

Summit Hill Borough Council
September 8, 2026, 6:30 p.m. Borough Hall

The regular scheduled meeting of the Summit Hill Borough Council was held at the above time and place with President Joseph Weber presiding.

Roll Call – President Joseph Weber, Vice President Sherri Buzik, Louis Mitchalk, Leigh Ann Kruslicky, Joan Morana, Edward Kane, Marlene Basiago, Solicitor Robert Frycklund and Mayor Karen Ruzicka were in attendance.

Floor –

1. Michele Nikolay, 246 West Ludlow Street, expressed her concerns about Portnoff Law and asked why they are being used to collect the delinquent real estate taxes. The fees are through the roof, and she now owes three times the amount of the original cost of the taxes. Anyone who falls into tough times is never going to dig themselves out. They are getting rich off the people who are having a tough time. Now they are going to be collecting the delinquent trash bills. President Weber stated that he understands her position but running the business of the borough whether it is paying the employees, paying insurances, or paying the trash collector they have to make sure they do not fall into a deficit. They need to bring the expected income in as soon as possible to pay the bills. Berkheimer can collect real estate taxes, as can the County. They can explore other options and see what else is out there.
2. Robert Michalik, 318 North Oak Street, addressed members of Council about an issue involving the keeping of ducks, chickens, and roosters on a residential property. This has gone beyond simply being a disagreement between neighbors. The noise and overall disturbance associated with these animals are affecting the surrounding neighborhood and the ability of residents to peacefully enjoy their own homes and properties. For him personally, this situation has become especially difficult. The ongoing disturbance has begun affecting my health and well-being. He does not feel that anyone should have to live with a constant nuisance in their own home, particularly when they have made reasonable attempts to have the situation addressed. He also believes Council needs to look at the bigger picture. Allowing chickens, ducks, roosters, and other fowl within densely populated residential areas can create issues involving noise, odor, sanitation, waste, rodents, flies, and conflicts between neighbors. Roosters in particular can create significant noise at all hours, and these problems do not necessarily stay within the boundaries of the property where the animals are being kept. His concern is that if this is allowed to continue or if the Borough considers changing its regulations to permit fowl in residential neighborhoods it could set a precedent that affects residents throughout the entire community. There is a significant difference between keeping these types of animals in a rural setting with adequate acreage and keeping them on residential lots where homes are close together. What one property owner chooses to do on their property should not negatively affect the health, comfort, or quality of life of the people living around them. He asked Council to take the concerns of the neighborhood seriously, to review and enforce the Borough's existing ordinances, and to carefully consider the consequences before making any changes that would allow chickens, ducks, roosters, or similar animals in residential areas. This is not about being against animals. It is about determining what is appropriate in a residential neighborhood and protecting everyone's right to peacefully enjoy their property. He respectfully asked Council to consider not only the person who wants to keep these animals, but also the residents who have to live next door to them and deal with the effects every single day. President Weber stated that other complaints are on the books and it should not be allowed, as per the zoning ordinance since 1980.
3. Richard Gould, 52 East Fell Street, stated that he lives two blocks away and you can hear the rooster at all times of the day. He always thought that roosters only crow in the mornings but that is not the

case. It crows all day long. President Weber said they will take a closer look to see what they can do because it is not allowed. Mr. Michalik added that all they need to do is park their car on the block for a half hour and they will end up leaving because of the noise.

Minutes – No minutes for approval at this time.

Mayor's Report – Mayor Ruzicka reported the total collected from the District Justice for August was \$25.00 and from Carbon County was \$301.45. She also mentioned painting lines on the corners and crosswalks in town. People are parking right up against the corner of the intersections, which makes it difficult to see when you are trying to pull out. Officers cannot enforce ticketing anyone without having lines and crosswalks painted. She understands that our borough workers are busy doing other things, but we have shared services. Let the workers from Coaldale and Lansford come up and paint the lines. Chief Woodward explained that if there is a stop sign you have to be 30 feet from it and 20 feet from a crosswalk. If there are no lines painted, it cannot be enforced. He can enforce the stop sign regulations but that is all unless lines are painted. Councilwoman Morana mentioned that lines were recently painted near her home. Mayor Ruzicka said that is part of the problem. Lines are painted in some places but not on every block like they should be. The other issue is the blocks that are painted at every corner are different sizes and half the town has blocks, and the other half does not. President Weber noted that everything would need to meet code. He added that they will lose a few parking spots per block if they paint the lines. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Sherri Buzik to accept the mayor's report for the month of August 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Police Report – Chief Woodward read his monthly report. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Sherri Buzik to accept the Police Report for the month of August 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Planning and Zoning – Nothing to report for the month of August 2026.

