MAYOR AND COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
November 26, 2024
6:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

SALUTE TO COLORS

Mayor Wronko invited all those present to stand in a salute to the colors.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT AS TO COMPLIANCE WITH P.L. 1975

Adequate Notice of this Meeting has been provided according to the Open Public Meetings Act, Assembly Bill 1030. Notice of this Meeting was included in the Annual Meeting Notice sent to the New Jersey Herald and the Daily Record on January 10, 2024 and was placed on the Official Bulletin Board in the Municipal Building.

Furthermore, notice of the change in meeting time was sent to the New Jersey Herald and Daily Record on November 15, 2024 and was placed on the official bulletin board in the Municipal Building.

In the event the Mayor and Council have not addressed all items on this Agenda by 10:00 PM and they are of the opinion that they cannot complete the Agenda in a reasonable time period, the Mayor and Council may exercise their option to continue this meeting at an agreed to date, time and place. Please turn off all cell phones for the duration of this Meeting.

ROLL CALL

Council Members:

Councilwoman Kuncken – present
Councilman Riccardi – present
Councilman Romano – present
Councilman Simpson – present
Councilman Thornton – present
Councilman Wachterhauser – present

Mayor Wronko – present

DISCUSSION

2025 Municipal Budget

5E Zoning Officer – Angelica Sabatini, CFO, stated she was asked at the last meeting to speak with the Zoning Officer for clarification for the increase request for Office Supplies. Ms. Sabatini stated the Zoning Officer told her the cost of ink has increased, and he will need to order a new charger and battery for the camera.

11A Stormwater Management – Ms. Sabatini stated she spoke with the DPW Superintendent, and he explained to her that the cost increase this year for supplies was due to the fact an excavator and a sewer camera had to be rented. There were a few items purchased at Lowe's.

9A Recreation – Councilman Simpson stated he will be meeting with the Recreation Committee next week to ask for clarification on some of the budget items. Councilwoman Kuncken asked Councilman Simpson to find out if the Recreation Committee purchased the hot dog cooking pot.

6C Fire Department – Councilwoman Kuncken stated she and Councilman Riccardi along with Fire Chief Donahue, Dave Badolato, and Mitch Ellicott held a Public Safety Meeting last night at the Firehouse to discuss the Fire Department budget. Councilwoman Kuncken stated she asked the Fire Department representatives if any of the requested items to be purchased could wait until 2026. The items requested are all needed due to the fact natural gas is being installed in town and for fighting electric car fires. The items requested are justified. There are some items that need additional clarification. Councilwoman Kuncken stated she hopes to have that information available for the next scheduled meeting. The airbag request is being pulled from the list. Paperwork to apply for another grant has been received and the Fire Department will include the air bags on the grant request. If that grant

is unsuccessful, the air bags will be placed on the budget request for 2026. Administrator McNeilly stated the cost of the air bags to be removed from the budget is $4,183.44.

12A Capital, RUT, & Debt Service – Mayor Wronko asked Ms. Sabatini to confirm that the Cap Fund is being increased by $25,000. Ms. Sabatini confirmed this and stated she is slowly beginning to pay for smaller items as opposed to incurring debt. If all of the funds are not spent this year, the Capital Fund can be built up to use as the 5% downpayment. Administrator McNeilly stated the debt service number is getting to be a good number. Councilman Riccardi asked about the lowering of the proposed interest. Ms. Sabatini stated the Borough was given a premium when the notes were bid. The premium money has been put in a reserve for debt service. It is in the revenues, and it is reducing the amount the Borough is paying in interest.

13A Water Revenue Budget – Ms. Sabatini stated the 4th quarter was just billed. Nothing can be done with the revenues until the funds have been collected.

13B Water Expenditure Budget – Ms. Sabatini stated the salary figures are not available as yet.

