

THE EVERGREEN

Historic Pine Grove . . . Early Settlers Noted the Area's "Fine Stand of Pines"

Vol. XIV, No. 4 – Issued Quarterly

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE, PA

NOVEMBER 2022

State of the Borough ... 2023 Budget Faces Deficit, Rising Costs

Water, Stormwater Infrastructure Needs Being Met

As we move into fall, many things of importance come into focus.



TOM FICKINGER
Council President

First of all, Pine Grove Borough invites the public to participate in our governmental process. I encourage all to attend, listen, and engage our Borough Council during monthly business meetings held on the second Thursday, 7 p.m. at Municipal Hall. These are public meetings, but we do have a security procedure when entering the hall to ensure everyone's safety.

Everyone must approach the main door and identify one's self to gain entrance. Also, a sign-in sheet for all attendees is located inside the meeting room door. Council welcomes all residents and property owners to attend and contribute to the process.

Currently working on 2023 Budget

One of the most important issues to residents and business owners would likely be the economic health of the Borough.

The current draft for the 2023 budget year shows a deficit of approximately \$93,000. Several items are yet to be worked out and may help to lessen this amount. The Borough has not increased the tax rate - currently at 14 mils - for approximately the past 13 years. The current climate will not sustain this rate and, despite our best efforts, an increase seems inevitable.

Employee contract and retirements loom

Our Personnel Committee is currently negotiating a 5-year contract with our Teamsters (non-union) employees. With our budgetary constraints, the Borough has tendered its best offer to the union and Council is awaiting their reply.

Due to upcoming retirements, we are also in search of the following employee replacements:

- We are actively seeking an individual with the proper state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) water license and the additional endorsements necessary to operate our water system. Candidates for this position must have the credentials as specified in our advertisement.
- The Borough is also looking for a Streets



Supervisor to direct the Borough crew in day-to-day activities.

- The Pine Grove Area School District has also requested our police department to acquire an additional police officer. This officer would be employed by the Borough, but financed by the school district.

Stormwater flood control projects

The Borough has completed an addition to the storm drain system for South Tulpehocken Street and is addressing a number of improvements at other locations.

Grants have been secured to redirect the runoff of storm water from the cemeteries now flowing down the dirt road into a South Tulpehocken home.

(See photo on Page 4)

This project will alter the slope of the dirt road and install a drainage line to run both directions emptying into catch basins at the St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church parking lot and into a drain near the

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2022 BOROUGH OFFICIALS

Regular Council Meeting:
2nd Thursday of Each Month - 6 p.m.
Municipal Building - 1 Snyder Ave.

OFFICIALS

Mayor Willard Shiffer
 Chief of Police..... Thomas J. Trotter, IV
 President of Council..... Tom Fickinger
 Vice President of Council..... Leroy Bates
 Pro Tem..... Len Clark
 Secretary/Treasurer..... Melissa A. Dyer
 Tax Collector..... Sally Burke
 Solicitor Shane Hobbs, Esquire
 Engineer..... Cardno BCM Engineers
 Floodplain Admin. Light-Heigel & Assoc.
 EMA Coordinator..... Dave Sattizahn
 Code Enforcement..... Light-Heigel & Assoc.
 Health Officer Lew Moyer

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 Thomas Fickinger • Rodney Hiester
 Elaine Holley • Devin Lymaster

POLICE

Thomas J. Trotter, IV - Chief
 Mike Dissinger • William Gelgot
 Pete Mozurkevich • Gino Ricigliano
 Mark Vandermartin • Beau Yarmush