UCC, Code Enforcement and Rental Inspection Reports – Vice President Buzik requested that some of the information be removed from the report, especially the past year's information, unless there were still items to be discussed in 2026. She would like to see current information and not something from last year. Also, she would like further details in the report such as the reason for a failed property inspection. Ms. Steber mentioned that Dana receives a copy of all the inspection reports, which Council is more than welcome to see. She can make sure they are added to everyone's packet each month. She can scan and email copies as well. Vice President Buzik asked why there are only a few properties marked as having tenants when she knows that most of the properties are occupied. She would like to see it marked off or have them put a Y or N so that Council knows if they have to act on a property if the property owners are not following up with a reinspection. Councilwoman Basiago asked if there was a timeframe on the inspection sheet that states they have so many days to have the property reinspected if it fails. This way Dana knows that she can follow up with the property owner or file a citation. She suggested that Dana take the report and make notes on it as to why the property failed inspection so that Council has the information. She added that there are properties that have been on the list for months, some are over a year, with no reinspection or follow up and nothing has been done. Ms. Steber said she can talk to Dana and ask if she would put a spreadsheet together to attach with her report. Vice President Buzik added that there are a few that state the tenant wouldn't let them in the property to do the inspection. President Weber stated that the license should be pulled and if they can't kick a tenant out, pull the license or lay down the law, then they might as well get rid of the ordinance. If a landlord refuses to obtain the required certificate, the property could be deemed unfit for occupancy, requiring the tenant to vacate the premises. Solicitor Frycklund stated that he believes this position is legally defensible. Councilwoman Basiago said that they need to stick to the timeframes. If the property fails inspection, Dana needs to follow up within the timeframe to make sure they follow through with the repairs and reinspection. If they still don't do it, then a citation needs to be filed. **Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Joan Morana to accept the UCC, Code Enforcement and Rental Inspection reports for the month of August 2026.** Motion opened for comment. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Work Leader Report – Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Sherri Buzik to accept the Work Leader report for the month of August 2026. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Tax Collector Report – Nothing to report at this time.

Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report – Portnoff submitted their Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of August 2026. Total Delinquent Real Estate collected was \$7,697.05. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Leigh Ann Kruslicky to accept the Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of August 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Wage Tax Report – Berkheimer submitted their Wage Tax Report for the month of August 2026. Total EIT submitted was \$71,484.29 with a commission of \$1,236.68 and postage charges of \$29.76. Total LST submitted was \$1,596.88 with a commission of \$32.74 and postage charges of \$9.04. Total Delinquent Taxes collected were \$0.31 in Occupation Assessment and \$21.27 in Per Capita Tax. **Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Joan Morana to accept the Wage Tax report for the month of August 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Receipts – Total receipts received for the month of August 2026 were \$211,817.52. Ms. Steber said the receipts for the month will be higher once she receives the Tax Collector Report for August. **Motion was made by Lehigh Ann Kruslicky and seconded by Sherri Buzik to accept the Receipts for the month of August 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Bills – General Fund \$84,750.76, Community Center \$599.80, Recreation Commission Checking \$4,126.20, Sanitation Account \$49,344, and Liquid Fuels Account \$23,316.39. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Leigh Ann Kruslicky to pay the bills from August 28 – September 8, 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Committee Reports

Street Committee – Councilman Kane updated Council on the emergency sewer repair that took place on Summit and Pine Streets. The workers are going to be doing paving projects and are ready for winter. Ms. Steber added that she received a call about the patch on the road sinking where the emergency repair was done. The workers are keeping an eye on it, and they did address the problem. Councilman Mitchalk added that as soon as it is suitable they are going to hot patch the area to restore it.

