

***MINUTES OF THE
BOROUGH OF TOPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, July 10, 2023***

The regular semi-monthly meeting of the Tipton Borough Council was called to order by interim Council President Kunkel at Borough Hall, 205 South Callowhill Street, Tipton, PA 19562 at 7:05 PM. Present were Mayor Miller, Council Members C. Cook, A. Falcone, E. Polinsky, E. Stoudt, and M. Stoudt, Solicitor Joan London, Engineer Charley Myers, PE, Borough Manager S. Milo and Borough Administrative Assistant T. Hook.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Kunkel announced that an executive session was held prior to this meeting at 6:00PM to discuss personnel and labor matters.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Meeting minutes from the June 12, 2023 Council Meeting were presented for approval. Mrs. Stoudt requested a revision to the meeting minutes. Mr. Stoudt made a motion to approve the minutes with the requested revision. Mr. Polinsky seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

INTERVIEWS OF BOROUGH COUNCIL CANDIDATES FOR APPOINTMENT

Ms. Kunkel advised no letters of interest for the open Council position had been received; she inquired if any of the attendees present were interested in serving on Borough Council. Ms. Hassler indicated if there were no other interested parties, she would be open to filling the vacancy. Ms. Kunkel noted Ms. Hassler had already completed interviews for a previous Council position. Mr. Polinsky made a motion to appoint Ms. Hassler to the open Council seat. Ms. Falcone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPOINTMENT TO COUNCIL EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

Mayor Miller administered the oath of office to Ms. Hassler.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: PRESIDENT

Ms. Kunkel opened the floor for nominations for Council President. Nominees were, in order of nomination, Mr. Polinsky (nominated by Mrs. Stoudt), Ms. Falcone (nominated by Ms. Cook), Mrs. Stoudt (nominated by Ms. Kunkel) and Mr. Stoudt (nominated by Ms. Falcone). Ms. London closed the nominations, and stated the nominees would be put up for a vote in the order of nomination; the first to secure a majority vote would assume the role of Council President. The first nominee, Mr. Polinsky, was presented for roll call vote.

Nay – Ms. Cook, Ms. Kunkel, Ms. Hassler

Yay – Ms. Falcone, Mr. Polinsky, Mr. Stoudt, Mrs. Stoudt

The motion passed with a 4-3 vote. Mr. Polinsky immediately assumed the role of Council President, with Ms. Kunkel re-assuming her Council Vice President role.

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Milo noted that Friend, Inc. will hold their 14th Annual “Brake the Cycle of Poverty” bike ride on August 12, 2023 from 9:00AM – 2:00PM; the riders will travel through Topton, and there will be signs posted throughout the town.

Ms. Milo stated Norfolk Southern communicated a revision to the anticipated dates on which they will be performing service on the Home Avenue and Main Street crossings; the work was previously scheduled for June, but is now tentatively scheduled to begin the week of July 24th. Ms. Milo noted this date may continue to change.

Ms. Milo presented the request for a designated persons with disability parking space at 137 E. High St.; the applicant submitted the permanent persons with disability parking placard with their request. Ms. Kunkel made a motion to approve. Mrs. Stoudt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Milo presented a letter from a property owner, who owns two properties in Topton. Ms. Milo asked if Mr. Dianna was present; he was not. Ms. Milo confirmed the communication holds as communication to Council, and asked Council to review as they are able.

MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Miller stated he stopped by the “Music in the Park” event; he stopped by early and it was a relatively light crowd at that time.

Mayor Miller expressed frustration with the speed of traffic along Home Avenue, stating he regularly crosses the road to utilize the dog park and it has become a “drag strip”. Ms. London asked if a police representative would be joining the meeting later this evening. Ms. Milo stated her understanding was that Officer Ulshafer would, hopefully, be attending after his first meeting of the evening concludes.

POLICE REPORT

No officers present for this month’s meeting, but the following report was submitted by the Fleetwood Police for June:

Activity Recap	No./Hrs.
Patrol Miles	799
Patrol Hours	82
IRF (# Incidents / Hours to Handle)	22 / 20 hrs.
Crash Investigations	0
Traffic Citations	14
Non-Traffic Citation(s)	1
Traffic Checks	9 hrs.
Paperwork	8 / 4 hrs.