13C Water Expenditures – Administrator McNeilly asked if the Health Benefits figures are real numbers. Ms. Sabatini stated once the salaries are updated the cost may reduce a little due to the fact if salaries increase the employee share to contribute increases. Administrator McNeilly stated the place holder for salaries is based on a five percent increase until the governing body determines the actual percentage. Councilman Romano asked Administrator McNeilly if the union has contacted him. Administrator McNeilly replied he has not been contacted by the union. Greg McFarland, the union representative, sent an email on Tuesday that due to health reasons he was retiring on Thursday.

Councilwoman Kuncken asked Ms. Sabatini if she has an idea of what the interest rate will be when the Borough goes out to bid for their 20%. Ms. Sabatini stated she is not hearing good things. This will depend on a lot of things which have been proposed by the new administration and what actually gets passed or does not get passed will affect the bond market.

13E Water Expenditure Budget – No changes were made.

14A Sewer Revenue Budget – Ms. Sabatini stated nothing can be done with the sewer revenues until the funds have been collected for the sewer charges.

14B Sewer Expenditures – Ms. Sabatini stated the salary figures are not available as yet, but the overtime has been increased due to the fact it was overextended this year. The extra time may be due to the NJ Natural Gas issues. No changes were made.

14C Sewer Expenditures – No changes were made.

Administrator McNeilly asked Ms. Sabatini to confirm that the overall budget increase will not be affected by the water and sewer budgets due to the fact the figures have been anticipated. Ms. Sabatini stated she is trying not to estimate more than what is being taken in. There will be a budget review this year and that will require an explanation. Ms. Sabatini stated she will speak with the Borough Auditor to see what he is comfortable with.

14D Sewer Expenditures – No changes were made.

14E Sewer Expenditures – No changes were made.

15B General Capital – Ms. Sabatini stated she is waiting for a figure for the Main Street Road Improvements. Administrator McNeilly stated a mini excavator will be purchased and the cost will be spread across the three budgets. With the gas lines being installed in the Borough, this piece of equipment will be delicate enough to dig around the lines. The mini excavator that was rented and was used successfully is the one being requested.

Mayor Wronko asked where Holiday Decorations are placed in the budget. There were a lot of decorations displayed at the League Conference which were very nice. Administrator McNeilly stated he spoke with a company last year that comes and sets up the display. The cost was $20,000. Administrator McNeilly stated the Christmas Tree out front may have to

be replaced at some point. Strings are being used to put lights in areas where there are no branches. Councilwoman Kuncken stated when that tree was planted over twenty years ago, it was a community effort to raise the funds to purchase the tree.

Councilwoman Kuncken asked how the Salmon Park improvement is moving along. Administrator McNeilly stated the grant is for $65,000. An additional $10,000 is needed. The project is on hold until May when this budget is approved. The DPW will do the removal of the playground and the basketball court. The signage is included in the costs, as well as stickers for the poles.

15C Water Capital Program – Ms. Sabatini stated she is still waiting for HUD to confirm the amount. Administrator McNeilly stated he asked HUD to provide access to the CFO a month ago. HUD just gave Ms. Sabatini a link today and it does not work. The water tower project is going to be a big number. Councilwoman Kuncken asked if a decision has been made with regard to keeping the existing water tower. Administrator McNeilly stated that the recommendation will be part of the Borough Engineer's report. Unfortunately, the existing tower may have to be removed as it may mess with the hydrology, the pressures and having the water sitting is not good. The new one will most likely be placed right behind the existing tower just further up the hill.

15D Sewer Capital Program – Ms. Sabatini stated the only item listed in the sewer capital is the portion of the mini excavator. Councilman Wachterhauser asked if the Borough would be responsible for installing a pump if the project on Sparta Road receives approval. Administrator McNeilly stated the developer would have to obtain all the approvals. If there is a pump station involved, they will have to install it, but the Borough will have to take ownership of it. DEP will not allow that to be handled by an association. The units in the development would become customers of the Borough's water and sewer system. There may be other residences and businesses that may take advantage of the added system, should it be installed. There are properties in that area that have wells and septic systems.

