HARMONY BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING April 7, 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Greg Such

Phyllis Metz

Dave Szakelyhidi

Joe Dippold

Don Sims

Mayor Cathy Rape

OTHERS PRESENT:

Susie Altemus

Meghan Cress

Stephen Gross

Bob Leonberg

Chief Jim Miller, ZPD

Tom Thompson

John Ziegler

CALL TO ORDER:

Council President, Greg Such called the April 7, 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 Jim McCormick, former Harmony Borough Council Member who passed away. Jim also volunteered with the Harmony Fire Department for many years.

MINUTES:

In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Dave Szakelyhidi, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the March 3, 2026 Council meeting minutes.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Solicitor Matt Racunas reported that the Street Opening Ordinance was advertised and is ready for adoption. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Don Sims, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the adoption of the Street Opening Ordinance. Solicitor Matt also reported that along with the Street Opening Ordinance is the Street Opening Permit Fee Resolution, the fee is $100. In a motion made by Phyllis Metz and seconded by Don Sims, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the Street Opening Permit Fee Resolution. Greg Such reported the Street Opening Permit Fee is $100 and that there is a formula in the ordinance for insurance. Solicitor Matt also reported that an executive session will be needed to discuss a pending litigation matter. Don Sims inquired if Solicitor Matt found the old truck route, Matt responded that he did find it and will try to pull it up.

BOARD REPORTS/APPOINTMENTS:

Appointments:

Greg Such reported that no appointments are needed.

Southwest Butler County Council of Governments (SWBC CoG):

Greg Such reported that there is a new Stormwater/COG Administrator for the Fire District, her name is Camryn Ziegler. Jason Daley was standing in until she got up to speed. Stephen Gross inquired about the location of the stormwater office. Greg Such responded in the Fire Station on Main Street in Zelienople. Greg Such also reported that Jason Knox is going to be the Jackson EMA Administrator and will stand in for the COG. The other three municipalities should have a Deputy EMA Administrator and a new agreement will be needed with Butler County

HARB:

Dave Szakelyhidi reported that there are two Certificates of Appropriateness that HARB approved and recommends to Council.

Ellen Stikles – 128 Jackson Street – A new fence. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Frank Luek, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the Certificate of Appropriateness for 128 Jackson Street.

HARB Cont.:
Dana Baytkeefer – 528 Main Street – A new sign. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Frank Luek, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the Certificate of Appropriateness for 528 Main Street.

Harmony Water Authority:
Dave Szakelyhidi reported that the contract for the chlorine loop has been signed and the project could begin at the end of April and be done by the end of May. The Water Authority cut and capped an abandoned line on Main Street and an abandoned line on Liberty and German Streets. The high service pump was rewound at Dumbaugh. Dave also reported that the Water Authority took over reading meters.

Parks Board:
Susie Altemus reported that the Miles for Micah 5K race will be on Saturday, April 11th; they are expecting 400 runners. Phyllis Metz reported that she spoke to US Liner, JADCO, and has the notification ready to go out on Friday. Phyllis also spoke to Chief Miller about Police service and Frank Luek will get the barriers for the race. Susie also reported that the Parks Board has started planning the Color Run, their first meeting was last Wednesday. Susie inquired if the Museum could have a re-enactment with muzzle-loader (black powder) firing at Wood Street Park for History Day, which is June 30th. Greg Such commented that he didn't think that there should be an issue since on Memorial Day there are shooting of blanks in the Square. Cath Rape inquired if the Parks Board wanted the Seneca Valley students to help with mulch. Susie Altemus responded that they will discuss it at the next Parks Board meeting and let Cath know.

Library Board:
John Ziegler reported that the Library received their grant for a new building, groundbreaking should be in the next two months. In a motion made by Joe Dippold and seconded by Don Sims, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved donating a book to the Library in memory of former council member, Jim McCormick in the amount of $75. Greg Such commented that Council has done this in the past for other former council members.

Planning Commission/Zoning Hearing Board:
Greg Such reported that Jim John resigned from the Zoning Hearing Board. The Borough needs a new Zoning Hearing Board member and a Planning Commission lead.

WBCA:
Greg Such reported that at the facilities meeting there was discussion to rehab the prior administration building to install a new lab for testing purposes. The lab that they currently have is very small and this would provide enough room for two people to work together plus places for sample bottles and things like that. The design is underway.

Storm Water Authority:
Greg Such had nothing new to report.

Shared Services:
Bob Leonberg reported that they got the salt spreader from Zelie and worked on a cart to move the salt spreader. Bob also reported that limb pick-up starts this Thursday, April 9th.

Parking and Signage:
Greg Such had nothing new to report.