Activity Recap cont.	No./Hrs.
Vehicle Stops	16
Follow-Up / CI	1 hr.
Court	1 hr.

Citation Breakdown	No.
Stop Sign	5
Speeding	5
Driving Under Suspension	2
Suspension of Title (Registration)	1

Additional notable activities handled this month included investigating criminal mischief at the Borough Park, a noise complaint and responding to the report of an attempted burglary. The attempted burglary turned out, in fact, to be someone trying to get the attention of a tenant by knocking on a window and was not an actual burglary attempt.

HEARING OF VISITORS

Ms. Kristula, resident, requested an update on the status of accessible parking spaces for the Borough office, adding she hoped the changes would be in place prior to the next election. Mr. Polinsky confirmed there were no major construction projects planned prior to the next round of elections. Ms. Kristula asked, if, as a secondary option, it would be possible to move the designated accessible spots to a flat area. Ms. Milo and Mr. Polinsky confirmed the officially designated accessible parking spaces are located in the Weis Street parking lot. Ms. Kristula stated “so a person in a wheelchair has to come all the way from there [Weis Street Parking Lot] on the pathway, which is why we were not here last month because of the rain”. Mr. Polinsky acknowledged the Weis Street location is not ideal, but it was the best option currently available. Ms. Kristula asked if the Borough Office was the only location at which elections could be held, and asked if the Borough was provided payment from the County in exchange for use of the building. Ms. Milo confirmed the Borough does not receive payment for use of the building. Ms. Kristula asked if it were possible to utilize an alternate location for elections. Ms. Milo indicated it would be necessary to contact the County about their selection of election sites; the County currently selects the Borough Office as an election site, and requests that space be provided for election equipment, personnel, etc. Until such time that a better option exists for residents with disabilities, Ms. Falcone inquired if it would be possible, at least temporarily, to designate accessible spaces in a more suitable (flat) area, especially during higher traffic events, such as elections. Ms. Milo confirmed it would be possible to do, confirming there are temporary accessible signs available. Mr. Polinsky and Ms. Kunkel agreed this was a good idea.

Ms. Kirby, resident, shared concerns over the dangerous speeds of GFL trucks (trash/recycling hauler) traveling in the Borough. Ms. Kirby stated she felt her own safety had been jeopardized, and had witnessed other residents being put in dangerous situations as well. Ms. Cook inquired what day GFL picked up. Mr. Stoudt and Mr. Polinsky indicated GFL picked up on Wednesdays

at their residences. Mr. Polinsky suggested reaching out to GFL. The resident stated that she had attempted to reach GFL using the number provided, and had visited their website online, but that they are a Canadian company and were not easy to reach. Mr. Polinsky suggested alerting the Fleetwood Police as well.

Ms. Cook noted she was advised today that whomever bought out AJ Blosenski had cancelled all of their contracts. Ms. Kirby confirmed cancellations were as of July 19th, 2023, and noted Texas Waste Management had bought out AJ Blosenski; she added there were currently 12 states that have filed lawsuits against them.

SOLICITOR

Ms. London stated her items were being addressed elsewhere in the agenda.

BOROUGH MANAGER

Ms. Milo directed Council to the most recent draft of the Residential Water and Sewer Service Policy, indicating the copy Ms. Falcone had presented previously was forwarded to office staff for additional review. Ms. Milo stated this was the 3rd or 4th draft that has been prepared, and stated the policy would be presented as a resolution at next month's meeting. Ms. Milo asked Council to review, and reach out to either herself or Ms. Schoonover, Borough Treasurer, in the office with any questions. Mrs. Stoudt commented that concerns were raised about the late notice fees, and indicated she had spoken with Ms. Schoonover regarding the current fee structure associated with late payments. Additional conversation around the current process, fees, verbiage on the shut off notice, potential adjustments to the fee structure, the on-going challenges associated with managing the delinquent accounts, grace periods, and thoughts on how to encourage residents to use the payment plan continued. Mrs. Stoudt asked Council to keep this in mind as they reviewed the policy. Ms. Milo confirmed the policy did not contain specifics on the late fees.

Ms. Milo stated as a UGI contractor began restoration work on Haas Street, sink holes caused by storm drainage pipes were uncovered; all storm sewer pipes on Haas Street will require replacement as soon as possible.