Recreation Committee –

1. Councilwoman Morana had a list of fundraising events to report.
 - New exercise class on Thursdays starting at 6:00 p.m. with a cost of \$5 per class
 - Nicole's exercise class will start again on September 14th at 6:00 p.m. with a cost of \$5 per class
 - Dance class continues Mondays and Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. with a cost of \$5 per class
 - A wrestling event was held on August 2nd
 - The Back-to-School event was a success
 - The Recreation Commission will be giving out candy for Trick-or-Treat night
 - Christmas on the Hill will be held on Sunday, November 29th from 4:00 – 6:30 p.m. There will be trolley rides from 4:30-6:30 p.m. and Santa will arrive by fire truck around 6:30 p.m. A turkey dinner will be available for \$5 a platter.

2. Councilwoman Morana said a new bylaw was submitted for Council and the Solicitor's review. Solicitor Frycklund explained that Borough Council cannot delegate discretionary funds. There would have to be line items in a budget that has been approved by Council. Kathy Gieniec explained that she does not want to get into a grant that they never wrote or seen before submitted. Solicitor Frycklund explained that the grant monies belong to the Borough and not the Commission. Councilwoman Morana stated that they would like to submit a bylaw that prevents someone from submitting a grant on Recreations behalf without them being involved or notified. Solicitor Frycklund explained that the board's purpose is advisory with hands on operation but as far as fiscal goes, which is exclusively Borough Council's responsibility. The way he reads the proposed bylaw is that they want is as the discretion of the commission, which is not allowed under the borough code. Ms. Gieniec stated that it is not about donations, it is about someone submitting a grant on behalf of the commission and them being responsible for it without even seeing the grant. They are concerned about having to match a grant that they did not even know about. Solicitor Frycklund said that decision would be Council's obligation to match a grant if that is what it requires. Ms. Gieniec said that the commission is matching the grant with their funds. Solicitor Frycklund said that should not be. A brief discussion took place about the rights the commission has when it comes to spending funds and the events that took place with a recent grant that was submitted to Pocono Mountain Visitors Bureau. Solicitor Frycklund said that the commission does not have the authority to match funds for any grant. Councilwoman Morana and Kruslicky stated that the commission just gave funds towards a grant when a motion was brought to the table at their meeting and approved. Solicitor Frycklund said this is called ultra vires, which means it is beyond the authority of the board. Any expenditure, including donations coming into the commission, which is stated in the bylaws, is subject to the Borough Code that the funds and/or donations belong to the Borough. How it is spent is the responsibility of the Council. If there is a line item in the budget to buy a new swing set and someone donates the funds for it, and it is a preapproved line item in the budget, then yes, they can spend the funds up to the authorized amount but there are no discretionary funds. Ms. Gieniec has concerns about a grant that was written by Councilwoman Basiago, which has the Recreation Commission attached to it. No one from the commission saw the grant before it was submitted even though they used the funds to match the grant.

Councilwoman Basiago stated that she went to the Recreation Commission and asked if there was any possibility that the commission could help. There were two quotes that she presented to the commission which were for the mulch and the Harley rake. She explained that it would be a 50/50 grant and four of the board members voted on it. The way the grant works is that the funds are paid up front and 50% is returned once the project is complete. Councilwoman Kruslicky asked if the borough gave any funds or did it all come from the commission.

President Weber stopped the discussion and said that he will get the details and provide them to Council and the Recreation Commission. Solicitor Frycklund stressed that the money that the commission raises is the property of the borough not the commission and the funds are not to be spent unless they have those funds allocated in a budgeted line item.

Councilwoman Kruslicky asked if this is a borough project because she was under the understanding that this was a project that was being paid for by funds raised through fundraisers that the Memorial Park Committee has been holding. President Weber explained that it is still a Borough owned park. If someone gave the borough \$50,000 to improve the park, Council still needs to approve it because it is their park. Councilwoman Kruslicky asked if the projects need to go out on bids since it is our park or can we just hire any contractor to do it. Solicitor Frycklund said it would unless it would fall under one of the exceptions, but he would have to review the paperwork. He read from the bylaws that any grant, gift, or donation of any kind should become the property of the borough. This is also consistent with the Borough Code. There is no discretionary spending, and it must be approved by a budgeted line item or had a meeting of borough council.

