

**KULPMONT BOROUGH
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

June 11, 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, June 11, 2025

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

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT: Solicitor Greco, Treasurer Paul Niglio, Chief Stephen Mazzeo, Borough Secretary Jewel Newbern, Fire Chief Ray Siko and Borough Supervisor Edwin Begis.

OTHERS PRESENT: Edwin Howerter, Diane Graff, Ann Martino, Tina Treese, Rich Hallick, Greg Sacavage, Kevin O'Hearn, Devin O'Hearn, Courtney Rey

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

No one spoke

PRESIDENTS REPORT – (Stephen Bielskie)

No Report.

MAYORS REPORT- (Robert M. Slaby)

Mayor Slaby asked council to approve the drug task agreement, at no cost to the borough, to allow the drug task to participate in the borough.

MOTION- Mr. Chesney made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Staskiel to approve the drug task agreement and participation.

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

SECRETARY'S REPORT- (Jewel Newbern)

Ms. Newbern stated approval is needed for the May 14, 2025, meeting minutes.

MOTION- Mr. Novakoski made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Fanella to approve meeting minutes for May 14, 2025, meeting minutes.

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

Ms. Newbern stated that a letter from the Greater Susquehanna Valley was received in regard to the event brought up last month. They are asking for permission to use the dog park space for their event on August 23rd. Copied Mayor/Council

MOTION- Mr. Fanella made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Novakoski to allow Greater Susquehanna Valley to use the dog park area for their event on August 23, 2025.

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

Ms. Newbern stated that the fire department is requesting that Fir Street from 8th to 9th be closed from 9 AM to 4 PM on August 9, 2025, for their Community Day program. Copied Mayor/Council.

MOTION- Mr. Motyka made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Fanella to close Fir Street between 8th and 9th from 9 AM to 4 PM on August 9, 2025, for the Fire Department's Community Event.

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

Ms. Newbern stated that the Department of Economic Development and Planning sent a letter regarding 1104 Scott St property. Copied Mayor/ Council. Mr. Bielskie stated the permit was for someone's back porch and that they had to go through Tri-County and now through Skavery since that's the process.

TREASURERS REPORT (Paul Niglio)

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

MOTION- Mr. Motyka made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Novakoski 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 the borough received the contractor invoices for the recycling building and the electrical work but are not on the list to be paid. He stated that because council approved the contract for the cardboard building on 9th street he would just like on record that council is okay with paying the invoices and would like a motion to pay. He stated that he does not want the contractor to not get paid for another month since the building is completed. He stated that the cost will be covered by the recycling grant, and we will be reimbursed for it. Mr. Motyka added

that there will be a walkthrough of the building to make sure everything is good to go. Mr. Niglio stated that until they sign off on the work that has been completed we will then send them a check for the contracted amount so far.

MOTION- Mr. Motyka made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Staskiel to pay the contractor for the work that has been completed for the cardboard recycling building.

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

SOLICITORS REPORT (Edward Greco)

Mr. Greco stated that he had one more phone call with PPL addressing negotiations and request to move forward on the matter.

Mr. Greco stated that the Kulp Lane survey is completed. He added that nothing has been done, and he is trying to schedule a meeting with Brinkash to review everything and ask questions regarding the results.

Mr. Greco stated that last month a resident brought a statute to the council's attention, and it is available for the council to read and review. The statute pertains to how to make houses into compliance. He said that he has done further research and found Kingston's ordinance states the new owner has a certain number of days to bring the building up to code and if they do not it falls on to the seller. He would like to know if the ordinance committee would be interested in reviewing this ordinance and maybe adopting it into Kulpmont. Mr. Fanella said yes.

Mr. Greco stated that he sent a letter to Joseph, at Susquehanna, about the Veteran Memorial land that he would like to be donated to the borough and has not received a response or call back.

Mr. Motyka asked Mr. Greco if the law that the citizen brought in that allows the property owner 18 months to bring the property up to code was a state law that passed? He asked why would the borough have to make a local law instead of just following the state law? Mr. Greco responded that the Kingston ordinance was stating that a new property owner would need to have their property inspected and the state law does not address that.

POLICE CHIEFS REPORT – (Stephen Mazzeo)

Report Attached.

Chief Mazzeo briefly went over the report statistics. He stated that calls were up, investigations are steady, court appearances are up, and they took two vehicles last month. He said that the part time officers are busy in Shamokin, so they are short on hours in Kulpmont. This led into a conversation about recruitment.