STREETS & WATER DEPARTMENT

Len Clark, Streets & Water Supervisor
 Jacob Dinger • Robert Kolb
 Earl Kreiser

BOROUGH OFFICE

Melissa A. Dyer
 Amanda Lutz • Mandy Miller

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET & FINANCE

Thomas Fickinger • Leroy Bates
 Elaine Holley

PERSONNEL

Leroy Bates • Thomas Fickinger
 Elaine Holley

PUBLIC WORKS

Tom Fickinger • Len Clark • Rodney Hiester

PROPERTY & NATURAL RESOURCES

Leroy Bates • Skip Butler • Elaine Holley

FLOOD MITIGATION

Len Clark • Thomas Fickinger • Skip Butler

COMMUNITY DEV. • PARKS & RECREATION

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Skip Butler • Rodney Hiester • Elaine Holley

STORM WATER COMMITTEE

Leroy Bates • Len Clark • Tom Fickinger

State of the Borough

- Continued from Page 1 -



BERRY ALLEY READY FOR FUTURE PAVING

entrance to the St. John's Lutheran Cemetery.

Many have noticed that catch basins and drain lines have recently been installed on Berry Alley. This dirt roadway has been prepared for paving in the near future.

Another drainage project has been started at Walters Street, directing drainage to a line along West Pottsville Street and to a drain near the traffic light.

Water system improvements

It has come to the Borough's attention that a number of private wells along Route 443 and Hallton Hill are experiencing low water levels and are having to be drilled deeper.

- Continued on Page 4



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Council President's State of the Borough Update

- Continued from Page 2



FUTURE CEMETERY DRAINAGE PROJECT

The Borough has an approved project to run a water supply line from its new wells in the Berger Road area. This project has been slowed, however, awaiting approval from the Susquehanna River Basin Authorities (our controlling authority).

The original project has financing to place a line in the PennDOT right-of-way to carry water from the wells to town. Due to approval delays, we are seeking a temporary change, asking to move ahead to install the new line, but reverse the flow of water direction

temporarily. This could supply those homeowners who opt to connect to the new line with Borough-supplied water from the current town system.

This request along with approved funding has been submitted for expedited approval.

Other items that may command attention

- The Borough is in the process of rewriting its sidewalk ordinance to simply, and hopefully, encourage more property owners to upgrade their sidewalks. Tree roots are the primary culprit causing misalignment and raised sidewalks.

- In an effort to improve street safety, the use of large dumpsters on South Tulpehocken has been banned. We regret the necessity to do this; but, the Borough Police Department is willing to work with residents to find alternative means for such work as removing roofing materials, etc. Please do not hesitate to discuss your needs and plans with us.

- Many residents have asked to keep the pool open through August and into September. Because our summer staff and lifeguards are traditionally school and college students, the pool has had to close when there was insufficient staffing. We would like to have some older lifeguards apply in order to keep the pool open as long as the weather permits. Anyone interested is asked to notify the Borough Office of their availability.

- Tom Fickinger, Council President

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Newsletter Particulars

"The Evergreen" is a quarterly newsletter of the Borough of Pine Grove distributed to 1500 households within the Borough.

The newsletter is designed and printed by South Schuylkill Printing & Publishing
960 E. Main St. • Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

Ph: 570-385-3120 • Fax: 570-385-0725

E-mail: printing@southschuylkill.net

www.SouthSchuylkillPrinting.com

Publication dates for the next three issues are February 16, May 18, and August 17, 2023

News Submittals

Non-profit and community organizations within the Borough are invited to submit news items for consideration. Written submittals must be received by Melissa Dyer in the Borough offices, pgborough@comcast.net or call 570-345-3555 for info, three weeks prior to the publication date.

Advertising

Businesses wishing to reach every household in the Borough of Pine Grove are invited to advertise in future issues. Contact South Schuylkill Printing & Publishing for more information. Call Barb @ 570-385-3120. All advertisements must be received at least three weeks prior to the publication dates. Ad content is subject to approval and acceptance by the Borough of Pine Grove.

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Borough Services Update . . . And Seasonal Tips!

Pinegrove Historical Society

The Pinegrove Historical Society Board of Directors wish to thank all Autumn Stroll visitors for stopping by to see items and opportunities that the Society offers.



