

**KULPMONT BOROUGH
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

April 9, 2025

7:00 P.M.

Opening Prayer by Councilman Robert Chesney
The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag by the body present,
Kulpmont Borough Council held the meeting for general purpose on
Wednesday, April 9, 2025

The roll call was taken, and the following members were present: Robert M. Slaby, Stephen Bielskie, Robert Fanella, Robert Chesney, Stephen Motyka, Marlin Hodge, Bernard Novakoski and Charles Staskiel.

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT: Chief Stephen Mazzeo, Administrative Secretary Jewel Newbern, Assistant Fire Chief Kevin O’Hearn, Fire Chief Ray Siko, EMA Devin O’Hearn, and Borough Supervisor Edwin Begis.

OTHERS PRESENT: Edwin Howerter, Vinny Clausi, Diane Graff, Ann Martino, Myron Turlis, Tina Treese, Rich Hallick, W. Bradley

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO BE HEARD ON ANYTHING THAT IS ON THE AGENDA:

Vinny Clausi thanked council for allowing him to speak first since he has another meeting to attend. He spoke about an issue regarding the handicapped parking in Kulpmont. He said he paid \$60,000 for a new van for a gentleman in town who has no legs. His issue is that the gentleman, Steve Wagner who resides at 1026 Chestnut Street, got his handicapped parking sign removed. Vinny said that Mr. Wagner told him he paid for one year but now has not paid for three years. He said that someone could have knocked on the door out of curtesy before taking the sign. He added that it is also unconstitutional to charge every year for a handicapped sign, “you can charge once for the pole and the concrete used to install it”. Mr. Novakoski told Vinny that the sign is not a handicap sign, it is a reserved sign since his license plate number is on it. He said that a handicap sign anyone could park in the spot. He asked the solicitor if it is legal to charge residents every year for the handicap sign, Mr. Novakoski added that the sign is a private parking spot for the resident and there is a difference. He said that the sign turns it into the resident’s private parking space. Vinny said that it is unconstitutional and that he will sue the borough and everyone individually. Mr. Bielskie stated that he has spoke for two minutes and that his time was up. Vinny directed his attention to Solicitor Greco and told him to discuss with the board about how the signs are illegal. Mr. Greco replied to him stating this issue has been raised by Mr. Bradley and that the ordinance committee has discussed it and will be addressing it again. Vinny said that he wants the sign back at Mr. Wagner’s property and that he will pay for it. Mr. Bielskie stated that there is a form that goes out every year and that the borough does that to ensure that the person who has the sign is still there. Vinny said that he will pay for the three years that he missed but he needs the sign.

PRESIDENTS REPORT – (Stephen Bielskie)

Mr. Bielskie stated that he would like to hold an executive session for personnel matters at this moment and that the council, including the solicitor and mayor, will go to the back hall to discuss personnel matters for about 5 to 10 minutes and will be back out.

The executive session began at 7:08 PM and ended around 7:15 PM.

MAYORS REPORT- (Robert M. Slaby)

Mayor Slaby stated that he believes it would be a good idea to hold the community yard sale on June 14th and asks if there could be a motion to approve it. He says unless someone can explain why it would not be a good idea that it should be accepted. Mr. Bielskie adds that the rain date for the yard sale is June 21st.

MOTION- Mr. Novakoski made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Fanella to approve to hold the community yard sale on June 14th with a rain date June 21st.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE (yes)
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

SECRETARY'S REPORT- (Rhonda Wilk)

Approval is needed for March 12 meeting minutes and April 2, 2025, special meeting minutes.

MOTION- Mr. Novakoski made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Staskiel to approve meeting minutes for the March 12 meeting and April 2 special meeting.

VOICE VOTE: All Is

Jewel Newbern stated that we received a letter from the Department of Economic Development& Planning to amend the Northumberland County Stormwater Management Ordinance (SWMO) at its public meeting on May 6. Jewel stated that the next letter is the same thing but for SALDO. Both copied Mayor/council.

Jewel stated that the next piece is from the Tax Claim Bureau which contains the distribution of proceeds from the 2024 Upset Tax Sale. Copied Mayor/council.

Jewel stated that Service Electric sent a letter explaining their new product updates and rate adjustments. Copied Mayor/ Council.

Jewel stated that the County of Northumberland Elections and Voter registration will be delivering machines for the primary election on May 20, 2025. The machines will be delivered May 15th, and it does not state a time. Copied Mayor/Council.

Jewel stated that the borough received another letter from the Department of Economic Development & Planning for the Kulpmont Carwash land development plans. Copied Mayor/Council.