Salaries – Ms. Sabatini stated the contracts have not been agreed to as yet. Administrator McNeilly stated there is time in the future to discuss salaries.

Tax Assessor – Administrator McNeilly stated in two weeks the Tax Assessor will make his presentation to the governing body regarding the assessed value. The Tax Assessor will also determine if funds need to be set aside this year for a re-valuation. There may not be a company available to do the re-valuation in 2025. Administrator McNeilly stated he would be more comfortable having the re-valuation done in 2026 in case the market changes.

Councilman Riccardi asked if the timeline will allow for having the temporary budget in place. Administrator McNeilly confirmed this. Ms. Sabatini will be working remotely with the Borough. The governing body thanked Ms. Sabatini for agreeing to continue working with them during the transition.

Mayor Wronko amended the order of the agenda.

CITIZEN'S TO BE HEARD

Mayor Wronko opened the meeting to the public after advising attendees that there is a five (5) minute time limit for each speaker.

Seeing no one from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Wronko closed the public portion of the meeting.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Mayor Wronko read aloud the list of minutes being presented for approval:

October 8, 2024	Work Session and Agenda Meeting
October 22, 2024	Business Meeting & Closed Session

On motion by Councilman Riccardi, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by voice vote, the minutes were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE *(List Attached)*

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Simpson and unanimously carried by voice vote, the list of correspondence was accepted and ordered placed on file.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

On motion by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by voice vote, the Council Committee Reports were waived.

Public Safety – Councilwoman Kuncken/Councilman Riccardi
(Police, Fire, Ambulance, Court & Violations Bureau, Emergency Management)

Finance & Administration – Councilman Romano/Councilman Thornton

Community Development – Councilman Wachterhauser/Councilman Simpson

Municipal Infrastructure – Councilman Thornton/Councilman Romano
(Water Distribution, Sewer Collection System, Road Construction & Maintenance, Buildings & Grounds)

Information Technology – Councilman Riccardi/Councilman Wachterhauser

Boards/Commissions – Councilman Simpson/Councilwoman Kuncken

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

2025 Municipal Calendar – Mayor Wronko stated he needs to provide his letter to the residents. Ellen Horak, Borough Clerk, asked Mayor Wronko to let her know who he will be appointing as Chair of the Environmental Commission. Mayor Wronko stated he will also provide the information regarding the Fire Department Officers. Ms. Horak stated the deadline is next Friday in order for the calendar to be mailed before the end of the year.

Staff Holiday Luncheon (Approval to Close Borough Hall at 2:00pm on December 20th) – The governing body agreed to close Borough Hall at 2:00pm on December 20th for the Staff Holiday Luncheon.

Lenape Valley Municipal Alliance (Letter of Interest Re: Additional Funding) – Ms. Horak stated, to her knowledge, Marie Jazowski is Stanhope's representative for the Lenape Valley Municipal Alliance. The Alliance provides programs for the high school. Mayor Wronko stated more information is needed regarding the request.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Wronko offered the following resolutions which were read by title.

Resolution 182-24 **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE RELEASE OF THE PERFORMANCE BOND OF PORTOFINO BUILDERS LLC FOR THE GROVE ROAD AND ELM STREET SIDEWALK & ADA RAMP IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council had deemed it necessary for Portofino Builders LLC to submit a performance bond prior to the commencement of the Grove Road and Elm Street Sidewalk & ADA Ramp Improvements Project; and

WHEREAS, Portofino Builders LLC did produce and the Borough did accept a performance bond guaranteeing the quality and completeness of the work; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Engineer has inspected the project site and deemed the project has been completed in general compliance with the contract; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Attorney has advised the Mayor and Council that a maintenance bond be required in the amount of $69,250.00 to be effective for one year from the date of issuance to ensure the quality of the work;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, at the concurrence of the Borough Attorney do hereby authorize the release of the performance bond to Portofino Builders LLC for the Grove Road and Elm Street Sidewalk & ADA Ramp Improvements Project.

