

South Connellsville Borough Council Meeting
South Connellsville PA 15425

March 9, 2026

The regular meeting of the South Connellsville Borough Council was held this evening in Council Chambers with the meeting convening at approximately 6:30 pm. Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance was as follows:

George Jay: P	Pat Foley: P	Jennifer Kostik-Johnson: P
Tom Jenkins: P	Guy Napolillo: P	Cheryl McClelland: P

Also in attendance: Secretary Kelly Addis, Treasurer Elizabeth Giles, Solicitor Tim Witt, Engineer Kerry Bell, Street Dept Foreman Matt Bartholomai, Police Captain Andy Hominsky and Mayor Chris Wiltrout.

Absent: Code Enforcement Officer Myron Nypaver.

HEARING OF CITIZEN'S & VISITORS: Nothing at this time.

READING OR WAIVING OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING: Jennifer Kostik-Johnson made a motion to waive the reading of the minutes from the February meeting. Second by Guy Napolillo. All in favor. Motion carried.

READING OR WAIVING OF REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

Police Dept.: Police Captain Andy Hominsky reported that there were 18 complaints answered in the borough during the month of February 2026. Requests for Assistance – 2 and Traffic Citations Issued – 5. There was a total of \$278.85 in fines remitted to the Borough Secretary. Miles traveled with the police vehicles during the month was 7,567. A detailed police report is kept on file with the meeting minutes.

Fire Co.: Fireman representative Mike Nicholson reported that they had few AED calls and a waiting zone. All fundraisers have been going well. Jeremy Grubbs was not available due to an unexpected death in the family. No hard copy report was available.

Code Enforcement Report: Code Enforcement Officer Myron Nypaver was absent due to a death of a friend. He did report that if anyone asks, he does have a hearing scheduled for March 19th with the owners of the old personal care home.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

FINANCE: Chair Jennifer Kostik-Johnson read the General Fund Receipts for the month of February. The February 2026 General Fund Receipts are as follows:

\$6,335.81	Armstrong – Franchise Fees
23,165.43	SWRTB – Local Taxes
<u>5,500.00</u>	S. C'ville Municipal Authority – Payment 1 of 12 for 2026
\$35,001.24	Total General Fund Receipts for February 2026

Jennifer announced that the Police contract ends on July 31st of this year and the Garbage contract ends June 30th so those will both need to be reviewed.

PARKS & RECREATION: Nothing at this time.

PLANNING AND ORDINANCES: Chair Pat Foley opened by discussion recapping what has been happening with the SCVFC. He stated that on November 5, the borough sent the SCVFC a letter requesting specific information. Pat said that receiving this information would be contingent on the fire company receiving future funding from the borough. A month went by and at the next meeting the SCVFC stated that they never received the letter, so borough council hand delivered the letter to officials at the December meeting. Pat provided a list of what was asked for and what was responded to. The letter asked for a list of all current and active members, which Pat said they received at the last meeting – 60 days after the request. Council also asked for copies of background checks for members for the last two years, call reports for the current year, copies of training and other events, and copies of the ISO report. None have been received. Pat said council also asked for a copy of the financial report, but when it was received it was a hand-written recap of the department's checking balance, which is not a financial report. Council also requested copies of the bylaws and copies of the 2025 minutes. These requests were not received. Pat said that the reason for the request for all this information, which he said that most of it is not mandated, but is imperative that the borough understand what is happening at the department, so that if anything would happen over there, everyone's insurance would go up. So, this is what is driving this request. At this time, Pat opened it up for remarks from the rest of council. Council President George Jay said that several years ago the borough went through a similar situation when the fire company failed its ISO and borough resident's homeowners' insurance doubled and tripled. Residents contacted the borough asking why. This is detrimental to us. We have an obligation to make sure we do everything right for the residents of this borough. Councilman Guy Napolillo asked some fire department members in the audience if there was a reason why the information hasn't been provided. One member said he knew Chief Jeremy Grubbs had gotten some information together but he had a death in the family. Grubbs did not attend Monday nights meeting. George Jay said Grubbs had stated the department took a vote and decided not to provide the information. The department officials again stated that Grubbs was working on it. Councilman Guy Napolillo said, "I just got on council. People are questioning us if things are okay there. We can't give them an answer because we have no facts. I don't think we are asking for anything that will hurt you in any way." Cheryl McClelland, who sat at the council table for the first time for her first meeting, said that it is great to have the fire department in the borough but that she didn't think it was too much to ask for the department to provide the requested information in order to keep insurance costs down for homeowners and to keep the borough safe. George Jay said the request for the background checks is not a "borough thing" but a "state thing." George said that we are not asking for anything that isn't due to us. "We don't want to run the fire department. We just want to make sure the borough is getting treated right and keeping the insurance rates down. There are a lot of elderly people in the borough and a lot of residents on fixed income. Insurance is already high enough, and we start doubling and tripling it." George Jay said the borough solicitor has sent multiple letters to the fire department. Guy Napolillo said that background checks and Childline checks are required and they should be on file. Mayor Chris Wilttrout said he talked to Grubbs multiple times about getting the information and he said Grubbs said a lot of the active members didn't want to give the information. Wilttrout said Grubbs told him in general they don't want to turn over the information. A resident in the audience said she thought that it was important to have copies of background checks, especially since they are going into peoples' homes. A fire department official attending the meeting, said that there was no reason for the borough to request financial records. We pay for everything. George Jay said that we do need to see them. We need to know that you have enough money to stay open for the next eight months. The fire official stated that it is their problem, and they will figure it out. George stated that if we don't designate a fire department, God forbid you guys have to close the door next month, we are left without a designated fire department, every single home in this borough the insurance will go sky high. It happened before when you guys failed the ISO. A fire official in the audience said that the department has had no problems since the issue that George referenced. Pat Foley said that up until the time the letter was sent last year, a representative of the fire department had not been present at a council meeting for at least seven months to present a report. Pat Foley said that there's obviously been a break down and we have asked to try to repair