Historic Harmony:
Cath Rape reported that there will be a flea market at the Barn on May 23rd from 9:00AM-2:00PM, any donations will be greatly appreciated. Donations can be dropped off during the week of the flea market, with no clothing, appliances, or large furniture. History Day is June 30th, Tuesday, from 3:00PM to 8:00PM. There will be a demonstration at the bake oven, and the Washington and Ziegler cabins will be open.

Harmony Business Association:
Cath Rape reported that the HBA disbanded.

Other Meetings:
Greg Such reported that the CoG Meeting will be April 8th at 3:00PM. The Stormwater Authority Meeting will be on April 8th at 4:00PM. The Commissioners Communications Meeting will be on April 14th at 1:30PM and the Butler County UCC Meeting will be June 11th at 10:00AM. Greg Such asked Bob Leonberg to join the Butler County UCC Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:
Meghan Cress–207 N. Charles Street- Meghan requested a crosswalk at Highland Avenue and Pittsburgh Street. A child was hit on a bicycle in 2024; she is asking the community to take action to prevent further tragedies. Meghan's son will be going to kindergarten next year and will be walking and there isn't a safe place to cross Pittsburgh Street to a sidewalk. Charles Street is narrow and does not have sidewalks. The best way to cross is at Highland Avenue and Pittsburgh Street but there isn't a crosswalk, no signage and a lot of cars fly up and down the hill. Meghan is asking for some type of signage to be put up and also a crosswalk to help make it safer to cross there. Bob Leonberg reported that he talked to Penn Dot and LTAP and a crosswalk is not recommended because there isn't a sidewalk on one side of the street. Cath Rape suggested a SLOW sign at the intersection. Bob will look into signage, Greg Such suggested getting two signs.

Stephen Gross-268 S. Liberty Street- Stephen asked why his rights are being impeded by somebody that is a Harmony Borough employee. He was told when he went to pay a bill that he could not come on that property with a life-saving service dog. Council inquired what office he was referring to, it was the tax collector's office. It was stated that there is a locked box for payments, Mr. Gross didn't want to put cash in the lock box. Solicitor Matt Racunas stated that the tax collector is a separately elected office aside from council. Her office is her home. She's governed by the Local Tax Enabling Act, which has different laws related to tax collection for tax collectors, Council does not have a say over the tax collector. There was more discussion and it was stated that the tax collector had made arrangements for Mr. Gross to pay his taxes. Mr. Gross also stated that both of his service dogs have been attacked, the first attack caused eight-days of quarantine and traumatized the dog so much that it would not go from the yard, which caused Mr. Gross to get another service dog. His service dog is trained to go look for help and his neighbor has threatened to shoot the dog if it comes looking for help. Greg Such commented that these police issues and not issues for the council. Solicitor Matt Racunas commented that the ordinance the Borough has in place is to restrain a dog or a barking dog, Mr. Gross's issues are non-council issues.

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 the gas company repaired some of the streets with the first layer and will come back to pave when the weather is nicer. Bob, Melanie, and Don met with the gas company to discuss street restoration. Bob also reported that he and Melanie met with Tom Thompson and S.E.T. to review the stormwater project. This month they fixed signs that were knocked over and worked with the Water Authority on a couple of leaks. Charles Street is sinking where WBCA did a sewer line repair. Bob contacted Penn Sweeping, the cost is $145/hour and typically takes 9 hours. This is $3/hour more than last year. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Frank Luek, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the street sweeping at the $145 per hour. Bob reported Voelker quoted $2,700 per hot box to patch potholes. In a motion made by Don Sims and seconded by Joe Dippold, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the $2700 for a hot box to patch potholes. Bob also reported that Melanie has started mowing grass. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Phyllis Metz, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved to ratify the vote to purchase the salt spreader from Zelienople Borough.

Zoning and Codes:
Report submitted. (attached)
Frank Luek commented that he was looking at some old planning information from when Ziegler wanted to do add a house on his lot for his father-in-law and needed to apply for a variance, that may come into play on Mercer. Dave Szakelyhidi commented that if it's not 75-foot frontage, then it's a non-conforming lot. If you buy a non-conforming lot, that is a reason to apply for a variance. Cath Rape reported that Mantia left a message on her answering machine that he is getting the lift moved. Cathy reported that she had told Melanie before there are a few places in the immediate town that are really ratty looking and I would appreciate it if Melanie would send violation notices out. Cath asked if Council would have a problem if she contacted Mantia to ask if he would give the property to the borough as he was to work on the building and move the lift.

