

**SAXONBURG BOROUGH**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 19, 2020**

President Weinzierl called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**Roll Call** Scott Herbst, Dave Felsing, Pat Rinebolt, Sherry Weinzierl, Carol Neubert, June Crawford, Josh Novotny, and Mayor Gillespie were present.

Also in attendance were Mary Papik/Manager, Sean Gallagher/Solicitor, Chief Joseph Beachem, Fred Caesar, Peter Watt, Paula Grubbs, and Doug Sprankle.

**Correspondence** None

**Minutes** Motion was made and seconded by Dave Felsing/June Crawford to approve the minutes of April 21, 2020. The motion carried.

**Public Comments**

- Doug Sprankle, of Sprankle's Neighborhood Markets, introduced himself and said they are excited to be opening the grocery store that took almost a year to acquire. They'd like to open July 4 and will offer a community-driven shopping experience at the same prices as their Leechburg and Kittanning stores. Sprankle's prides themselves on their great meat department, he said, but they also have strong produce, deli, and bakery, everything fresh, and for Saxonburg they'd like to add a sushi chef. Doug said they're looking to hire 40+ people, locally, to work in the store and they look forward to serving the community and to making Saxonburg proud. President Weinzierl welcomed him, as did the Council.

**Mayor** William Gillespie Jr.

- Mayor Gillespie provided an update on the deliveries he and the police department are making from the donated meals through the Hotel Saxonburg, What's Cooking on Main, Batch, and Novotny's Pizza. This week, they'd like to honor Saxonburg's Veterans by delivering meals to them. He said he's contacted the local VFW and asked Council to provide names of local Veterans that he could call.

**Chief of Police** Joseph Beachem

- Chief Beachem had no further report at this time.

**Manager** Mary Papik

**Ordinance No. 473 Franchise Agreement with Armstrong Utilities, Inc.**

Mary explained that this is a continuation of the Armstrong Franchise Agreement for another 15 years, to be added at the end of the current agreement July 2, 2022. There is no additional cost to residents; the current franchise fees are already on the bill and Armstrong sends the money to the Borough. The Ordinance has been duly advertised as required.

**Motion was made and seconded by Carol Neubert/Dave Felsing to approve Ordinance No. 473. The motion carried.**

**Real Estate Taxes**

Mary explained that the County extended the deadline for submitting Face Value Real Estate Taxes for 2020 to November 30 this year due to the Pandemic. Extending the Borough's deadline to match the County's would keep the tax collector's bookkeeping consistent.

**Motion was made and seconded by Dave Felsing/Carol Neubert to approve the extension of the Real Estate Tax Face Value due date for 2020 to November 30, 2020. The motion carried.**

### **Events in Saxonburg**

Mary reminded Council that the Borough has been taking a month-by-month approach with the need to cancel events due to COVID-19 and the Governor's restrictions on crowds. She opened up discussions starting with Cooper Hall. Josh Novotny asked if Council would consider discussing the Mingles and Arts Festival before taking a vote on Cooper Hall as more information may come to light. Council agreed.

Cooper Hall discussion:

- A suggestion was made to Cancel Cooper Hall events through a specific date and then reassess.
- There is a strong thought that we can cancel on a month-by-month basis, reassessing at each month's Council meeting.
- The Solicitor reminded Council that restrictions in our current "Yellow Phase" are "Twenty-five people or less at a gathering so long as social distance can be maintained." He said the Hall can legally be rented so long as the guest count does not exceed the Governor's maximum. If that number is exceeded, the Borough needs to shut the event down. He recommended liability insurance for small gatherings, outbreak insurance if possible, and liability waivers against sickness be signed. He cautioned that there are no guarantees; it's unknown where lawsuit liability may direct itself.
- The smallest booking Cooper Hall has in 2020 is for 100 people, so "Green Phase" restrictions on gatherings would still eliminate most of the year's events.
- Without events, even small events, Cooper Hall is not bringing in any revenue but the costs for overhead are still being incurred.
- We should be open to booking events for 25 people or less, at the same hourly rates.
- We should contact every booked event now in writing to set the expectation that events will need to be held to the whatever the maximum gathering number is at event time; right now it is 25. And they will need to keep activities within the social distancing guidelines.
- These are unprecedented times and this is a very difficult decision.

Mingle on Main discussion:

- We cannot put several thousand people on Main Street.
- If we have a Mingle, how could we turn people away, keep track of numbers, crowd-control, social distance?
- If we're the only event going, then everyone will come out to it.
- It's better to be proactive than to string vendors along. We'll make it better next year.
- Carnival and parade have already cancelled for July.

Arts Festival discussion:

- We'd need to spread out the vendors, which means having fewer vendors. That means reworking the whole design and layout to space vendors out. Planning starts in January and that's without rethinking the whole thing at this stage.
- We're short on volunteers.
- Fewer vendors means less revenue, yet many of the Borough's costs are still fixed.
- How do we make up the revenue?

### **Cooper Hall Events**

**Motion was made and seconded by Carol Neubert/June Crawford to close Cooper Hall to all Rental Events through June 30. The motion carried.**

**Mingle on Main**

Motion was made and seconded by Scott Herbst/Carol Neubert to cancel the Mingle on Main Season. The motion carried.

**Arts Festival**

Motion was made and seconded by Pat Rinebolt/Carol Neubert to cancel the 2020 Saxonburg Arts Festival scheduled for September 12 & 13. The motion carried.

**Bills**

Motion was made and seconded by Dave Felsing/Scott Herbst to approve the bills as presented: \$22,952.97 in checks paid from the Borough's General Fund, of which \$16,480.52 is the Borough's portion of the expense and \$6,472.45 the Authority's portion of the expense. In addition, decrease adjustments in April from the Borough General Fund in the amount of \$36,079.50 of which \$15,858.09 was the Borough's portion of the expense and \$20,221.41 was the Authority's portion of the expense, and payroll for April 2020 in the amount of \$77,225.58 of which \$29,358.08 is the Borough's portion of the expense and \$47,867.50 is the Authority's portion of the expense. The motion carried.

**Financial Report**

- Mary presented the first quarter budget numbers comparing 2018, 2019, and 2020. Due to a mild winter, capital projects on hold, and an effort not to spend, the Borough's expenses are significantly lower now as compared to 2019 and 2018. Mary estimated revenue loss due to COVID-19-related decreases in Earned Income Tax and Local Service Tax, possibly as much as a mil and a half for the year, which is about \$18,000.
- Mayor Gillespie tasked Council with cutting more expenses and devising a plan for revenue loss.

**Solicitor**

Solicitor Sean Gallagher

- The Solicitor had no further report at this time.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

None

**Executive Session**

The meeting recessed at 7:50 p.m. to go into Executive Session to discuss employee and contract matters.

The meeting reconvened at 8:05 p.m.

**Certificate of Appropriateness:**

Motion was made and seconded by Carol Neubert/Dave Felsing to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the shingle change at 305 W Main Street contingent upon approval by the HARB. The motion carried.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 16 at 7 p.m.

Jody Brown  
Secretary