Nine new members joined that day, several renewed their dues, a few gave donations, and some bought books that help to support the Society – now in its 33rd year. The Society’s newest book, “When Electric Power Came to Pine Grove and Changed How We Lived,” plus the 2023 Calendar, spotlighting

historical photographs from the area, were popular items at the Stroll.

The Society’s headquarters at 205 N. Tulpehocken Street has public open hours as follows – the 2nd and 4th Saturdays and the 1st & 3rd Sundays, all from 1 to 3 p.m. The headquarters will be open in November, but closed from December until early March to save on heating costs. Follow the Society’s Facebook page for updates.

A genealogy research library, lots of old photographs and maps, and artifacts can be seen at the headquarters. Also interesting books, featuring historical accounts, capture aspects of Pine Grove’s history and other items are available for purchase. They make great gifts for Christmas!

Membership is inexpensive. Those who pay dues by December 31 will receive a free 2023 pictorial calendar. All members receive a quarterly newsletter. For inquiries and to leave a message, call 570-345-0157.

Free parking for December shopping

Parking vehicles in the Business District may be regulated in certain areas by parking meters. Feeding the meter is required Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Throughout the year, it is not necessary to feed the meter on Sundays or on Borough-observed Holidays.

Borough Council has also proclaimed Free Parking during December ... starting Thursday, Dec. 1 through Thursday, Jan. 5 to encourage holiday shoppers to

R&J TOURS – 2023

DAY TOURS

| | |
|---|---------|
| Feb. 2 – “The Play That Goes Wrong”; Bird-In-Hand Lunch .. | **\$113 |
| Feb. 18 – “Murder on Orient Express” @ Dutch Apple | **\$99 |
| Mar. 4, 6, 8 and 10 – Philadelphia Flower Show | **\$82 |
| Mar. 22 – “The Wiz” @ Fulton w/ Hershey Farms Lunch..... | \$113 |
| Mar. 25 & April 22 – New York City Free Day | \$59 |
| Mar. 30 – Show @Tropicana; \$25 FSP | \$95 |
| April 1 – “Sister Act” @ Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre | **\$99 |
| April 5 – Murder at Mount Hope Mansion | \$89 |
| April 7 – Moses@Sight/Sound; Hershey Farms Lunch .. | **\$139 |
| April 11 – Four by Four @ Wind Creek Casino; \$30 FSP .. | \$81 |
| April 15 – Washington DC Free Day | \$62 |
| April 17 – Kenny Rogers Band @ Tropicana; \$25 FSP | \$95 |

OVERNIGHT TRIPS (Prices Based on Double Occupancy)

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Marriott Marquis, NY | Feb. 10 - \$468; June 30 - \$479 |
| Resorts World Catskills Casino-5/30-6/27-8/8-9/12-12/5 .. | \$197 |
| Resorts Casino Hotel | June 4 - \$316 |
| Virginia Beach, VA | June 4 - \$612 |
| Ocean City, MD | July 17 - \$899; Sept. 4 - \$552 |
| Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, Mt. Rushmore- Aug. 16 - \$Call | |

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Borough Services Update . . . And Seasonal Tips!

favor local merchants, making it convenient to do so. Residents are asked to be considerate of our businesses, keeping these parking spaces available to shoppers.

Ash collection

Ash pickup will be twice per week on Tuesdays and Fridays now and throughout the heating season. Tubs are to be placed curbside, have handles, and be free of sharp edges.

What to do with all those leaves

Bagged leaves are being picked up curbside every Thursday during November. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, however, the last pickup will be on Wednesday, Nov. 23. Leaves must be bagged and tied. Please place tied bags at your curb so the Borough crew can safely pick them up. Burning of leaves is prohibited.

Also, just a friendly reminder when cleaning up yards and sidewalks, please don't sweep debris onto the roads. Debris will go into the storm drains causing blockages leading to water back-ups and possible localized flooding.

The Pine Grove Borough Office sells compost permits to residents for \$20. You can stop in Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to purchase your compost permit.