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Romano – yes	Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

Resolution 183-24 **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF MAINTENANCE BOND OFFERED BY PORTOFINO BUILDERS LLC FOR THE GROVE ROAD AND ELM STREET SIDEWALK & ADA RAMP IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council heretofore authorized the release of a performance bond submitted by Portofino Builders LLC; and

WHEREAS, Portofino Builders LLC has substantially completed the Stanhope Grove Road and Elm Street Sidewalk & ADA Ramp Improvements Project; and

WHEREAS, Portofino Builders LLC has offered to the Borough a Maintenance Bond in the amount of $69,250.00, which amount has been specified by the Borough Engineer; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Attorney has reviewed and approved of the form of said Maintenance Bond.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Borough does hereby accept the Maintenance Bond issued by Portofino Builders LLC in the amount of $69,250.00 for the Grove Road and Elm Street Sidewalk & ADA Ramp Improvements Project.

On motion by Councilman Simpson, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Romano – yes	Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

Resolution 184-24 **AUTHORIZING AN INCREASE OF WORKING HOURS FOR ACCOUNTS PAYABLE/RECEIVABLE CLERK**

WHEREAS, the Borough of Stanhope's Accounts Payable/Receivable Clerk, Nancy Rivera, currently works twenty (20) hours per week; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council wish to increase Ms. Rivera's hours to twenty-five (25) hours per week to further assist with the Finance Department, effective immediately; and

WHEREAS, this increase in hours will be at the cost of $400.00 per month, at the current rate of $20.00 per hour.

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that the Mayor and Council do hereby approve the additional hours of the Accounts Payable/Receivable Clerk to 25 hours per week.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Councilman Thornton stated it was his understanding that the person who resigned had requested more hours and was denied. Administrator McNeilly stated this is for the Finance Department. The hours are being increased from 20 hours per week to 25 hours per week to have more coverage for the counter. With lunches and trips to the bank, the coverage goes down to being covered by just one person, which is a problem. The person that resigned wanted five dollars more per hour, not five additional hours.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Romano – yes	Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

Resolution 185-24 **APPOINTING A PART-TIME CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER BEYOND OPERATING HOURS FOR THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE**

WHEREAS, the need exists to hire a part-time Chief Financial Officer ("CFO") for the Borough of Stanhope, in order for the Borough to execute a candidate search for a permanent new CFO, due to the resignation of Angelica Sabatini as full-time CFO; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council has recommended the appointment of Angelica Sabatini to perform part-time CFO tasks in the evenings until such permanent replacement is named, effective immediately; and

WHEREAS, the cost of this part-time position will be $3,000 per month; and

WHEREAS, this temporary position shall only be until a permanent CFO is retained by the Borough; and

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that the Mayor and Council does hereby appoint Angelica Sabatini to the position of Part-Time CFO to perform such duties in the evening hours at a rate of $3,000 per month.

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Romano and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Romano – yes	Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

Resolution 186-24 **APPOINTING A PART-TIME CERTIFIED TAX COLLECTOR FOR THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE**

WHEREAS, the need exists to hire a part-time Certified Tax Collector for the Borough of Stanhope in order for the Borough to execute a candidate search for a permanent new CFO, due to the resignation of Angelica Sabatini as the Certified Tax Collector; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council have recommended the appointment of Ashley Frueholz as part-time Certified Tax Collector until such permanent replacement is named, effective immediately; and

WHEREAS, the cost of this part-time position will be $2,000.00 per month;

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that the Mayor and Council does hereby appoint Ashley Frueholz to the position of Part-Time Certified Tax Collector to perform such duties at the rate of $2,000.00 per month, until a permanent replacement is hired.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton – yes