Chief Mazzeo explained that neighboring jurisdictions are having good luck hiring police officers because they are sending them to the police academy. He said that with the police grant

the borough needs to show their recruitment efforts and that he recommends sending people to the police academy. Mr. Greco asked if the council found someone and put them in an agreement to send them to the academy, could the grant be used to pay for their schooling? Chief Mazzeo responded no but the state may cover it. He said that Chief Siko from Shamokin is here and could talk about his success with it. Chief Mazzeo said to Mr. Chesney, "I know we do not have the money, but it is just an option". Mr. Chesney said yes it is an option but council looked down that road already. Chief Siko explained the program that Shamokin uses; he stated that the cost goes down 65% with state funds.

The program Chief Siko uses is Shamokin receives applications, hires someone and enters them into a new 5-year contract. They send the student to the academy, which is paid for by Shamokin, and send them a paycheck while they are there. They then have to pass an exam in Harrisburg, following that they have to work minimum five years to stay within their rights of the contract and if they leave before then or fail at any point they owe the money back to Shamokin. He mentioned that different academies have different start dates. He said that is what pulls great candidates in. Mr. Niglio asked how many people have failed out or not lasted the five years, which Mr. Siko said zero. The screening process is about four months. Ray Siko added that there have been people that want to work at different boroughs/towns and has council pay for them to leave their contract, but it is not common.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT – (Raymond Siko)

Report Attached.

Mr. Siko stated that there was a house fire in the community and that everyone involved, emergency services, did a great job. He said that everyone has a great working relationship in the community.

Mr. Siko added that, as a friend, he would like to congratulate Michael Kotzo who has been awarded the highest ranked life-saving award. He works in Harlem now but was born and raised in Mt. Carmel. He added that he wanted to acknowledge it because someone from the coal region is now working to save people from high rises and is getting recognized for their work.

Mr. Siko asked which mechanic they should take the fire vehicle to get inspected. Mr. Fanella asked if they take it to Ashland Diesels, he said yes, and Mr. Fanella said to continue to take it there since it is the closest one.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – (Devin O'Hearn)

No report.

Mr. O'Hearn said that he is working on the EOP plan, and it should be completed in the next few days.

BUILDING INSPECTOR'S REPORT– (Tri County COG)

Report Attached

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

Report Attached

SERVICE AND FACILITIES – (Robert Fanella)

Mr. Fanella stated the food distribution will be held June 18th from 8-11 AM at the borough garage.

Mr. Fanella provided an update on the 7th street pipe issue and stated that there is an inlet not attached to the connector pipe and that seems to be how the issue was caused. Mr. Fanella stated that the borough will need to dig 53 feet down to the pipe and add the inlet to attach it to the pipe. He stated that the project will cost anywhere from \$20-25 thousand. He stated that the borough could potentially do some work in house, but it might be easier to put the job out for bid. Mr. Bielskie asked if the state could help with the price of the project since it is on the road and Mr. Fanella responded no they would not even pay for any project on Chestnut Street. Mr. Motyka asked if the borough would have the engineer create the scope of work, Mr. Fanella said that Barry from PennDOT could do it and have it ready for the borough to bid out. He said that the project would require a certain type of material to ensure the project is done correctly, which would be included in the specifications for the bid. Mr. Greco added that anything over \$23 thousand there will also be prevailing wage included in the cost. Mr. Motyka said as of right now it is just the cost of a newspaper bid so council might as well have it sent out for bid.

MOTION- Mr. Motyka made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Staskiel to advertise for bids for 7th street pipe job after receiving scope of work and specifications for the project.

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

Mr. Fanella said the paving project that was bid out and contracted will hopefully start at the end of July, it is delayed because of the rain.

FINANCE AND PURCHASING – (Stephen Motyka)

Mr. Motyka stated that the bathroom materials that we send out for bid never include the miscellaneous things and he has had to purchase things on his own. He also had to buy a few things for the Earth Day event and would like a motion to reimburse him for the out of pocket expenses totaling \$653.24.

MOTION- Mr. Fanella made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Novakoski to reimburse Mr. Motyka for his out-of-pocket expenses for the restroom project and Earth Day event totaling \$653.24.

ROLL CALL VOTE- NOVAKOSKI (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), FANELLA, (yes),

CHESNEY (yes), STASKIEL (yes), MOTYKA (abstain), HODGE (yes)
6 YEAS – 0 NAYS

Mr. Motyka stated that the solar project is back on the hot burner and the borough is waiting for the interconnection agreement from PPL, once we get that the engineer can proceed. He stated that the borough has a new lender, and it will operate from black and generate 2 million dollars in revenue of the system's life duration. He stated that with the new federal budget in DC, we will have 60 days from the time Trump signs the new budget if he removes the 50% tax incentives. Mr. Bielskie expresses concern that the solar panels will be losing efficiency and not actually generate that much money, Mr. Motyka said that is accounted for. A discussion between the two of them occurred. Mr. Motyka stated that the borough should send letters to representatives stating the huge importance of the tax incentives. He stated that the tax incentives are still in place unless changes are made.