Ms. Milo confirmed UGI is completing restoration on Haas, Penn and East Franklin Streets.

Ms. Milo informed Council that Berks County received 2 positive mosquito samples of West Nile Virus today, and encouraged residents and businesses to eliminate standing water on their properties.

Ms. Milo confirmed both she and Ms. Schoonover met with Dallas Data Systems for a demonstration of their billing software. Ms. Milo noted DDS was preparing a quote to be completed prior to the annual budget process; if the quote is not below the required threshold, it will be sent out for additional competitive bids as required. Ms. Milo noted the current SafeChoice software being utilized is falling short of Borough needs.

Ms. Milo noted she had attended 2 Albright seminars recently; the first was led by the OOR (Office of Open Records) and was intended for experienced municipal secretaries and managers; the seminar provided an in depth review of Sunshine Act, to include review of mistakes that are commonly made. The second Albright seminar was the Berks County Water/Sewer monthly meeting. Ms. Milo indicated the County is interested in additional information on infrastructure needs, and is encouraging regionalization of smaller municipalities. Ms. Milo noted a challenge with the regionalization approach is simply the costs involved with linking pipes between municipalities, for example, linking Topton to Fleetwood.

Ms. Milo noted that she and Ms. Hook attended a webinar on Clean Water that outlined potential impacts to municipal development arising from a recent Supreme Court ruling that stemmed from a challenge to the Clean Water Act.

Ms. Milo mentioned the Berks County Commissioners organized an “On the Road” meeting recently in Topton; she noted the BCC were very good to work with and encouraged other municipalities to host “On the Road” meetings with the Commissioners.

Ms. Milo stated, as Mrs. Stoudt indicated previously, the office has been receiving a lot of feedback on water/sewer bills from both residential and non-residential customers.

Ms. Milo reported a refund check had been received from PMHIC (Pennsylvania Municipal Health Insurance Cooperative); in previous years Council had voted to refund employees enrolled in health care coverage the value of a single coverage plan (\$1,332.04/employee). Mrs. Stoudt asked if this was 50% of the refund that could be expected for the year. Ms. Milo advised though that is what PMHIC indicated, it was not the case last year. Mrs. Stoudt asked when the second refund check would be cut. Ms. Milo indicated typically it is issued around November or December, but it depends on the timing of when the PMHIC board meets. Mrs. Stoudt asked for clarification on the total value that would remain after the refund to employees. Ms. Milo confirmed the employees would be refunded \$9,324.28, leaving a balance of \$22,661.72 to apply to the General Fund. Mrs. Stoudt made a motion to refund the value of a single coverage plan to enrolled employees. Ms. Kunkel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Milo introduced Mr. Scott, the chair of the Borough’s Planning Commission. Mr. Scott indicated the current Eastern Berks Joint Comprehensive Plan among the Borough, Rockland Township and District Township will eclipse its 10 year mark in 2025, noting 2015 was the last time any modifications were made. Mr. Scott stated updates to the plan will be needed; the Planning Commission has been in contact with Rockland Township, District Township and the school district. Mr. Scott indicated the Planning Commission intends to meet with the Berks County Planning Commission to discuss a schedule, procedures, costs, and NAP grant funding through DCED (Department of Community and Economic Development); the meeting with the BCPC is slated for October 11th. Mr. Scott requested authorization to move forward with establishing a planning committee, similar to those established by District and Rockland Townships, comprised of members of the community, Council, planning commission or other committees as appropriate. Mr. Stoudt made a motion to approve. Ms. Cook seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Scott noted the Planning Commission had previously requested that Council appoint an interim member to the Planning Commission, stating they are currently functioning with 4 members. Mr. Scott requested an appointment from Council again. Mr. Polinsky volunteered to fill a vacant position on the Planning Commission.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Safety and Personnel Committee (Unassigned/Open)

Ms. Kunkel inquired about the status of resumes submissions for the open full-time Public Works position. Ms. Milo confirmed 4 resumes had been received. Mr. Stoudt suggested tabling further conversation until the next meeting.

