

**Summit Hill Borough Council**  
**February 10, 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 Vice President Joseph Weber presiding.

**Roll Call** – President David Wargo (via phone), Vice President Joseph Weber, Sherri Buzik, Edward Kane, Marlene Basiago, Solicitor Robert Frycklund and Mayor Karen Ruzicka were in attendance. Lacey Gonzalez was absent

**Floor** –

1. Ian Miller, 46 West Ludlow Street, has concerns about the inspection company and the fees that are being charged. They own 41-43 West Ludlow Street, as well as 46 and 50 West Ludlow Street. They are highly invested in Summit Hill and would like to continue to invest and thrive in the town. When applying for the permits for 41 West Ludlow Street he was shocked at the outrageous fees that Lehigh Engineering is charging the people in town. He put together a comparison of inspection fees for Summit Hill and surrounding towns. If he were to submit an application for a remodeling project of a commercial building that costs \$2,500, the total application fee for Lehigh Engineering would be \$7,800. He then went through the comparison of fees from other towns compared to Summit Hills. He stated that the amount of money invested into 50 West Ludlow Street is instrumental at this point. Working with Lehigh Engineering, as a contractor, on buildings that are 200 years old is nearly impossible. Anytime you run into a problem, they immediately want to talk to an architect. This means another drawing, another plan, and more money out of your pocket. He asked if there is another way to allow other inspectors to use their services in Summit Hill. Vice President Weber asked for a copy of the comparison of the fee schedules so they can look into it further.
2. Michele Midas, 46 West Ludlow Street, asked if you were doing something wrong in the town and you did not get a permit. If the borough is notified of work being done without a permit, within how many days should the business or homeowner be notified. Vice President Weber said that it would be passed on to the Code Enforcement Officer to address. Ms. Midas stated that someone reported her to the zoning officer back in October, but she was not notified until January. She added that they upgraded an existing meter but was never notified that a permit was needed. PPL did inspect the meter, and everything was good. Kira Steber noted that she has had calls before from residents stating that PPL will not come out and look at their meter until an electrical inspection has been completed and proof is provided. Mr. Miller added that the electrical service was already there, so it was an upgrade to the panel and not a new service being installed. He stated that they spoke with the zoning officer who said to apply for the permit and that Michele can continue to work in the salon at 41 East Ludlow. They got the zoning permit, it was approved, and then they were told she cannot continue working in the salon at 41 East Ludlow. If she was notified in October about work being done, then it is her obligation to put a stop work order in to stop everything until permits are received. This was never done and now they are working backwards.
3. Jimmy Gjoca, 203 East Bertsch Street, also has concerns about the fees and the way Lehigh Engineering manages the business. The prices that they are being charged are incomparable. You try talking to them and they do not want to talk. He had an inspection today at one of his properties and they failed him for a ridiculous reason. The tenant cleaned the house and put bags of garbage outside. They questioned him as to why it was there. He wanted to tell them to fine him and get out of his property. They are there to inspect the apartment and not worry about what the tenant does. The way they handle inspections is like they owe us. He feels that they fail the inspection on purpose so that they can come back and charge you again. Vice President Weber stated that they will be looking at the fee schedule, but he cannot comment on Code Enforcement issues because that is between the Code Enforcement Officer and the homeowner. Mr. Miller stated that Ralph Hummel will not talk to you at all as the contractor. As soon as a problem arises, he tells you to talk to an architect or engineer. They do not live here, you are not invested in the town, and

you do not even show common courtesy to the people in this town. No one is trying to skirt the code, but they make it nearly impossible to do anything. Mr. Gjoca said that there used to be inspectors for the town who lived in this town. Vice President Weber said that it is tough for them too because they are licensed by the state, which he needs to be accountable for in case the state comes in and rechecks his work. He asked that they give Council some time to look into it and get answers for them.