Engineer:
Tom Thompson reported that SET has mostly finished the main line work to the railroad and it is performing pretty well with the storm events. There have been some improvements for property owners and eliminating water issues they would have normally had. The backfill preventers are not in the outfall yet and water has not backed up in this pipe, it is still flowing well. SET made it through Dambach's section, there was a collapsed pipe across the street from Dambach's that occurred over the winter. SET will fix it. They will be looking to do Greg Drive and Seneca Drive tomorrow and Thursday, that should finish up the majority of their work. Union Brother has been restored. Tom and the contractor met with Bob and Melanie to review the inlets that were originally part of this contract. SET will be addressing the inlets when they come back, they have another job. SET submitted a pay estimate back

Engineer Cont.:
in March, just after the council meeting, the first pay estimate is for work performed, which was the initial work around Union Brothers, the amount is $33,796.35 and the second pay estimate, which covers the majority of the pipe with the exception of the one over by Dambach's, that estimate is $363,107.13. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Phyllis Metz, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved to the pay orders in the amount of $396,903.48. Tom Thompson also reported on the change orders for the Stormwater Project, one change order was discussed at the last council meeting, which was the due to the conflict with the gas line, and the soil stabilization for the outfall, the change order amount was $5,804.40. Change order #3, was for some additional inlet work around inlet A6, which was the railroad inlet. When the contractor dug that up, there were multiple pieces of damaged reinforced concrete pipe and steel which caused additional work and there was also a lot of sediment that needed removed, which they did remove. That amount was $18,835. In a motion made by Dave Szakelyhidi and seconded by Don Sims, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the change orders. Tom Thompson commented that the work should be complete by the end of May. Greg Such reported that Rick Voegtly sent an email about some erosion on the track beds, he had the Track Master look at it. Jackson Township has been trying to get the right-of-way to drill underneath the railroad tracks to put in a new drain; it has been tough going and Rick forwarded that to the Track Master as well. Tom Thompson reported that on the RACP Project they did receive the preliminary plans from the contract from the electrical supplier, they are close to getting that finalized and should be going out to bid soon. The Multimodal Grant, waiting for Cory (PennDOT Rep) to come look at it and price it out to get that application started. A Resolution will be needed to apply for that grant. We are looking to see if we can coordinate with Jackson Township on the Multimodal Grant; it may help to have more than one municipality. Bob Leonberg reported that the Main Street bridge has a hole and you can see down to the tracks, there was discussion on who was responsible for the wear surface of the bridge, and the bridge inspection report. Bob Leonberg is to contact the railroad. Bob also reported that the flags need to be replaced. Solicitor Matt Racunas commented that he will pay for the flag at the borough building, just send him the invoice. Bob will order two flags, one for the square and one for the borough building.

Public Safety:
Phyllis Metz reported that the Miles for Micah 5K is taken care of. Phyllis reported that she received the Event Form for the Library's Wine Walk on June 6th from 2-9PM. The Police Service Request Form and the Certificate of Insurance have been submitted with the Event Form. There was discussion about the 2PM start time, Susie Altemus and Joe Dippold commented that there is a VIP time from 4-5PM before the event opens to the public. In a motion made by Phyllis Metz and seconded by Frank Luek, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved the Library's Wine Walk on June 6th contingent on alcohol being served from 4-8:30PM. Street Closures are approved from 2-9PM for set up and clean up.

Business Development:
Cath Rape reported that she would like to request a speed study on Rt. 68/Grandview Avenue from Main Street Zelie to the Jackson Township line. She would like the speed limit lowered from 35mph to 25mph. The speed limit is 25mph coming into Zelie on Rt 19 North and South, and Rt 68 West. Cath spoke to Andrew Spencer in Zelie about trying to get the speed limit reduced and he said that Zelie tried to have the speed reduced a couple of years ago. Chief Miller commented that Zelie tried to have the speed limit reduced two years ago

Business Development Cont.:
and it was rejected. Cath Rape commented that there are three crosswalks and a school crossing at Pittsburgh Street. Cath Rape will write a joint letter with Zelienople requesting the speed reduction on Rt. 68/Grandview Avenue. Cath Rape also reported that she talked with Rome Monument. John from Rome recommends moving the existing monument to the borough building's front lawn and not cleaning it. The cost to move the existing monument to the borough building would be $500. He also suggested temporarily moving the damaged monument base over in front of the electric box to keep the electric box safe, the cost would be $200. Cath Rape has two quotes for the foundation for the monument being moved to the borough building, Tom Haus suggested 4-ft deep. The quote from TSH (Haus) was $3,200. and the quote from M&M Concrete Designs in Connoquenessing was $4,500. In a motion made by Frank Luek and seconded by Dave Szakelyhidi, the Harmony Borough Council unanimously approved to accept Haus's (THS Concrete) quote for the monument's base in the amount of $3,200 plus the $500 (to Rome Monuments) to move the existing monument. Cath Rape thanked Ann John for scrubbing the graffiti off the bridge under Rt 68. Cath also reported that she reached out to Big Trucks or Bigger Trucks via email to ask what the borough could do to keep trucks out of the square. He said there are apps such as Smart Truck Route and Trucker Path that truckers can use other than GPS. He also said the United States put back into the requirements to get a CDL an English proficiency test. He also recommended that we all call Chris Deluzio at the Monaca District office at 724-206-4860 because he's on the House Infrastructure and Transportation Committee and he is the one that will be voting on larger and heavier trucks. Greg Such suggested a letter be sent from the borough. Cath Rape also commented that she would like to see the recommendations by Chris from LTAP be implemented. She would like to see a couple new signs at the end of Evergreen Mill Road saying, "No left turns for trucks." All trucks have to go up Mercer Road. Don Sims commented that is why he's trying to change the truck route.