that information. We have asked for information. You don't have to give it to us but we don't have to designate SCVFC as the primary fire department. It's a reciprocal relationship. If you guys don't want to provide that, that's fine. But we are making decisions that we think are best for the residents of the borough. Pat again stated its information to show the borough that the fire department is financially solvent and up to date with training and records are accurate. Guy Napolillo said what is driving the issue is residents are asking questions. Guy stated that the information we are asking for shouldn't hurt you. George Jay said that it's important for council to see a long-term financial report. He said we can't go with this month they have enough and next month they won't. We need more than a month-to-month basis. One resident said that council should look for another fire department. She noted at the last few fires, other fire companies were on the scene before South Connellsville. She said that as a resident I am asking you, why don't you just make a choice and make another fire company to be the primary and get the contingency started. As a homeowner I want someone that knows how to put out a fire when they come to my house and not destroy my house to put that fire out. And it's scary. It's very scary. Guy Napolillo said that this is fixable but we need that information. Without that information, we can't fix it. You guys have the list. Pat Foley made a motion to repeal Ordinance #29, passed in 1929, that designated SCVFC as the primary fire department in the borough. Second by George Jay. A roll call vote was taken. George Jay: yes, Tom Jenkins: yes, Pat Foley: yes, Guy Napolillo: yes, Cheryl McClelland: yes, Jennifer Kostik-Johnson: yes. Motion passed unanimously. The second motion made by Pat Foley to repeal our designation of the South Connellsville Volunteer Fire Company as the primary department. Second by George Jay. A roll call vote was taken. George Jay: yes, Tom Jenkins: yes, Pat Foley: yes, Guy Napolillo: yes, Cheryl McClelland: yes, Jennifer Kostik-Johnson: yes. Motion passed unanimously. Pat Foley made a motion to amend the agenda to include a resolution to name the Connellsville Township Volunteer Fire Department as the primary for the borough of South Connellsville. Second by George Jay. All in favor. Motion carried. The third motion made by Pat Foley was in the form of a resolution, naming Connellsville Township Volunteer Fire Department as the designated primary department and New Haven Hose Company as the secondary. Second by George Jay. A roll call vote was taken. George Jay: yes, Tom Jenkins: yes, Cheryl McClelland: yes, Jennifer Kostik-Johnson: yes, Pat Foley: yes. Guy Napolillo abstained from voting since he is a member of the New Haven Hose. Motion carried. Solicitor Tim Witt explained that procedurally the first motion to repeal Ordinance #29, under borough code would have a 10-day period and first must be presented to the mayor to sign off or veto. After 10 days, if not signed off or vetoed it automatically goes into effect and then all other items follow. Guy Napolillo stated that Fayette 911 will need a letter to know of the change. He said the letter would pull the trigger to make the change.

On another note, Pat mentioned council may want to have a discussion about having a backup or third person as editor having access to post on the borough FB page and website. In the event Kelly and George are both out of the office at the same time, it might be a good idea.