Motion was made by Joan Morana and seconded by Leigh Ann Kruslicky to approve the request from the Recreation Commission to use Ludlow Park on Sunday, November 29, 2026 for Christmas

on the Hill from 4:00 – 6:30 p.m. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Building Committee –

1. Kira Steber informed Council that there was a wedding held in the community center about two weeks ago and it was in total disarray. She made sure to keep the security deposit because of the damage to the building and the mess that was left behind. The renter stated that they were going to dispute it and that they were going to speak to Council about it. She received a phone call the night of the event, received pictures of the mess and damage so that it is documented, and at least two Council members also saw the building after the event. The borough workers were made aware of things and will get things repaired. If it costs more than \$100, Council should consider sending a bill to the renter. Vice President Buzik asked what the people are made aware of when they rent the building because people are still sticking stuff on the walls. Ms. Steber stated that everything is spelled out in the contract that they sign. Councilwoman Kruslicky suggested having the renters initial next to each item. Ms. Steber said that she can update the contract.
2. Councilman Kane asked if anything was ever done with the heater in the police garage. Ms. Steber will talk to Ronnie about putting together another quote for Council's approval so it can get installed before winter.
3. Vice President Buzik stated that in the recreation center there are some items that need to be looked at and fixed. In the woman's bathroom there is a tile above the center stall that is starting to bow and looks like it about to fall. There is a speaker cover that near the kitchen that is coming down. There is a broken baseboard heater with exposed wires. Councilman Mitchalk said that he went with the borough workers and to look at the items. They did look at the ceiling above the stall and the unit itself is secure, but the tile needs to be replaced. The grill on the speaker just needs to be removed because it is a decorative cover.

Emergency Services Committee – Vice President Buzik said the mum sale will be on September 12 and 13, 2026 in the fire company. They are continuing with training and maintenance nights on Mondays and Thursdays. They are always looking for new members. She will have a report to submit to Council with the numbers of calls they have responded to so far this year.

Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Lehigh Kruslicky to accept the Committee Reports for the month of August 2026. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Communications – No communications received at this time.

Old Business -

1. Ms. Steber said that she and Solicitor Frycklund are still putting the information together for the 2026 Fee Schedule. Solicitor Frycklund verified that the information that he has is final and will start to draft the ordinance.
2. Ms. Steber asked Council if they had time to review the information she provided regarding a policy and procedure document and checklist pertaining to the Fire Escrow ordinance.
3. President Weber said they started the discussion of adding language to the Special Purpose Parking Ordinance to limit parking spaces on each block. Something they would like to consider and have the ordinance amended.

4. President Weber stated they had a brief discussion about e-bikes and scooters at the last meeting. They are still having issues with people riding them in the Ginder Field on the new track and not following the regulations set by the state. E-Bikes need to follow the law, as well as anyone riding a bike. There are issues with people riding bikes and e-bikes at night with no lights, not stopping at stop signs, and going faster than they should be. Councilwoman Basiago stated that she researched the PA law about e-bikes and scooters and put information together to be put on the Borough's website so people can understand the law. She went over the information that she found. She mentioned that other towns are banning both because of the issues they are having but she does not want to resort to that if they do not have to.

Matthew Plieth, 106 South Chestnut Street, questioned the fact that his child was told by an officer that they are not allowed to ride their e-bike on the street, and they are seen riding on the street again they will be cited. The laws they enforce in the town are ridiculous. Solicitor Frycklund explained that it is state law, not local law. If a child is under 16 years of age, they are not allowed to ride an e-bike on the street. Mr. Plieth said there are other towns allowing kids to ride e-bikes with no issues. Council needs to have a meeting with the kids and explaining if they obey the law, stop at stop signs and ride the e-bike on the street like a car then you must follow the law like a car. President Weber expressed the liability the borough would be in if they allow kids to disobey the state law. He said they can talk to the state legislators. Mr. Plieth stated if everything keeps being taken away from kids, they are going to start getting into trouble like breaking into homes or robbing places. President Weber called the meeting back to order and stated that no matter if they agree or not, they are not above the law. It has to be addressed at the state level. Their concerns can be taken to Representative Heffley and Senator Argall.