Councilman Romano – yes Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

Resolution 187-24 **AUTHORIZING A STIPEND FOR THE ASSISTANT TAX COLLECTOR FOR ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

WHEREAS, due to the resignation of Angelica Sabatini as full-time CFO and Certified Tax Collector, Tammy Minniti, the Borough's Assistant Tax Collector, will be the lone full-time employee in the Borough's finance department; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council would like to recognize Ms. Minniti with a stipend of $600.00 per month for her additional duties until a permanent full-time Tax Collector can be appointed, effective immediately; and

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope, that the Mayor and Council does hereby approve the stipend for Tammy Minniti in the amount of $600.00 per month, prorated based upon days performing the additional duties, until such permanent full-time Tax Collector can be appointed.

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Simpson and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Romano – yes Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

Resolution 188-24 **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REFUND OF REDEMPTION MONIES TO OUTSIDE LIEN HOLDER**

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector has received payment for the redemption of Tax Title Lien No. 24-00014 representing 2023 property taxes and/or utility charges on Block 10906, Lot 10.04 known as 3 Elm St, assessed to Mark & Maryanna Errichetti, and;

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector certifies that reimbursement is now required to be made to the following lien holder for the required redemption amounts as shown below:

To Lienholder: Bala Partners LLC
PO Box 303
Pottersville, NJ 07979

Redemption Amount: Tax Title Lien #24-00008 and

Interest to Date of Meeting	$	329.64
Premium Paid by Lienholder		600.00

Total From Current Fund:	$	329.64
Total From Tax Premium Account		600.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Stanhope, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, that the Borough Treasurer be authorized to prepare the necessary check as stated above and to forward the same to the lien holder.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Borough Chief Financial Officer/Tax Collector.

On motion by Councilman Simpson, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Mayor's Acceptance of Resignation

Resolution 189-24 **MAYOR'S ACCEPTANCE OF RESIGNATION OF ANGELICA SABATINI FROM HER EMPLOYMENT WITH THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE WITH COUNCIL CONCURRENCE**

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Borough of Stanhope they do hereby concur with the Mayor's acceptance of Angelica Sabatini's resignation from the position of Chief Financial Officer/Tax Collector/Qualified Purchasing Agent, effective November 30, 2024.

On motion by Councilman Romano, with regret, seconded by Councilwoman Kuncken, with regret, and unanimously carried by voice vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

Resolution 190-24 **RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF STANHOPE AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF BILLS**

WHEREAS, the Chief Finance Officer has certified that funds are available in the proper account; and

WHEREAS, the Chief Finance Officer has approved payment upon certification from the Borough Department Heads that the goods and/or services have been rendered to the Borough;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Stanhope that the current bills list, dated November 26, 2024 and on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief Finance Officer and approved by the Chief Finance Officer for payment, be paid.

On motion by Councilman Romano, seconded by Councilman Riccardi and unanimously carried by the following roll call vote, the foregoing resolution was duly adopted.

Roll Call:

Councilwoman Kuncken – yes	Councilman Simpson – yes
Councilman Riccardi – yes	Councilman Thornton – yes
Councilman Romano – yes	Councilman Wachterhauser – yes

ATTORNEY REPORT

Mayor Wronko stated Attorney Ursula Leo is absent and therefore no report was given.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Nixle – Councilman Wachterhauser asked if the Nixle program for next year will be budgeted for the same amount as this past year. Administrator McNeilly confirmed this. Between what is budgeted and the generous offer from NJ Natural Gas, the Nixle messages will be covered.