Personnel:
Beth Bruker-Walso had nothing new to report.

Finance:
Joe Dippold had nothing new to report. Greg Such reported that the audit has ended and the reports are in Council's packet.

Streets:
Don Sims inquired about the salt status. Bob Leonberg replied that we got our loads of salt and are good. Greg Such commented that the CoG bids that went in were for chip seal.

Facilities:
Dave Szakelyhidi had nothing new to report.

Grants:
Greg Such reported that the guy from Stevenson contacted him about a Recycle Grant that the Borough may be able to use to replace the truck. Greg will reach out to them regarding the Recycle Grant.

Training & Conferences:
Greg Such reported that training and conferences are listed on the correspondence list. Greg commented that there was a Codes class that he sent to Melanie to see if she had any interest.

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 **$418,531.42**
Payroll in the amount of **$15,960.67**
Parks Board Fund Bills Payable in the amount of **$125.00**
Silvester Fund Bills Payable in the amount of **$400.00**
General Bills Already Paid in the amount of **$3,067.60**

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.

Square Planning/Brainstorming:
Don Sims presented an idea of a dedicated truck lane to follow the truck route and to keep trucks from coming into the Square, another concept to narrow the lanes on Main Street, and a third concept to eliminate the islands in the Square and allow trucks to come into the Square on Main Street and make a left hand turn only. Nothing was planned or decided.

Greg Such called for an executive session at 8:55pm to discuss on=going litigation, Council came out of executive session at 9:22pm

Adjourned: 9:22pm
As there was no further business to discuss, the Harmony Borough Council adjourned the April 7, 2026, In-person and Teams virtual meeting at 9:22pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Brown

Amy Brown, Recording Secretary

Zoning Report - March 2026

- The Zelie police department was contacted to address complaints in regards to uninspected/"abandoned" vehicles around town. All but one of the vehicles have since been removed.
- I spoke with the residents at 715 Spring St. asking them to clean some of the debris and materials on their property. They were very cooperative and proceeded to remove debris and tidy up items around the yard.
- The resident at 306A complained about the placement of their neighbor's garbage can at 306B. It was placed on their shared sidewalk, preventing the resident of 306A from using his wheelchair to access the street. Being as this is technically a private sidewalk, the landlord was notified of the dispute and has rectified the issue for now.
- A real estate agent inquired about the zoning for 532 Main St. as it may possibly be going up for sale. I sent her the details for C-2 zoning regulations as well as historic district regulations.
- The owner of a business soon to open at 528 Main St. inquired about signage. I informed Brett Shank of her request so she can obtain a certificate of appropriateness from HARB and sent her the guidelines for signage and what she would need to obtain a permit.
- Received an inquiry from a contractor hired to install a fence at 138 Jackson St. I informed him that since the property is in the historic district he would first need HARB approval. The homeowner of the same property later reached out and asked about a permit for deck replacement.
- The person who is interested in purchasing the empty lot on Mercer St. had concerns about obtaining a variance to build due to the width of the property being 12' shorter than the ordinance requirement. It was recommended to him to ask the current owner to request a variance, or if he proceeds with the purchase, to make the property sale contingent on obtaining a variance to build.
- I received a few inquiries about permits for people who actually live in Jackson Twp. and directed them to their offices.
- I completed a building permits survey sent by the census. The survey asked if any new residences were built in the last year. Since the answer was no, that was the extent of the survey.
- Granted a permit for an addition at 214 S. Division St. with work to be done by Wayne Henchar Construction.
- Granted a permit for demolition of the current detached garage at 756 Spring St. and the construction of a new garage.
- Received a complaint about a trailer parked at 266 S. Liberty St. being too close to their bedroom window. The owner of the trailer was notified of the complaint and stated that the trailer will be moved to their camp in 2 weeks.

- Melanie Fessides