5. President Weber said the signs have been purchased and ready to be installed around Memorial Park, which will be off limits from October 1st until the construction is complete next year.
6. Ms. Steber explained that she reached out to the Heritage Center regarding the possibility of moving the bus stop over to the corner by the vacant lot on White Street. Their monthly meeting is tomorrow, and they will notify her of the decision after their meeting.

Ms. Steber stated that Items No. 7 and 8 are being worked on by Vice President Buzik but are being left on the agenda so they are not forgotten about.

New Business –

1. Councilwoman Basiago said she drafted an ordinance that states it is unlawful to keep certain animals on your property. It reads that no person, firm or corporation owning or occupying any real estate within the Borough shall keep any reptile which is capable of killing its prey through constriction, suffocation or poisoning, pig, hog, horse, cow, sheep, goat, goose, chicken, or other barnyard or wild animal, nor construct or maintain any pen therefore, at any place in the Borough. It also talks about the noise with having the animals. Our current ordinance mainly talks about cats and dogs. She did not know if they could include this in the current ordinance or if it was good enough for what they were looking for. Ms. Steber noted that she did include the Borough's current ordinance. President Weber asked if this would be for everywhere within the borough. If he owned 10 acres in White Bear or up on Mountaintop, would he fall into a different category that it would be allowed. Councilwoman Basiago said that it states it would not be allowed anywhere in the borough. A brief discussion took place about how the town is zoned and what is allowed. Solicitor Frycklund said he is not seeing where it is adding new classifications of animals. The current ordinance already provides for horses and birds because equine is a horse and aves are birds. They may just want to make it clearer and not use the scientific classifications. Councilwoman Basiago asked who will address the problems that people are already having; will the police control it. Solicitor Frycklund explained the current ordinance provides for Animal Humane Officer, which he feels they

already made the appointment. President Weber feels it was Officer Strauss, but they may want to consider appointing someone else. Chief Woodward stated that he knows Officer Strauss has fined the property owner for having chickens on their property, but he is not sure of the status of it. She also sent a letter stating that they are to handle the situation with the Zoning Hearing Board. President Weber stated that something needs to happen immediately because the situation has gone on long enough.

2. Ms. Steber asked Council to set some dates to start discussing the 2027 budget. Council recommended having the first meeting on September 24, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Steber suggested meeting more than once or twice a month because it is too much to review and discuss. Council stated that they will hold a special council meeting on September 24th with a budget meeting to follow and a tentative date of October 15th for a second budget meeting.
3. **Motion was made by Leigh Ann Kruslicky and seconded by Louis Mitchalk to approve the Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) worksheet for the Summit Hill Borough and Police Pension Plans for 2027.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
4. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Sherri Buzik to approve the 2026-2027 liability, workers' comp, and cyber insurance renewal for the Borough with the policy going into effect on October 1, 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
5. **Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Joan Morana to transfer funds in the amount of \$150,000 from the General Fund to the Sewer Account to reimburse the account for funds borrowed for operating expenses in 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
6. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Leigh Ann Kruslicky to approve Saturday, October 31, 2026 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. for Trick-or-Treating with a rain date of November 1, 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
7. **Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Leigh Ann Kruslicky to approve the Fall Cleanup Dates of Saturday, October 10, 2026 and Saturday, October 17, 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Special Purpose Parking – Nothing to review or discuss at this time.

Kira Steber thanked Councilwoman Basiago, Shelia Kozuch and everyone else that pitched in to make GOJoe 2026 in Summit Hill a success. They pulled it all together the morning of and were able to donate over \$1,000.

Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Leigh Ann Kruslicky to enter an Executive Session at 8:09 p.m. to discuss Personnel Matters and Police Contract Negotiations. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Joan Morana and second by Marlene Basiago to enter back into Regular Session at 10:32 p.m. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Motion was made by Edward Kane and second by Joseph Weber to adjourn the meeting at 10:34 p.m. until the next regular meeting of the Summit Hill Borough on October 13, 2026. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Joseph Weber
Council Vice President

Kira Steber
Secretary/Treasurer