Lastly, Jewel stated that we got an email from Heather Betsill seeking permission to plant a tree in memory of her daughter. Jewel stated that she would like to plant it near the park behind Pine Street. She would like to plant it on May 3rd and is asking for permission and where a good place to plant it would be. Mr. Chesney says that it would be best for her to coordinate with Ed Begis to find the best place to plant the tree and that she also has a personalized plaque to go with it. He states that her hope is that the tree along with the personalized plaque would lessen the risk of it getting vandalized. Mr. Chesney added that although we cannot guarantee that it will not be vandalized, at least having the two things together will lessen the chance. He said it would not be a problem but to coordinate with Ed to find the best spot for it.

MOTION- Mr. Fanella made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Chesney to permit Heather Betsill to plant the tree at the park with coordination from Ed.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE (yes)
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

TREASURERS REPORT (Paul Niglio)

Mr. Niglio stated financial information and a list of bills to be paid was provided and stated a motion is needed for them to be approved.

MOTION- Mr. Chesney made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Hodge to approve and pay the bills.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE (yes)
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

Mr. Niglio stated that he would like to add one more note. According to last year's statistics, it has been the first year since he's been here in 1984 that there was a decrease in the income earned. He says that it is not a good sign, and he does not know if this will be a constant and if it begins receding it won't be a good thing for the borough. Mr. Greco asked Paul if he has reached out to the tax collector and Paul replied that this does not come from that and this is the income earned.

Mr. Chesney stated that he had a question for Paul. He asked if we were okay with all the money that has been dispersed because we still have not received all of the funding back from the bills that we have paid. Paul stated that the borough has and that all of the money appropriated from the storm sewer work has been paid for. The bills we are getting now are different grants and that does not have anything to do with the storm sewer bills which were paid, with ARPA money. Mr. Chesney said right but I am asking about the new stuff, like the carboard situation. He states that we have not gotten the money back from those bills yet. He breaks down the recycling grant and

states that we do not know what the land development cost will be and that we have changed some of the machinery. He stated that we are waiting on getting back \$14,770 and \$73,853 and if we don't get those grants back and we already paid that out, we must hope that it's coming back. Paul said that if we do not get that money back then the whole world would be in trouble because we wouldn't be the only ones. Mr. Chesney said that it is just a concern and Paul stated that he is not paying them until he gets reimbursements.

SOLICITORS REPORT (Edward Greco)

Solicitor Greco stated that he has a conference call next week with PPL that Steve will be on.

Mr. Greco said that there is an updated agreement with the Mount Carmel Area School District regarding the baseball field lease. The updated agreement has new language and lease terms. The field shall be used year-round by the high school for practices, games and clinics during the PIAA season and any other use upon that will have to be approved by the borough. He read that the Kulpmont Borough police will patrol the field, and all site development costs will be the responsibility of the school and initiate the plan to the borough to seek approval. He reads the insurance will be covered by the school and that any organization or group that intends to use the field will have to comply with the agreement terms. He stated that the school shall have access to the restrooms on site and share water use costs with the borough. He stated that there would need to be approval on that with contingency on Mount Carmel's approval, which their meeting is next Monday.

MOTION- Mr. Chesney made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Motyka to approve the updated agreement between the borough and Mt Carmel Area School District regarding the baseball field, contingent on MCA's approval.

Mr. Novakoski said that it sounds like they have total control, and they do not have to come to us for anything. Mr. Greco said that he may have para phrased wrong, but the Borough still has the right to say no and that the School District has preference during baseball season.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE (yes)
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

Mr. Greco stated that there is no report on Kulp Lane yet and that he is waiting on Brinkash.

POLICE CHIEFS REPORT – (Stephen Mazzeo)

Report Attached.

Chief Mazzeo briefly went over the report statistics. He stated that the calls for service were normal, but the PSP and new investigations were up. There are a few traffic citations and since the street sweeper started the tickets for that are up. He stated that the part time officers are doing a good job on arrests and vehicle stops. He said that there was an investigation on someone from South Carolina and someone else from out of town. He said that the mill is also an open investigation.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT – (Raymond Siko)

Report Attached.

Mr. Siko stated that the new fire engine purchase for \$400,000 was paid off two years early and thanked everyone for their donations and fundraising efforts.

Mr. Siko added that for the last five years they have been denied the federal grant for the SUV. He stated that they are at the point where the current self-detained breathing apparatus is completely out of service and out of date. They contacted a company and purchased used air packs and cylinders for a cost of \$16,000 just to get them by as they continue applying for grants. The updated air packs that they need to purchase are \$350,000 which they cannot afford so they are applying for federal state grants.

Mr. Siko added that they are replacing their thermal imaging cameras at \$3500 apiece and they are having to start updating their turnout gear. He said the cost is anywhere between \$4500-5000.

He wanted the borough to be aware that they had called in their IT guy to check the camera systems. He stated that there has been someone tampering with the heating unit in the fire department. He said that it has been twice they found the box coming out of the wall and that last night there was a car accident during the cold stretch, and it was 41 degrees in the station and that the heat was off. The other time the heat was at 48 degrees.