4. Joseph Barone, 728 East White Bear Drive, questioned the trash increase for the year. Vice President Weber explained that the trash goes out to bid, approximately every four years, the low bidder is always taken, and we had one company that bid. Mr. Barone asked if they solicited anyone else for a bid. Vice President Weber said it was an open market bid and advertised in the newspaper. Council cannot go out and solicit bids. Surrounding towns garbage rates have also increased. The contract is based on the tonnage and number of homes in the borough. Mr. Barone asked what the heaviest tonnage is in the borough, ashes, construction debris. Vice President Weber explained that there is no collection of construction debris, they also have a Spring and Fall Cleanup and an electronics recycling day, which no other towns have. They are options that Council is presented. Mr. Barone said that he puts out two garbage bags a week and now must pay \$480 a year for garbage. He requested to be removed from the list because he is going to get a dumpster and service himself. Vice President Weber stated that he cannot be removed from the list because as a borough they must provide garbage service to the town. Even if he had a dumpster, he would be responsible for paying the garbage fee. They did what they legally had to do, and it is not going to change. What do they think is going to happen in 4 years when the contract expires now that Tamaqua Transfer has been sold. Mr. Barone added that the people sitting at the table have responsibility to the residents of the town. Vice President Weber said they take it very seriously and he has never sat at the table with anyone who has not.

**Minutes** – Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Sherri Buzik to approve the meeting minutes from the January 13, 2026 Council meeting. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Mayor's Report** – Mayor Ruzicka read the Mayor's report. Total collected from the District Justice was \$403.60 and from Carbon County was \$476.41. Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Edward Kane to accept the mayor's report for the month of January 2026. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Police Report** – Chief Woodward read the monthly report. Motion was made by Edward Kane and seconded by David Wargo to accept the Police report for the month of January 2026. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Planning and Zoning** – Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Marlene Basiago to accept the Planning and Zoning report for the month of January 2026. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**UCC, Code Enforcement and Rental Inspection Reports** – Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Edward Kane to accept the UCC, Code Enforcement and Rental Inspection reports for the month of January 2026. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Work Leader Report** – Vice President Weber stated that the borough crew did a fantastic job during the last snow storm and thanked them for handling it as well as they did. President Wargo added that he wanted to thank Officer Fischl for the time he took to make sure all vehicles were moved to the proper sides of the streets to make things easier during the storm. She personally called people and knocked on doors to give people a chance to move their vehicles. Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Edward Kane to accept the Work Leader report for the month of January 2026. Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Tax Collector Report** – Nathan Halenar, Tax Collector submitted his Tax Collector Report for the month of December 2025. Total collected was \$1,276.00 in Occupation Taxes, \$566.50 in Per Capita Taxes, \$27,895.39 in Real Estate Taxes with a commission of \$892.14. Also submitted were the 2025 Delinquent Per Capita and Real Estate Tax lists and the 2025 Exemption lists for Per Capita and Real Estate Tax. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Joan Morana to accept the Tax Collector Report for the month of December 2025 and to accept the 2025 delinquent Per Capita and Real Estate Tax Reports.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report** – Portnoff submitted their Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of January 2026. Total collected was \$2,996.30 in Delinquent Real Estate Taxes and \$665.80 in Expense Reimbursement. **Motion was made by David Wargo and seconded by Sherri Buzik to accept the Delinquent Real Estate Tax Report for the month of January 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 January 2026. Total EIT submitted was \$22,248.61 with a commission of \$384.90 and postage charges of \$40.16. Total LST submitted was \$2,346.91 with a commission of \$48.11 and no postage charges. Total DLT submitted was \$141.65 in delinquent Occupation Assessment Tax and \$49.50 in Per Capita Tax. **Motion was made by Edward Kane and seconded by Marlene Basiago to accept the Wage Tax report for the month of January 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Delinquent Garbage Collection Report** – Nothing to report at this time.