NJ Natural Gas – Councilman Wachterhauser stated the gas company did not inform the Borough that they were moving onto King Street today. Administrator McNeilly stated they did get ahead of themselves. This has only happened once before. NJ Natural Gas is supposed to knock on everyone's door to let them know. Councilman Thornton stated the DPW had not marked out the lines yet. Administrator McNeilly stated on occasion it does happen that the DPW is marking out the lines just ahead of NJ Natural Gas starting on a specific road. Mayor Wronko asked if residents have been updated with regard to the change in schedule for the gas line installations. Mayor Wronko asked if there was a reason for the delay. Administrator McNeilly stated there were issues with the water project in the area of Sunset Avenue, Overhill Road and Ridge Road. The water project was projected to start in March but did not begin until Memorial Day. Now we are watching the weather to see if the gas company can continue to work past December 15th. There will be challenges on Bell Street, Bedford Avenue and King Street. Mayor Wronko asked Administrator McNeilly to ask NJ Natural Gas for an updated schedule. Councilman Thornton stated the purpose of the follow up meetings was for the gas company to let the Borough know their plan. However, they go wherever they want to without informing the Borough. Administrator McNeilly stated that is not entirely their fault and we cannot

micro-manage this. All that remains in this section of town is the remaining part of King Street, Plane Street, Plainview Street, New Street and a small section of High Street. Administrator McNeilly stated he will request an updated schedule from NJ Natural Gas. Councilman Thornton stated the residents need to know that just because the lines have been installed, that does not mean the homeowners can connect to those lines right away. Councilman Riccardi stated the permits the residents have filed remain valid. They do not expire. Unfortunately, the contractors will continue to contact the homeowners asking if the meter has been installed yet. Councilman Wachterhauser stated we have been working well with the NJ Natural Gas Company but ultimately, they answer to the BPU.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Eric Keller, Borough Engineer, came forward to give his report.

Sunset Avenue, Ridge Road, Overhill Road Water Project – Mr. Keller stated he and Jason Titsworth, DPW Superintendent, met with the contractor for the Sunset Avenue, Ridge Road, Overhill Road Water Main Project this morning to discuss two change orders. These will be discussed with the Borough Attorney. Mayor Wronko asked if this would delay the sign-off for the gas company to be able to begin work in that area. Administrator McNeilly stated this will not cause a delay. Mr. Keller stated he, the Administrator and the DPW Superintendent walked the area and closed out the project. Out of nowhere, another damage complaint came up after the contractor has been gone for a month and a half. The contractor did make a video of the entire area prior to beginning the job. Mr. Keller stated he is aware of what the area looked like prior to the work being done and what it looks like now and he is dealing with those issues. One of the change orders is valid. The appropriate price has to be determined but that will hinge on where the other one goes. Mr. Keller will contact Attorney Leo regarding that matter.

Elm Street and Grove Road Project – Mr. Keller stated the contractor for Elm Street and Grove Road, regardless of what we had said to him, has to do his own pavement cores. Mr. Keller stated he went back to the DOT and explained to them what the contractor is saying he is entitled to, and the DOT acquiesced to a certain degree. The contractor's pavement cores will be matched with the Borough's pavement cores and that will be what the penalty is. It will not be 15%. It will be something less, but it will not be zero. The DOT has agreed that they will abide by both sets of pavement cores. This is different than what was stated a month ago by Mr. Keller.

Local Aid Project – Mr. Keller stated notification was received last week that the award for the Local Aid Project will be just under $82,000 for the milling and resurfacing of New Street. This will include the replacement of the speed humps and perhaps an additional one. Mr. Keller stated if an all-way stop is desired that can be reviewed separately. That would require passing an ordinance and the DOT would have to agree to it. This would not be done through the Local Aid Office. It would have to go to the Bureau of Traffic Engineering. A study would have to accompany that including traffic volume.

21 Sunset Avenue – Mr. Keller stated he was aware of a citizen complaint regarding damage that occurred at 21 Sunset Avenue to the retaining wall. Mr. Keller stated he will meet with the resident but according to what was viewed in the video and how it looks now, there is no appreciable damage.