Public Relations and Quality of Life (Kunkel)

Ms. Kunkel introduced a new agenda item, “Buzz Around Town”. Mrs. Stoudt stated there had been discussion at previous meetings around improving conversations and connections with residents. She thought this segment of the meeting could provide a forum to discuss what council members are hearing from residents, be it concerns, suggestions, or otherwise.

Mrs. Stoudt stated she had heard residents were not aware of the street sweeping dates; she acknowledged it was discussed in a Council meeting, had been posted on the Borough’s electronic message board and was posted on social media. Mrs. Stoudt asked for thoughts on how to get the message out. There was additional conversation around why the current communication methods might not be effective for all residents, and why the timing of the newsletter discounted it as an effective option. Mrs. Stoudt reiterated this section was not intended to always result in an immediate resolution.

Mrs. Stoudt also noted several residents were hoping the paving on Haas and Franklin Streets was not complete; Mr. Myers confirmed it was not.

Mrs. Stoudt mentioned she had been hearing concerns from AJ Blosenski customers, but indicated at this point most customers had switched to other haulers. Ms. Falcone noted residents should be aware that it was Texas Waste Management, not AJ Blosenski, who had cancelled the AJ Blosenski contracts; she noted residents may want to evaluate their patronage to Waste Management, if any.

Mrs. Stoudt inquired as to how the collection of contact information from residents was going. Ms. Milo indicated it remained difficult. Additional discussion around including the request for information directly on the water/sewer bill, previous attempts to collect information, and the potential of utilizing the SwiftReach phone system for communications continued. Ms. Milo also reiterated residents can continue to call or come into the office.

Ms. Kunkel stated as follow-up to last meeting’s request for more Quality of Life reporting, there were 4 Quality of Life citations submitted prior to the last meeting, and

an additional 5 citations posted since the last meeting. In all instances, the issues were resolved. Ms. Cook noted there were several trash issues reported, but it was determined they were related to trash hauler issues, and therefore, would not be written up.

Environmental and Quality of Life Committee (Cook)

Ms. Cook stated there were several trash complaints since the last meeting, two were valid, the others were related to trash hauler issues; one complaint was especially bad, with trash in the backyard of the home; the resident was cited and ultimately complied, but was afforded a few additional days because of medical circumstances. There were also a few instances of tall grass or weeds.

Ms. Cook noted there were rumors circulating on social media around the destination of the Borough's recycling. Ms. Cook stated that recycling collected in the Borough goes to Cogle's Recycling in Hamburg, adding that haulers may handle recycling from other municipalities differently, but reiterated the Borough's recycling is not taken for incineration.

Ms. Cook indicated she will post a flyer for the Berks County Recycling Center in the Borough Office; the flyer outlines the center's hours, items accepted and additional information.

Special Events and Policy Committee (Falcone)

Ms. Falcone indicated the weather held out for the recent "Music in the Park" event, but there was extremely low attendance; she noted there were likely several contributing factors affecting turnout, to include the forecasted bad weather, and the fact that Redeemer Bible Fellowship Church did not combine their event with the community event this year.

Ms. Falcone indicated additional upcoming events scheduled for the park included the "Senior Luncheon" on Thursday, July 20th from Noon to 4:00PM. Ms. Falcone made a motion requesting the back portion of Oak Alley from the restrooms on be blocked off as accessible to allow for enough parking for the seniors. Mrs. Stoudt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Falcone indicated the "Classic Cars & Classic Music" event was scheduled for Sunday, July 23rd from 3:00PM – 8:00PM. Discussion around parking options and closures needed ensued. Ms. Falcone requested closing Callowhill Street from Weis Street to Franklin Street, all of Oak Alley, and Spruce Street from Oak Alley to Barkley Street. Mrs. Stoudt made a motion to approve the requested closure. Ms. Kunkel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Falcone advised the "National Night Out" event will be held on Tuesday, August 1st, beginning at 6:00PM; community organizations will be on hand offering food and beverages for sale; sno-cones and a variety of other foods will also be available for purchase; the publicized start time for the movie is 8:00PM, and it is expected to run until 9:30 – 9:45PM. Ms. Hassler confirmed "The Secret Life of Pets" was the movie selected