PROPERTY: Chair Cheryl McClelland mentioned the old store door being busted and she was wondering if anyone had contacted the new owners of the store to make them aware. Kelly stated that she did contact them some time ago right after it was first noticed to make them aware. Cheryl was concerned that there may be squatters hanging out in there. Officer Hominsky also said that they had checked into it and found out that one of the workers who had been working there accidentally busted it. Cheryl also mentioned that she noticed two homes up on Fifth Street where the roofs were in really bad shape. Kelly told Cheryl to check with her after the meeting to see if those properties have been listed on any of Myron's reports. They may be being worked on. Cheryl also provided pictures of those two properties that Kelly can email over to Myron for them to be looked at.

PUBLIC SAFETY: Chair Guy Napolillo brought to councils' attention that Mayor Wiltrout has volunteered to act as the borough's Emergency Management Coordinator. Chris already started some of the paperwork to get that started. George Jay made a motion to amend the agenda to include appointing Mayor Chris Wiltrout as our

boroughs' Emergency Management Coordinator. Second by Guy Napolillo. All in favor. Motion carried. Guy Napolillo made a motion to appoint Chris Wiltout as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the Borough of South Connellsville. Second by George Jay. All in favor. Motion carried. George thanked Chris for taking on that additional duty. Guy said that Chris has his first meeting tomorrow.

PUBLIC WORKS: Chair Tom Jenkins made a motion to amend the agenda for discussion and possible motion to hire the temporary worker for the street department. Second by George Jay. All in favor. Motion carried. Tom Jenkins made a motion to hire Mr. Lee Miller as a temporary hire to help out the street department. Second by George Jay. A roll call vote was taken. George Jay: yes, Tom Jenkins: yes, Pat Foley: yes, Guy Napolillo: yes, Cheryl McClelland: yes, and Jennifer Kostik-Johnson: yes. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS: Secretary Kelly Addis wanted to remind everyone that our Spring Community Yard Sales will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026 and then to follow our Spring Clean-up will be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2026.

PAYMENT OF BILLS: Kelly reminded council that the bills listed on the bill list that were not highlighted, came in over the last week while she was out on vacation. Pat Foley made a motion to pay the bills for the month of March. Second by Guy Napolillo. All in favor. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Councilman Guy Napolillo had a question regarding the fire station issue. The firemen who showed up for the meeting had left the building. Guy wanted to know if the South Connellsville department presented the borough with the information previously requested, could council reverse its decision. One resident in the audience asked if Mayor Chris Wiltout could go over and "clean house." Wiltout said that the fire department is under a charter and that is not permissible. Chris said that the fire department does have an ISO report set it's standing at 6, with one being the best and 10 being the worse. Council and Police Officer's Hominsky and Hammerle discussed the need for background checks and clearances. Napolillo said for a lot of fire departments that mandate is in the bylaws. Council discussed the issue of worker's comp it currently pays for the SCVFC and would it have to pay that to the other two departments. Tim Witt said the borough has reached out to the state fire commissioner for answers and officials for a response. Guy said both Connellsville Township and New Haven are already responding to calls in the borough as backups for the borough. Tim Witt said once the new designation goes into effect, written notice will have to be sent to the worker's comp and fire commissioners so they have a record. Council discussed funding through the Fire Relief Association. Council officials would look into how that account should be handled. Guy said that we have to make sure that the right thing is done here because it is audited by the state. Councilman Tom Jenkins had questions about considering rescinding and going back to making the department the primary department. He asked, "Are we pulling backwards and then another year it goes the other way?" Guy said he is just at a loss as to why they don't provide the information. That's my concern. People here in the borough are concerned about services provided and we can't give them any answers. Tom Jenkins said this issue has been readdressed for months in a row and the mission was to make sure the borough residents are provided with a way that they have a stable insurance platform. This should not be a yoyo issue and we go back and forth. Guy said it's just sad that a fire station is sitting right here and it won't be being used. Tim Witt stated that if the borough would decide to redesignate the SC department as the primary department, all motions would have to be rescinded and motions put in place for the redesignation.