15 Ridge Road – Mr. Keller stated he was just made aware of damage to 15 Ridge Road today. He and the DPW Superintendent looked at this today. There is an offset to the three panels of the sidewalk, but the sidewalk panel is solid, and it is not tilting. Any attempt to fix it may make it worse. There are no cracks. Mr. Keller stated he will inform the homeowner.

New Street – Councilman Thornton asked if an additional speed hump will be able to be installed on New Street as requested by one of the homeowners at last months meeting. Mr. Keller stated he will have to look at this in order to make that determination. This project will not happen until 2026. Therefore, Mr. Keller has not reviewed this as yet.

Administrator McNeilly, Councilman Romano and Councilman Riccardi left the meeting at this time to attend an MSA meeting.

CITIZEN'S TO BE HEARD

Mayor Wronko opened the meeting to the public after advising attendees that there is a five (5) minute time limit for each speaker.

Paula Zeliff-Murphy stated next Tuesday night, the Shade Tree Commission is having a program called "Home Grown National Park" presented by the Forester. This program explains why homeowners should get rid of their non-native plants and let the native plants grow instead. The Environmental Commission has been invited to attend. Ms. Zeliff-Murphy invited all those present this evening to attend as well. Mayor Wronko asked Ms. Zeliff-Murphy to email the invitation to him and he will post it on Facebook to invite the residents.

Seeing no one further from the public wishing to speak, Mayor Wronko closed the public portion of the meeting.

PRESENTATION

Musconetcong Watershed Association (MWA) – Linda Cerceau, Educational Outreach Manager from the Musconetcong Watershed Association, thanked the governing body for inviting her here this evening to give this presentation. Ms. Cerceau stated she will present information regarding stormwater and some background information about the MWA, the importance of managing stormwater, green infrastructure and the stormwater points system. The mission of the MWA is to protect and improve the quality of the Musconetcong Watershed and its waters for people and nature. The key takeaway is that they put the watershed first. All the things that interact with the land affect the quality of the water. The water quality team consists of two people who monitor the 42-mile-long river. The MWA does rely on volunteers and there is a group of volunteers called the River Watchers. The River Watchers go out throughout the year and collect samples for different parameters throughout the entire river. There are enough volunteers to sample the whole river on the same day at the same time. The team monitors for Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) which can be caused by leaking septic systems, high water temperature, sunlight, low flow and an increase in nutrients in the water such as fertilizers. Data is collected from summer to fall. There are some areas which are monitored year-round. This past year a high school student monitored for HABs and found that they do occur in the winter as well. HABs can affect human and pet health. Road Salts are also monitored. There is concern for elevated salt levels in drinking water, even after it has been treated. Along with road salt other things are being washed into the river from the roads such as oils, plastics, metals etc. Mayor Wronko asked if a HAB has caused Lake Musconetcong to be shut down. Many people kayak on the lake. Mayor Wronko asked if the Borough could be notified in that event. Ms. Cerceau stated the Borough can be notified and stated the information is always posted on the website as well.

Ms. Cerceau stated the MWA also monitors macroinvertebrates, which are bugs in the river, and habitat assessments. The information is shared with many other organizations. Mayor Wronko asked Councilman Simpson to ask the Environmental Commission if someone could monitor the MWA website during peak season to keep the Borough informed of any changes. There are boxes all along the river which monitor water temperature, depth, conductivity and turbidity every 5-10 minutes. This can alert the MWA to any changes in real time. This data is also available on the MWA website. Many watersheds are experiencing bacterial pollution issues. The MWA will begin monitoring for bacteria in the near future. Along the Musconetcong there are many rural areas and failing septic systems can cause bacteria issues. Soil erosion is also a source of pollution. The MWA also provides restoration by removing abandoned dams, stream channel restoration and planting trees and plants in riparian buffer areas. The MWA provides recreation and outreach. It is important for people to be able to utilize the river and trails. The Asbury Mill is currently being restored in the hope of creating an interpretive center. Education is another program that is offered through a five-week summer day camp with outdoor curriculum and school programs with in-class and in-stream components. The MWA also has a river talk series to educate the public. Mayor Wronko suggested Ms. Cerceau contact the high school as they already have a Green Club that may be interested. Ms. Cerceau stated she has not reached out to the schools in the area as yet but that is a goal for this year. The MWA is a 501 c3 organization and they do policy work. They are not a political advocacy organization. However, they do make sure that water quality protections are being carried out.