for presentation. Ms. Falcone made a motion to close Oak Alley and Spruce Streets for this event. Ms. Kunkel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Falcone shared that an additional \$1,000 had been pledged for special events, bringing the total contributions to \$8,700; she stressed these events are not costing taxpayers money, that community businesses are supporting these events as a way to allow residents to enjoy events in the park. Ms. Falcone stated that, previously, these events were paid for by the Borough. Ms. Falcone provided detail on the amounts spent and remaining from the donated funds. Ms. Cook noted she had heard nothing but positive feedback regarding the “Music in the Park” event, and thanked Ms. Falcone for organizing the event. Ms. Falcone thanked Ms. Cook for her feedback, but noted the appreciation and recognition should go to the event sponsors, stating their generosity made the events possible; Ms. Falcone also noted some of the donors elect to remain anonymous.

Streets and Property Committee (Polinsky)

Mr. Polinsky requested a motion to authorize the engineers to create a bid package to replace the roof on the Public Works building. Mrs. Stoudt made a motion to approve the engineers to create a bid package. Mr. Stoudt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Parks and Recreation Committee (E. Stoudt)

Mr. Stoudt referred to the recreation committee ordinance (4-2018) that had been under discussion previously; he stated that specific recreation committee ties directly to the PA DCNR grant, and until such time that the DCNR grant funds have been exhausted, he intends to leave that ordinance in place. Mr. Stoudt indicated once the DCNR grant has been closed out, he would look to create a new recreation committee from scratch. Ms. London agreed with Mr. Stoudt’s recommendation, but stated there are some organizations listed in the ordinance that no longer exist, and it would be reasonable to amend it to reflect current stakeholders. Mr. Stoudt indicated he did not plan to change the ordinance until the DCNR grant is closed. Ms. Cook inquired about the amount of funds remaining in the DCNR grant. Ms. Milo confirmed the DCNR project was estimated at approximately \$247,000. Mr. Stoudt noted grants are matching grants, and the Borough cannot ask for new grants because funds do not exist to match. Ms. Milo asked if Mr. Stoudt had any idea on when he would like to begin advertising meeting dates. Mr. Stoudt indicated he did not, and asked Mr. Myers if he could provide any completion date for the DCNR project. Mr. Myers stated the engineering proposal would be forthcoming, and if approved, completion would likely be spring of 2024.

Finance and Utilities Committee (M. Stoudt)

Mrs. Stoudt introduced the bills and transfers. Mrs. Stoudt made a motion to approve the list of bills and transfers. Mr. Stoudt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Stoudt indicated water/sewer bills will go out on or around Friday, July 21st; currently there are 4 residents on payment plans, and 1 resident has been posted with a 48hr final notice because they failed to make a payment on their payment plan; meter reading will begin next week.

Mrs. Stoudt reviewed the Borough account balances presented by the Borough Treasurer.

On-Line Bank Account Balances as of 7/10/2023:

General Account:	\$ 451,534.59
Water Account:	\$ 30,206.18
Sewer Account:	\$ 163,766.76
Reeds Beds – Sewer:	\$ 5,004.83
Payroll:	\$ 1,248.27
Recreation/Park Project:	\$ 305,730.02
Liquid Fuels:	\$ 336,615.38
Fire Fund:	\$ 99,349.62
Ambulance Fund:	\$ 38,621.37
ARPA Funding	\$ 217,913.55

Mrs. Stoudt asked if anyone had questions on the request for proposals for auditing services. Ms. London asked if this proposal was based on prior proposals completed by the Borough; Mrs. Stoudt confirmed it was the proposal reviewed by Ms. London. Mrs. Stoudt made a motion to approve the RFP for Auditing Services. Ms. Cook seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Kunkel asked if it was known who would receive the RFP. Mrs. Stoudt indicated the process was to publish the RFP, but it was acceptable to also send directly to any interested parties.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

1. **PADEP Sewer and Water**
 - a. Working with DRBC on some issues with Wastewater Reporting.