CODE HEALTH AND SAFETY- (Stephen Bielskie)

Mr. Bielskie stated that there have been two groups of people interested in purchasing the mill. When he asked one of the interested groups how much the seller was asking they said 10 million dollars, so it is lessening the chance of it being bought. He stated that one group is interested in turning it into storage and the other group is interested in turning it into apartments. He said that the building would require an architect in first so they would know what options they actually have, once purchased. Mr. Motyka added that there are resources available such as infrastructure grants, or making it a peaceful opportunity zone to boost taxes.

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE - (Robert Fanella)

No Report

RECREATION/GRANTS COMMITTEE – (Robert Chesney)

Mr. Chesney stated that he has spoken with Mr. Delgrippe for a recycling grant update. He said that the borough has received the first disbursement sent but he is still working on disbursements 2-4. He added that they work on them in the order they receive them and once they are sent to the treasury department there is another four- six weeks to disburse the money.

Mr. Motyka stated that volunteers will be working on the bathrooms tomorrow night from 5-8 PM and Saturday and Sunday from 9-5. He said this will bring the restrooms to completion hopefully and he hopes to have them done by July 4th for the Traveling Vietnam Wall and other festivities. He said everyone is welcome to volunteer.

PERSONNEL- (Bernard P. Novakoski)

Mr. Novakoski stated that there have been a few applications for review for the street department position.

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

No Report

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Tina Treese thanked Solicitor Greco for looking into the issue she has brought to council's attention. She would like to know what the borough is going to do about the blighted properties that are already owned, more specifically 1256/1258 Chestnut and 1004 Chestnut? She said 1004 Chestnut has a sidewalk issue and one on Spruce Street is now piling cars. She said there are ordinances in the packet she sent that address this issue. There was a conversation about who owned all the properties she listed. Chief Mazzeo said all the cars on the Pine Street property that she referred to have plates on them. Mayor Slaby said the property owner on Pine Street is being compliant. Chief Mazzeo said the cars are always shifting and when he has time he patrols that area to ensure the vehicles are legal. She said the sidewalk on 1004 Chestnut has plywood and it is a serious safety hazard.

She mentioned that the mill is a huge problem and wants to know why nothing can be done about it currently and not once someone purchases it. Chief Mazzeo said that he tries to email them, and he would not know who to arrest for public nuisance because he just has the company name which is in New York. He said that he has not given up on it. Mr. Fanella added that he should arrest whoever's name comes up, which Chief Mazzeo responded saying there is not one individual it's a corporation, which he replied just arrest them. Mrs. Owens added that the mailing address is now in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Chesney added that the property 1004 Chestnut had a water issue, and they are claiming they do not have money to fix it. He said that this is not an excuse, and it has been a year so they should find a way to make money to fix the issue because it is now a huge safety issue. Tina said she appreciates that Solicitor Greco looked into the last issue and wishes he would look into owned blight properties now.

OLD BUSINESS-

Mr. Novakoski asked if the trail is being handled properly, like how it is supposed to be from the contract. He said that the stone is not what it was supposed to be, and he should just put it back the way it was. Mr. Motyka said that we could hold the last payment to make sure it is done correctly.

NEW BUSINESS-

Mr. Chesney said that he does not understand a lot of the solar project, like the super benefits and the monetary input that the borough will have to do. He said that it seems like a major issue.

Mr. Niglio asked if council could adopt a resolution to authorize him, as the treasurer, to make transfers from the StoneX account for the police pension fund. He said that it is just a formality to show StoneX that the authorized person is still him. He added that this was just asked of him last week.

MOTION- Mr. Motyka made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Hodge to write a resolution to authorize Paul access to StoneX account to make transfers as needed for the police pension fund.

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

Mr. Chesney asked Mr. Niglio if he would need to get permission to make transfers every time and Mr. Niglio said no he transfers as needed because he is authorized to make the transfers and council is approving that by adopting the resolution.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Hodge said that people are calling him to ask if the yard sale was postponed or if people could just have them both Saturdays. Jewel said that they might have postponed it to next Saturday due to the weather forecast. Mr. Motyka added that the borough advertised the yard sale, and it would be fine if the borough had it for the next two weekends. Jewel added that the car cruise was postponed to next Sunday due to the weather forecast.

Mr. Hodge congratulated Mt. Carmel Area baseball team for the great season and wish them luck tomorrow.

Mr. Chesney wished everyone a Happy Father's Day and thanked Rhonda Wilk for all her service for the borough.

Mr. Motyka added that the borough's 150th anniversary and nations' 249th is happening before the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Jewel Newbern
Borough Secretary

Approval date July 9, 2025