Ms. Cerceau stated it is important to manage stormwater. This can affect our drinking water and recreation activities. Unfortunately, most municipalities have no dedicated funds for stormwater management. When precipitation runs off from the landscape, it collects pollutants. There are many hidden costs with stormwater especially when there is a flooding event. There are costs for police, emergency services and DPW work to be done. Impervious coverage of 8-10% can cause

degradation in the water quality in the streams. In 2019, Stanhope had 21% impervious coverage, Netcong had 41%, Hopatcong 13%, and Byram had 6.4%. These numbers have most likely increased since then. In Stanhope, the drinking water comes from an aquifer underground and it is not connected in any way to the surface so that the pollutants are not affecting the drinking water. In much of the Musconetcong Watershed there is a great deal of limestone, which dissolves and can cause sink holes, which can seep into the aquifers. Ms. Cerceau stated the solution is to use green stormwater infrastructure. Gray stormwater infrastructure uses stormwater basins which moves water away from roads and homes and controlling water quantity. This did not help with water quality, and it did not help with water absorption into the soil to help recharge the aquifers. Green stormwater infrastructure treats stormwater runoff through infiltration into subsoil; treats stormwater runoff through filtration by vegetation or soil; and stores stormwater runoff for reuse. Examples of Green Infrastructure include vegetated swales, rain gardens, using pervious and impervious pavement, green roofs and cisterns. These solutions are pretty to look at, can increase property values and reduce the localized "urban heat island" effect. One example of how to utilize this would be in apartment complexes. More units can be built when stormwater management is put into the planting strips and the existing landscaping areas which eliminates the need for large retention basins.

Ms. Cerceau stated municipalities need to score 12 points across 3 of the 5 categories of outreach. At least one activity must involve education about the hazards of illicit connections and improper disposal of goods. The MWA can provide content for the Borough for General Public Outreach to place on social media, to provide signage or send out a mailing. The rules have changed and just placing the information on the website is not sufficient. One point is received for each social media platform that is used. For Targeted Audience Outreach the MWA can host a table at an event or provide supplies for the Borough to distribute. A volunteer could be trained in how to use the tabletop enviroscape to provide a presentation. School presentations can be provided. Ms. Cerceau does have an elementary and middle school watershed presentation which she will be sending out to all the schools in the watershed. The school presentation can earn up to five points, one point for each class up to five. The MWA also hosts the NJ AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador in their office who can also provide presentations. The MWA can also help to organize a clean up day in the Borough. There is also an annual river wide cleanup which is generally held on the second Saturday in April. Ms. Cerceau stated she would be happy to set up a site in Stanhope. Councilwoman Kuncken stated the Borough does a Clean Up Day. Ms. Cerceau stated this would qualify for two points. There is a Musconetcong River Management Council, and these meetings can be attended by a Stanhope representative to earn points as well. The final category is Community Involvement Activities which involves stream monitoring and other events. The MWA has partnerships with many organizations, and they are willing to work with the Borough. Mayor Wronko asked Ms. Cerceau to please forward a copy of her presentation by email to him so he can pass it along to the Environmental Commission. The Mayor and Council thanked Ms. Cerceau for attending this evening's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilwoman Kuncken, seconded by Councilman Wachterhauser and unanimously carried by voice vote the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

Approved:

Linda Chirip
Deputy Clerk for
Ellen Horak, RMC
Borough Clerk