2. **Authorizations Needed/Pending**
 - (1) Public Works Building Roof – authorization for Bid package and to bid:
 - a. Design \$6,500
 - b. Bidding \$3,500
 - c. Construction Engineering \$5,500
 - (2) Water Supply Well – we will seek authorization for each stage.
 - (3) Topton DCNR project: \$37,000 per grant application
 - a. Survey & Design - \$23,000
 - b. Admin - \$5,000
 - c. Bidding - \$4,500
 - d. Construction Admin - \$4,500

3. **Water Supply Well**

Task I: Feasibility Study	
A. Site Feasibility	\$5,000.00
B. Site Evaluation	\$7,500.00
Task II: Site Survey	\$7,500.00
Task III: Well Construction Specifications	\$5,000.00
Task IV: Well Drilling	\$60,000.00
Task V: Pump Tests	\$15,000.00
Task VI: Final Design of Water Improvements	\$50,000.00
Task VII: Final Permitting of Water Improvements	\$10,000.00
Task VIII: Construction of Final Water Improvements	\$200,000.00
Total Estimated Cost	\$360,000.00

Tentative Schedule:

Task I: Feasibility Study	
A. Site Feasibility	June 2023
B. Site Evaluation	July 2023
Task II: Site Survey	July-August 2023
Task III: Well Construction Specifications	August 2023
Task IV: Well Drilling	October 2023 - December 2023
Task V: Pump Tests	December 2023
Task VI: Final Design of Water Improvements	August 2023 - January 2024
Task VII: Final Permitting of Water Improvements	February 2024 - September 2024
Task VIII: Construction of Final Water Improvements	November 2024 - March 2025

4. **DEP MS-4**

MS4 Annual Report to DEP – DEP Annual report draft being prepared for Borough review. and comments. Submission is due to DEP by September 30, 2023.

Perennial Stream Work – On Hold. No change

5. **Topton Transportation Alternatives Trail Connection Project**

Construction is complete.

6. **Grants:**

A. East Barkley - \$385,000, Small Water & Sewer – expect award in summer.

a. Next CFA Meeting 7/18/2023, then 9/19/2023

7. **Washington Street Pumping Station**

Received Grant award, contract with grant agency signed.

Bid delayed due to issues with PennBid.

Anticipated Schedule:

Bid Opening - August 7, 2023

Potential Award – August 10, 2023

Pre-Con – Sept 1, 2023

Installation Actual Start – December 6, 2023

Installation Complete – December 17, 2023

Construction Complete – January 22, 2024

8. **UGI Line Installation**

Franklin Street asphalt base course repairs week of July 10th.

Mill and overlay scheduled for the week of July 24th.

9. **Roller Hockey Rink**

Initial draft sketch & estimate sent on 6/5/2023 for review. Revisions are being made based on feedback. Updated estimate submitted with removal of court color surfacing.

10. **DCNR – Oak Alley Project**

Project scope falls within the DCNR requirements. Isett submits a lump sum proposal which is within the grant reimbursement guidelines.

OLD BUSINESS

Mrs. Stoudt stated 70 Hometown Hero banners are hung; the last check for the next batch of 10 was received today, so she will work to get that batch sent over to Mr. Mark this week; the next round of 10 applications were completed today as well. A brief discussion on the remaining locations available to hang banners followed.

Mr. Polinsky introduced the topic of employee benefits. Mrs. Stoudt stated the options provided by PMHIC are limited; the only available provider is Capital Blue Cross. Mrs. Stoudt indicated 3 of 5 employees currently enrolled in the family plan were only employee + spouse, so she inquired about a rate for employee + spouse, but no such option exists; she added that the cost of a family plan is more than double that of the single employee option. Ms. Cook noted the health insurance landscape has changed since this coverage was originally established, referencing the Affordable Care Act. Ms. Cook acknowledged PMHIC was competitive at the time, but questioned if exploring options outside PMHIC would offer more affordable options today. Ms. Kunkel agreed searching outside PMHIC would offer more options, but cautioned when searching as a small entity rather than as part of the group, the costs would likely not be competitive. Ms. Kunkel also noted that ACA addresses coverages that need to be provided, not necessarily premiums. Ms. Cook noted she had friends who utilized ACA for minimum coverage and stated it offered many options. Ms. Kunkel agreed, but noted individuals utilizing the ACA exchange because they are not covered by their employer would be a