He then paid Jewel for Steve Wagner's late payments for his reserved parking sign and said that he would like him to sign up.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – (Devin O'Hearn)

No report.

BUILDING INSPECTOR'S REPORT– (Tri County COG)

Report Attached. Mr. Bielskie stated that all that they have had are solar systems.

CODE/HEALTH ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT – (Heather Owens)

No Report.

SERVICE AND FACILITIES – (Robert Fanella)

Mr. Fanella stated the food distribution will be held April 17th from 8-11 AM at the borough garage.

Mr. Fanella stated that the street sweeper will be going down Chestnut Street this Friday and sweep sidewalks off, so the road is cleaned. He stated that there will be no parking during this time, and it will be posted.

Mr. Fanella asked if we wanted to hire summer help again this year and asked Paul if we had the money to pay for that. Mr. Chesney said that he believes the summer helped Ed a lot of last summer according to his reports and that he said that he could use them again this year. Ed said they would be greatly valuable this year since they are all older and can do more things and would free up their time.

MOTION- Mr. Fanella made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Chesney to hire them again at the same rate as last year.

Mr. Hodge asked if we had to advertise it. Mr. Greco says no you would not have to since they are part-time, and we are hiring the same people.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE (yes)
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

Mr. Fanella stated that the council should make a motion to advertise Walnut Street between 6th and 7th, Oak Street 13th to 14th and Oak Street 12th to 13th for paving bids.

MOTION- Mr. Fanella made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Motyka to advertise for paving bids for the three streets independent of each other and with the right to accept or reject any and all bids.

Mr. Motyka asked if we would advertise those three independent of each other and receive bids for all three. Mr. Fanella replied yes. Mr. Greco added that we would have to include with the right to accept or reject all bids.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE (yes)
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

Mr. Greco asked Mr. Fanella when he would like the bids to be submitted, Mr. Fanella said that he will have to get in contact with Barry and Josh to get details specified. Paul said that it is early in the year, and they usually wait until October to do our jobs since they are so small.

FINANCE AND PURCHASING – (Stephen Motyka)

Mr. Motyka stated that Bucknell University and WNEP contacted him that Kulpmont is holding an Earth Day Event with three local high schools: Mount Carmel, Shamokin and Lourdes. He stated that the event is a good way for the students to learn the area, environment, and have hands on planning. He stated the cost of landscaping is \$3,458.94. He stated the Shamokin Creek Restoration Alliance has a \$3,000 grant and the Sportsman Association is donating \$150. Mr.

Motyka would like to make a motion to pick up the difference not to exceed \$500. He said that it would cost \$308.94 to pay the rest of it but there will be bussing costs that come from the school districts.

MOTION- Mr. Motyka made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Fanella to pay the difference of \$308.94 to the landscaping invoice for Earth Day Event on April 22nd and bussing fees not to exceed \$500.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE (yes)
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

Mr. Motyka said to keep an eye on the Facebook page for more details on the event.

Mr. Motyka said he would like to meet with the finance committee and Paul to go over the new solar financing proposal.

CODE HEALTH AND SAFETY- (Stephen Bielskie)

Mr. Bielskie stated that he met with people from New York from last week that are interested in purchasing the mill. He said that if they have a vision of what they can do and are able to draw it out, then it could be a great thing.

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE - (Robert Fanella)

Mr. Greco asked Mr. Fanella if he would like to schedule a meeting to handle the reserved parking ordinance. Mr. Fanella said yes.

RECREATION/GRANTS COMMITTEE – (Robert Chesney)

Mr. Chesney said that the grants are rolling along, and the big concern is that all of them stay in and work out. He asked Mr. Motyka if he had something to add.

Mr. Motyka said that the Pickleball League has started up at the field and is asking permission to put permanent outdoor nets up. He asked Ed if they could take a look at it and said that is all he has.

PERSONNEL- (Bernard P. Novakoski)

He said it was taken care of in the executive session.

FIRE/EMA/POLICE COMMITTEE – (Bernard P. Novakoski)

