bob reported that the historic street lights ordered last year came in.

**Zoning and Codes:**

Report submitted. (attached)

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**Zoning and Codes Cont.:**

Greg Such commented that the Seneca Drive issue was pushed to the Stormwater Authority and prioritized into our capital plan. Tom Thompson commented that it was approved by the Authority, they looked at potentially doing design one year and construction the following year. Regarding the current stormwater work, Cath Rape inquired if the original run would still come from the railroad, through the Opera House into the creek and if there's a flood, would the water come back up that pipe. Tom Thompson commented that there are provisions in the plans for the outfall of that pipe as a check valve in it that prevents water from coming back into it. Don Sims commented that we are also decreasing the volume of water that's going into that inlet and pipe. Tom Thompson commented that the pipe size was reduced, with that volume all of that pipe backs up, it will go through the top and flow over, essentially there is an overflow involved, but it's going to be always flowing. It's intended to keep that free flow there so we don't have debris build up or anything like that.

**Engineer:**

Tom Thompson reported that the Stormwater Project started yesterday and made it through to the first inlet. They have it so the check valve is in so they're not fighting off water backing up through the pipe. There is a gas line conflict at Union Brothers, a steel gas line. The stormwater line will be lowered 6" to accommodate that, this is Jackson Township's portion. Where the outfall is, the material is mostly clay, there is not a lot of rock and the area needs to be stabilized with some concrete. Cath Rape inquired if the large gravel in the front yard of Union Brothers would stay. Tom Thompson responded that was negotiated between Union Brothers and the contractor as a project staging area. Cath Rape commented that it is Jackson Township, but we're all supposed to be working together as far as flood relief. And if gravel can't be put on one side of that Mercer Street for a parking lot, it shouldn't be put on the other side of Mercer for a parking lot. It was again stated that it is between a private landowner and a private contractor. Bob Leonberg reported that the drain in front of Addams' body shop on German Street is starting to become a sinkhole. Tom Thompson will look at it. For the RACP Grant, Tom Thompson reported that they are waiting for information on the electric for Zelig. Tom also reported that he reached out to Omni Fiber regarding their work on Pittsburgh Street. They are not affiliated with Verizon and do not have plans to come into downtown Harmony. Tom is working with PennDOT for the cost on the Multimodal Grant and will have a Resolution ready for the June meeting. Tom would like to formalize the approval for the concrete for the stormwater outfall, where there are unsuitable materials, there will be a change order to formalize that. In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Joe Dippold, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved \$3500 for 100 yards on concrete at \$350/cubic yard to stabilize the bank where the stormwater drain is going in.

**Public Safety:**

Phyllis Metz reported that the Shamrock Shuffle, Miles for Micah, and the I LOVE CVE have all been taken care of.

**Business Development:**

Cath Rape inquired if a newsletter could go out at the beginning of April. Amy agreed to do the newsletter and recommended having articles to her by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of March. Cath would like to move forward with moving the monument to the yard at the Borough building. She checked with Grace Church, Historic Harmony and the Rodgers Brothers. Don Sims inquired if there was a pedestal to put the monument on, Cath responded no. Don Sims

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**Business Development Cont.:**

suggested asking Barbish to move it with his front-end loader. Dave Szakelyhidi commented that the electric box will be exposed if the monument is moved and asked if the Borough should get the barrier bells to protect it. The barrier bells are \$11,000 for four. It was pointed out that as we do not have a design for the square; we may not need the barrier bells. Cath Rape reported that they met with the PennDot LTAP engineer last week and he is to send recommendations on signage and bump outs and stated that an ordinance is needed to get rid of the truck route to keep trucks out of the square, Solicitor Matt will look into the truck route ordinance. Cath Rape inquired on the brass plate for the damaged monument, Joe Dippold has it but it, it is for Veterans, and the one that is still there is a war monument. Cath Rape will talk to Rome Monuments for ideas on the placard and the possibility of combining the Veteran and War plaques.

**Personnel:**

Beth Bruker-Walso had nothing new to report.

**Finance:**

Joe Dippold had nothing new to report.

**Streets:**

Don Sims commented that he appreciated Brendan Linton's presentation, but would like to propose that the Borough passes the Safe Street Study, to at least open the door to try and acquire any funding coming up for this study for the engineering and hopefully one day to actually get any work done. In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Dave Szakelyhidi, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the Safe Street Study. Greg Such offered to forward any comments that Brendon might have. Greg reported that he and Cath Rape met with the LTAP Engineer to control truck traffic on main street, his recommendations were to rearrange signage, and paint white lines on each side of Main Street to make the lane look visually smaller, making truckers think twice about going through there. Don Sims reported that he would like to wait until April to discuss possible street paving. Don reported that he, Bob, and Melanie will be meeting on Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> with the Gas Company at 9:00am. Amy commented that the meeting will be at the borough building. Bob Leonberg reported that he received two loads of salt from both suppliers, and has met his quota.

**Facilities:**

Dave Szakelyhidi commented that he asked to have the barrier bells on the agenda but it's not on the agenda. Greg Such commented that it was discussed in the square monument update.

**Grants:**

Greg Such reported that the CDBG grant doesn't belong on the agenda; it was from last month. There is a list of grants opening that Senator Vogel sent today.

**Training & Conferences:**

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

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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 **\$31,122.78**

**Payroll** in the amount of **\$13,373.74**

**Fire Tax Fund Bills Payable** in the amount of **\$37.85**

**Parks Board Fund Bills Payable** in the amount of **\$34.97**

**General Bills Already Paid** in the amount of **\$3,067.60**

**Parks Board Fund Bills Already Paid** in the amount of **\$640.32**

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

**Adjourned: 8:20pm**

As there was no further business to discuss, the Harmony Borough Council adjourned the March 3, 2026 In-person and Teams virtual meeting at 8:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Amy Brown, Recording Secretary

## Zoning Report - February 2026

- Snow removal violations were issued for a few residents after several rounds of snow showers. 330 Monroe and 241-243 Mercer St. were both cited and snow was removed promptly.
- There have been several inquiries as to zoning and building requirements for the lot for sale next to the Weaver's cabin on Mercer St. I sent links via email to several people regarding floodplain requirements, HARB guidelines, zoning, and setbacks.

An interested buyer had some confusion on the setback requirement before making an offer on the property. He stated that he measured the Weaver cabin to the end of the property line and that it was less than 25 feet. However, I measured it and it is 25 feet from the front of the cabin to the curb along the street. This does contradict the setback requirement mentioned in the zoning ordinance which states the minimum front yard is "measured between lot line and building line". In looking at the parcel map it is unclear as to where exactly the end of the property line is (which side of the sidewalk). I am hoping to get more clarification on this subject at the HARB meeting.

- I received a few calls from residents in town in regards to building permits but no permits were actually issued in January.
- No further action was taken since the last meeting in regards to the water runoff at 1114 Seneca Dr. as we were awaiting more information in regards to easements and to whom the responsibility for maintaining the swale fell, upon completion of the Harmony Heights development.

- Melanie Fessides