**Receipts** – Total receipts received for the month of January 2026 were \$169,954.14. **Motion was made by David Wargo and seconded by Sherri Buzik to accept the Receipts for the month of January 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Bills** – General Fund \$108,442.55, Local Services Tax \$172.11, Community Center \$305.94, Street Lighting \$4,988.90, Sanitation Account \$52,118.58, Rental Property Account \$917.50, Liquid Fuels Account \$3,885.09 and Sewer Fund \$100,000. **Motion was made by David Wargo and seconded by Edward Kane to pay the bills from January 14 – February 10, 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

### **Committee Reports**

**Street Committee** – Councilman Kane also thanked the borough crew for the fantastic job they did during and after the storm. He was able to ride around with them for a little and was very impressed. The crew was out replacing signs that were damaged during the storm. They also had to repair one of the plows in the middle of the storm and would like to replace it at some point. He also mentioned that there is an updated Emergency Call Out and Part-Time Work List that needs to be approved by Council. **Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Edward Kane to approve the updated Emergency Call Out and Part-Time Work list for the Borough.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Infrastructure Committee** – Councilwoman Basiago stated that she will be attending both the Sewer and Water Authority meetings to request their meeting minutes.

**Recreation Committee** – Councilwoman Morana stated that Easter on the Hill will be held on Saturday, March 28, 2026 starting at 1:00 p.m. with a rain date of Saturday, April 4, 2026.

**Building Committee** – Councilman Kane stated there was a condensation issue with the HVAC unit in the police garage due to the severe cold weather and there being no heat in the garage. A quote was received from HT Lyons in the amount of \$12,600. He feels that the borough crew can find a heater and install it much

cheaper. It was an unusual situation because of how cold it was and for how long. Chief Woodward said that the cold is killing the batteries in the AEDs, which were just replaced last month, and are very expensive.

**Emergency Services Committee** – Councilwoman Buzik mentioned that the Fire Company had two very successful fundraisers. The Dart Tournament and the Pizza and Wing Sale. Next month there is a big fire school training weekend, which they will send some of the members to. President Wargo asked if they have done any training at the local fire grounds. Councilwoman Buzik said they have not done any training there yet.

**Special Purpose Parking Committee** – Councilwoman Buzik stated that they received an application for 43 East White Street. She noted that on Page 2 under the physician’s portion of the application the one question that was not answered was the ambulatory range. Overall, talking with the committee members and reviewing the documentation from the doctor, even without the range being listed the committee would like to recommend approval of the application. She did look at the property and even though there is off-street parking, it is under a carport, there is a fence, it is 42 feet from the curb and then there are five steps to get up to the back door. If you look at the front of the house, there is one step up onto the curb, it is 21 feet from the curb to the front door and one step up into the threshold of the property. He can only walk about 30 feet before he struggles. Councilwoman Basiago mentioned that the ordinance states that you must investigate and interview the person. What she sees on the application is very gross from his diagnosis and the problems he has. How can you be true that he really needs the parking spot. COPD is a broad thing. Everyone has Arthritis but it is also broad. Councilwoman Buzik stated that he also has Parkinsons. Councilwoman said that is a broad sense. It could be a mild degree with no walking problems, or you can be bedbound. You will not have an idea unless you see this person and talk to them. Otherwise, we are going back to the same old routine that happened years ago where everyone gets a parking space. She questioned the fact that there is a motorcycle on the property and asked who is riding it. Councilwoman Buzik said she is making an assumption. We do not know if someone asked to park it on his property. Councilwoman Basiago asked how they can have a true picture of this gentleman by saying yes, he deserves to have this parking space. **Motion was made by Edward Kane and seconded by Joseph Weber to table the application until further information is gathered.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Motion was made by Edward Kane and seconded by Joan Morana to accept the Committee Reports for the month of January 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Communications** – **Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Joseph Weber to accept communications from December 10, 2025 – January 13, 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

**Old Business** -

1. Discuss Resolution No. 02-2026 Setting the 2026 Fee Schedule. President Wargo mentioned that he started it last year. He went through the book, looked at every ordinance, and pulled out each one that mentioned that fees were set by resolution in a fee schedule. He cited the section of the code and the fees from that section of the code. Having a list of fees versus having a resolution, which is required by the code book, which covers the fees recorded in the code book are two different things. The resolution that we are talking about now is to cover all the fees that are listed in the code book, not fees outside the code book or other fees that they have. Somewhere there was a disconnect where we think every fee in the world needs to be listed in the resolution. The only thing that needs to be on this fee schedule is what is already in the books under our ordinances. It does not matter what other towns have listed on their fee schedule, this is our code. The fees must apply to our ordinances, not every other code around us. We can look at other towns to see what they are charging but we have to take our fees, break them down into cost components and prove that what we are charging is customary. He and Lacey sat down and looked over the Rental Inspection Ordinance and made sure that every component that went into the fees was covered