Resident Dave Striner, 1325 Dushane Avenue said that a long time ago, council was going to make their road up on Dushane a borough road and it never happened, putting it on liquid fuels. George Jay stated that he thought that it was on liquid fuels. Back when Stephanie Whitlach came in and took some roads off, they added Dave's road on to it. Dave said that the garbage company doesn't like coming up that road and turning around. They back the whole way up the road. It's crazy when someone is coming up that road and they run into the garbage

collectors attempting to back up. It was noticed that the collectors back up on a lot of our roads. Dave wanted to know why we couldn't extend that road up even more if he donated the property for the road and another cul-de-sac it could go all the way up to where all of our driveways join. George told Dave if he would come to a work session, they could discuss it. Dave said there are three driveways that could be connected and it would be a nice place for the garbage men to turn around. Dave also mentioned that a GPS would never find his place. Mrs. Striner said that when their address is entered in on a GPS it takes you to multiple other addresses. Mrs. Striner mentioned that her sister-in-law who owns a house going up Dushane was missed years ago by emergency vehicles when her husband was having a health-related emergency and they missed the road, which in the end resulted in her husband's death. Guy Napolillo said he was on council at the time and remembers that happening and he said that the road was missed by the fire dept and EMS due to the homeowner not having proper house signing at the end of their road. The emergency vehicles couldn't even see that there was a house back in there. You couldn't see a house back in there at night from the road. The Striners asked what they could do to make sure that emergency vehicles would be able to locate their homes in the event of an emergency. Captain Hominsky said if he were them, he would make sure to have proper signage at the end of those roads with house numbers and arrows pointing to each home. The borough does sell the green signs that they can purchase to place at the end at each driveway. Captain Hominsky stated that all of his officers have been taken up to those homes so that in the event of an emergency, the police know where to go. Andy stated that all new hires with the police are shown those addresses up on Dushane Avenue. Andy stated that he would call Fayette EMS to make them aware of the issues for future needs. Tom Jenkins said that there could be some consideration to rename the names of the streets up there and the street department can add road signs. The Striners' also mentioned about the roads being paved up there and George said he would check with Stephanie Whitlach to confirm their road was added to Liquid Fuels. Council said that there was a grant put in for that road, but that we didn't get it. Council will continue to try to get that grant and will work on getting that road paved.

NEW BUSINESS: Nothing at this time.

MAYOR'S BUSINESS: Mayor Chris Wiltrout reminded everyone that the Time Capsule will be buried this Saturday, March 14 at 1pm up at the Honor Roll. There will be one last chance for residents to sign the book at that burial.

James Moore reached out to Chris about the Flag Football event for this summer beginning June 7th for a total of eight weeks. The age divisions is 3-4 yrs, 5-7 yrs, 8-10 yrs, 11-14 yrs, 15-18 yrs. Each player will receive an official NFL Flag Football jersey and some other items. They plan on having vendors, concessions, food trucks, entertainment, and all the games will be on Sundays. We will be getting a flyer soon and we will put that out on FB for everyone to get that information. This is a good way to get people back to the park.

Chris also announced that he will be starting his EMA classes tomorrow morning and put a plan together following Fayette counties plan. It's around 26 pages and took him 4-5 days to get it all typed up. Chris said he has a lot of work to do yet. He has to reach out to the Railroad Commission, Army Core of Engineers, Crown Cork and Seal to check on all their safety things that they have in the event of a hazardous spill or something. Chris is hoping to have a lot ready for April's meeting. There would need to be a resolution prepared for all of this. Chris asked Pat about paving the roads, so we need to see what kind of money we have available for that. That way he can get with Kerry to get all the bid packages together for those roads. Chris turned in the LSA drawing request for the Park Improvement Bathroom Project. It was \$24,440.05. Just waiting to hear back on that. Tom Jnekins asked Chris what was going on with the fire hydrants. Chris mentioned that when they did the ISO audit in 2021 you can get a total of 4 pts. for the fire testing and they got 0 pts. because the water company hadn't tested the fire hydrants since 2017 so we need to make sure we get all these hydrants tested. Tom said we pay the water company every month so they need to be getting this done. Chris said they don't actually do the testing, they get another company to do it and they need to be leaning on the other company to get this done. We

need to have reports, the pressures of every hydrant, to be able to let our fire companies know which hydrants are what. This would affect insurance rates. Chris said that we did get a score on the ISO audit of 37 out of a possible 40 for how much water we have in the hydrants, due to the good placements of our hydrants. Chris is still working on the Christmas Light issue with First Energy. A meeting will be planned.

SOLICITOR'S BUSINESS: Solicitor Tim Witt reminded us that we need to get the nomination paperwork for our EMC filed with the Governor's office.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Nothing at this time.

REMARKS FOR GOOD & WELFARE OF THE BOROUGH: Nothing at this time.

ADJOURNMENT: Pat Foley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Second by Tom Jenkins. All in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Addis, Secretary