No Report

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Tina Treese asked the council if there was anything considered about blight fines after she spoke last month. She specifically is asking if there are any thoughts on new rules and regulations for new owners. She said if there are new mill owners then it would be the perfect time to make sure everything is up to code. Mr. Bielskie replied that there are codes in place to make sure the engineers make the building up to code. She then asked what about owners for private homes. She suggested that there is so much blight going on because there are no rules set in place. Mr. Bielskie stated that we can't force them to do anything, where she replied, "why can't we make a law then". The council replied that it would have to be done by the legislators. Mr. Greco told her that we do have laws in place and that properties can't just be let go and the borough has code in place. The borough has a range of fines and if they do not comply with paying their citations there is the opportunity to take them to the district judge and they ultimately decide on the fine. Mr. Greco adds that the borough is not in it for the money and would rather just like to see the property cleaned up, but we are able to fine every single day until it is resolved. He stated that most property owners realize that it is cheaper to fix the problem rather than pay all the fines. Mr. Chesney added that in the tax claim bureau report that a lot of people purchase a large amount of property. He used an example of a gentleman who purchased five properties at one time for \$25,000, one person bought six properties and someone else purchased seven properties. He added that although these examples are for the whole county it is still important to put in place, a way that if you are purchasing a property, you must have a certain amount of money to put up as a bond. He said that he would like to have another meeting with them regarding the problem properties in Kulpmont so the borough can find a way, legally, to take care of them. A small discussion between the council occurred and Mr. Bielskie asked if anyone else would like to speak.

Ann Martino, 7th Street, came up to ask if the problem on her street has been addressed and would like to know when it will be repaired. She brought several photos of the problem and shared them with the council, the mayor and solicitor. She stated that the street has caved in and had done a lot of damage to her property. She stated that every time it rains it goes into the holes and worsens the problem. She would like to know when it will be resolved. She said that the cones that were placed keep falling down, and she has to go out to pick them back up every day. She said nothing was on the agenda for it to even be discussed. The council informed her that there is a pipe under the road that has rotted and caused the issue. The problem is worsening because the road goes downhill and is causing more rainwater to go into.

MOTION- Mr. Motyka made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Fanella to get the borough's engineer involved for an emergency repair on 7th Street.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes), CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (yes), HODGE (yes)
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

A discussion between council of how the rainwater flows on the street runs for a few minutes. Mayor Slaby asked Diane Graff if she lives right up from Ms. Martino and if she has any problems where she lives. She replied, "no they put the grate in front of her property when they redid her road" and explained that the water enters into that grate and flows down to Ms. Martino's property.

Myron Turlis, 600 block of Pine Street, wants an update on the issue he brought to the meeting last month, when Walnut Street will be fixed. He said that the potholes are now craters and said now the road is not passable. Mr. Fanella reminded Mr. Turlis that this road is on the list to get paved. Mr. Turlis said that he appreciates that but what is he supposed to do until October, when it will be paved. He asked the council if any of them drove through it after last month's meeting, when he asked them to. The council replied yes. Mr. Turlis added that "it's bad enough that you allow the junkyard next to me operate, now I have to deal with this too". Mr. Motyka added that we are getting bids now so hopefully that road will be paved in the spring and not the fall. Mr. Bielskie asked Ed Begis if the holes are too large to fill and if he could try to fill them. Ed replied that the asphalt plant does not open until April 16th and that the holes are too big for cold patch. He said that his hands are tied, and Myron replied that he fixed most of the potholes by himself with millings, he knew they were not going to last but it gave him two months. He said he wants something done and that everyone knows the road won't be paved until the fall not the spring because they do it at the end of their schedule since it only takes two days. He said the road needs to be rebuilt and refilled since it is so bad. Mr. Niglio told Myron that the borough has to do what PennDOT tells us. Myron asked what are we supposed to do now about it though, just not use the street? Ed said he can't do anything until April 16th, Myron replied I'm not asking you I'm asking council. Mr. Fanella told Myron that as soon as the asphalt plant opens the borough will see what can be done to make it at least bearable to drive until it gets repaved. Mayor Slaby added that the junkyard Myron referred to was there before he arrived for the second time and that it is a code issue. He said that it is a mess. Myron said that there are 16 to 18 cars up there at times. A discussion on this issue occurred for a couple of minutes. Mr. Bielskie asked Officer Mazzeo if he could go up and ask him if he has a license to operate there. Mr. Mazzeo asked what department would issue a license and Mr. Bielskie said the state would have to.

OLD BUSINESS-

None

NEW BUSINESS-

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Motyka announced that on April 26th they are having another opportunity for volunteers, meeting at the Veterans Field and disbanding from there.

Mr. Motyka also announced that there is another town hall meeting for transportation related issues on April 17 from 5:30-6:30 PM at the Kulpmont Winery.

Paul Niglio wanted to acknowledge Councilman Hodge and Bob Nolan for cleaning brush around the stadium last week.

Mr. Hodge asked if there was any way to hold a birthday party at the baseball field. He wants to know if there is any liability on that. Mayor Slaby said something like that should be covered on their homeowner's insurance. Mr. Greco added that other towns have a schedule for reservations and that they fill out a facility use agreement that includes what date and time and that includes their liability insurance along with other things. He said that he will share one to see what the council thinks and if they would like to propose something like that for Kulpmont.

ADJOURNMENT THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Rhonda Wilk
Borough Secretary

Approval date May 14, 2025