by actual costs, as allowed by law. He suggested that they adopt the Fee Schedule Resolution tonight and then they can meet to talk about what fees they feel need to be increased. Councilwoman Basiago mentioned that for two years that she has been on Council she has never seen this fee schedule before. Every year they say they approve the fee schedule, but she has never seen one until now. She feels we need to be a little more descriptive of what the fees are. A brief discussion took place about what fees need to be adjusted. **Motion was made by David Wargo and seconded by Marlene Basiago to adopt Resolution No. 02-2026 to adopt the 2026 Fee Schedule.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council. Council agreed to meet on Monday, March 2, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. to further discuss the possibility of adjusting some of the fees in the fee schedule. President Wargo recommended they come to the meeting with empirical data to justify why a fee should be charged. By law, they have to cover the cost plus 10-20% administrative cost.

2. Solicitor Frycklund stated that there is a model ordinance for data centers. You can see an example of this ordinance that was drafted by Penn Forest Township but is still a work in progress. This is something that the engineer should be looking at by viewing the model ordinances, which he can provide, as far as data centers go. In the governor's budget address last week, he mentioned that one of the priorities is to develop a statewide guideline for data centers. It is not just about aesthetics. It is about the use of resources and particularly protecting the water tables. The state is going to be reviewing that. If they do enact regulations, they would have supremacy over local ordinances. He recommends having the borough engineer look at the model ordinances to offer some suggestions that would be unique to Summit Hill. It will take some time to develop it, but it is something they want to get right. He is not aware of anyone who has put together a Solar Field Ordinance. Councilwoman Basiago said she does have a couple copies of solar field ordinances for ARRO to review.

#### **New Business –**

1. **Motion was made by David Wargo and seconded by Edward Kane to adopt Ordinance No. 01-2026 Fixing the Various Tax Rates for the Fiscal Year 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
2. **Motion was made by Marlene Basiago and seconded by Sherri Buzik to adopt Ordinance No. 02-2026 to amend Chapter 17, Article VI 17-40 of the Civil Service Commission to change the probationary period from twelve months to six months.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
3. **Motion was made by David Wargo and seconded by Joan Morana to adopt Ordinance No. 03-2026 to amend Chapter 350 to adopt the 2024 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC).** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.
4. Vice President Weber mentioned the information that was received from the County asking for the boroughs to provide a list of the most blighted properties within our town to help them establish a countywide database to help get some Federal and/or State funding to help demolish some of the eyesores. President Wargo stated that this is the program that is part of the PA Act 152 of 2016. Mayor Ruzicka asked if the properties need to be condemned to be on the list. Solicitor Frycklund stated that they do not.
5. **Motion was made by David Wargo and seconded by Edward Kane to appoint Joseph Weber as the voting delegate and Sherri Buzik as the alternate delegate to represent the borough on the Council of Governments.** Motion was opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council. President Wargo said the meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. Vice President Weber said the doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. in the Courthouse Annex or the Commissioner's office depending on what is available. They also have a guest speaker at each meeting.

6. Vice President Weber mentioned a topic that was discussed at the Panther Valley Blueprint meeting. They are looking for all the boroughs in the valley to have a Roadside Clean-Up day. The goal is to clean up approximately 15 miles of roadway that spans between all four boroughs along Route 209/902. The scheduled date is Saturday, April 25, 2026 with a rain date of May 2, 2026. They will provide safety guidance, garbage bags, grabbers, vests, gloves, transportation with lunch to follow. There is an initial organizational meeting for those that are interested in volunteering on Monday, March 2, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Panther Valley High School auditorium. He feels that they should ask for the assistance of the fire police to assist in traffic control on the hills.

**Motion was made by Sherri Buzik and seconded by Joan to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m. until the next meeting of the Summit Hill Borough on March 10, 2026.** Motion opened for comment; none made. Motion carried unanimously by Council.

Joseph Weber  
Council Vice President

Kira Steber  
Secretary/Treasurer