very different scenario, and factors such as salary are considered. Ms. Cook noted it may still be worth exploring other options. Ms. Kunkel cautioned that working outside the cooperative could create challenges in the future if, for example, PMHIC would not allow the Borough to re-join at some point in the future. Ms. Milo indicated that could be the case, or it could result in additional costs, noting that financial penalties are levied for members leaving PMHIC in the last 6 months of the year. Ms. Hassler reiterated Ms. Kunkel's statement, that securing coverage as part of a large group would result in a more advantageous price; she noted that Berks County school districts had formed their own health care consortium several years ago, and were able to save a lot of money by leveraging their collective volume. Ms. Cook asked how large the PMHIC group was. Ms. Milo indicated the group began small, but was huge now. Ms. Cook asked for the number of employees in the group. Ms. Milo stated she would have to get back to Ms. Cook on the current PMHIC enrollment, or Ms. Cook could go directly to the PMHIC website for more information. Mrs. Stoudt stated the PMHIC site reflects 4 carrier options, but our plan only offers one for some reason. Ms. Cook sought clarification that though PMHIC offers 4 carriers, the Borough is only able to select the single option. Mrs. Stoudt confirmed that was what she was told. Mrs. Stoudt suggested the best option, given the limitations of the plan, would be to get pricing on the current plan with a slightly higher deductible. Ms. Milo confirmed she would get back to Mrs. Stoudt on the numbers, or Mrs. Stoudt could go directly to the PMHIC website for information. Mrs. Stoudt acknowledged there was little that could be done at this point in the year, but noted the enrollment period opens again at the beginning of 2024, and pricing for the new enrollment year would be available sometime in October or November. Mrs. Stoudt suggested requesting pricing at slightly higher deductibles to determine the impact on costs. Mr. Polinsky stated exploring options seemed like an appropriate step at this time. Ms. Cook and Ms. Falcone agreed. Ms. Falcone noted, even if alternate options are not viable, it was appropriate to perform this due diligence. Mrs. Stoudt questioned if there were other groups that could be joined, but added she was not clear on the potential penalties for leaving PMHIC. Ms. Milo confirmed if sufficient advance written notice was provided to PMHIC (within the first 6 months of the calendar year), there would not be penalties for leaving, adding it was also possible to take back that decision by a certain date later in the year. Mr. Polinsky stated again it was appropriate to explore options.

Mr. Polinsky introduced Redeemer Bible Fellowship Church's requested revision to their Block Party from August 26, 2023 to August 19, 2023. Mrs. Stoudt made a motion to approve the revised date. Ms. Kunkel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Stoudt stated she and Mr. Polinsky had spoken at the recent County Commissioners "On The Road" meeting held at the Topton Borough Hall on Thursday, June 29th. Mrs. Stoudt indicated she and Mr. Polinsky had asked for suggestions or assistance with respect to the Borough budget, specifically the limited availability of funds. Mrs. Stoudt stated the feedback from the County Commissioners was twofold, suggesting either merging with adjacent Boroughs to share resources, or reaching out to CELG (Center for Excellence in Local Government) for assistance. Mrs. Stoudt indicated she had spoken to

a few members after the meeting adjourned, who agreed, merging with other municipalities is really only suitable for those physically adjacent to one another. Mrs. Stoudt indicated Ms. Milo confirmed the Borough was already in contact with CELG. Mrs. Stoudt mentioned that another suggestion was to have CELG review the Borough's budget and assist with savings. Ms. London confirmed CELG offers budget review services; she provided background on CELG staff, and shared some success stories about local municipality merges facilitated with assistance from CELG. Ms. London did note the differences between the municipality examples shared, and the Borough's unique situation. Ms. London did recommend looking into use of CELG resources for the Borough. Ms. Falcone found it interesting that merging of municipalities was encouraged, as opposed to trying to preserve small town America. Ms. London stated the mergers did not change the character of the municipalities involved, but agreed it would be appropriate for the County Commissioners to review the grant structure, specifically the matches, and their suitability for smaller communities. Ms. Falcone thanked Mr. Polinsky and Mrs. Stoudt for speaking up on behalf of the Borough and making the County Commissioners aware that the Borough is struggling to secure the funding it needs, especially for roads.

ADJOURNMENT

Council adjourned at 8:27PM by a motion from Ms. Kunkel, seconded by Ms. Falcone. The next regular Council meeting will be held on August 1, 2023 at 7:00PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry L. Hook
Administrative Assistant