Christmas tree pick-up

Christmas trees will be collected by the Borough each Thursday in January. Place the tree at your curb, bare of all lights, ornaments, and tree stand.

Please help your neighborhood



Blocked street drains can create a hazard for you and your neighbors during heavy rain events and when winter snows and ice occur. If you see the drain near your house clogged with leaves or litter, please take a few minutes to open it with a broom or shovel.

Borough holiday closures

Pine Grove Borough offices and employee operations will be closed in observance of these upcoming holidays: Thursday and Friday, Nov. 24-25, (Thanksgiving); half day on Friday, Dec. 23 and full day on Monday, Dec. 26 (Christmas observed); and Monday, Jan. 2 (New Year's Day observed).

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Pine Grove Borough Info

For Up-to-Date Information Concerning
Borough Services, Ordinances, Etc.:

www.pinegroveborough.org

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Borough Services Update . . . And Seasonal Tips!

- Continued from Page 7

Snow emergencies

When an official Snow Emergency is called in Pine Grove Borough, vehicles parked on streets designated as Snow Emergency Routes must be moved to allow for efficient and effective snow removal. Streets affected are East and West Mill, East Pottsville, Wood, North and South Tulpehocken, Orchard, and Snyder Avenue. Parking is available in the lot behind Borough Hall.

Food Pantry

The Pine Grove Area Council of Churches Food Pantry serves those in need of nutritious food items on the third Saturday of every month. Located in the lower level of the Weekday Church School building, 200 School Street (directly across the street from the entrance to the Pine Grove Area Elementary School), food distribution takes place from 9 a.m. to noon.

The pantry serves families of Pine Grove Borough, Pine Grove Township and Washington Township. For additional information or for emergency food, call 570-345-3033 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Leave a message if no answer.



Water bill payments

Quarterly water bill payments were due November 7. If you missed it, a late fee will be assessed. Next year's bills will be due on February 6, May 1, August 7 and Nov. 6. Payments can be made by check or money order by mail or in person at the Borough Municipal Building.

The Pine Grove Borough office now accepts credit/debit card payments, using MuniPAY, for water service. Customers can pay online or at the Borough Office.

Payments accepted through MuniPAY will be Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express, or e-check. Payments made in this way will be subject to service fees of 2.65% or \$3, whichever is greater for credit cards, and \$1.50 for e-check.

The Borough does not collect, receive or retain any portion of the service fees. The fees are charged by MuniPAY in order to provide this convenient service to you.

MuniPAY is audited on an annual basis by a company recognized as a Qualified Security Assessor by the PCI Security Standards.



No outdoor burning

Borough ordinance prohibits any outdoor burning of trash or yard waste within the borough limits. Over the years, this ordinance has proven its worth by cutting the number of brush fires in Pine Grove to almost zero. Enjoy the fall days and holidays ahead and stay safe.

From PPL Electric Utilities

Get rid of that old, working refrigerator or freezer, stowed away in your basement or garage now through December 31. PPL Electric Utilities will - not only come and take it away at no cost to you - they'll send you a check for \$50. Visit ppllectric.com/recycle or call 1-877-486-9204.

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Borough Services Update . . . And Seasonal Tips!

Keep sidewalks clear this winter

We are coming upon winter quickly ... a reminder that sidewalks need to be maintained safe and passable. Please keep your sidewalks cleared for everyone's safety! Remove snow/ice immediately following storms and salt frequently to treat thawing/refreezing. Sidewalks and curbs are residents' responsibility, not the Borough's.

This includes maintenance and on-going repairs as well. The Borough's existing ordinance is being upgraded, making it better for the community and much easier to understand.

Your input is always valuable to this process. The Borough seeks your thoughts. You can do so by attending the December Borough Council meeting or speak to the Borough Office.

Help available for heating costs

Residents struggling to pay home heating bills can begin applying for assistance from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) now. This program runs until April 28, 2023.

The federally funded LIHEAP program helps individuals and families pay their heating bills through home



heating energy assistance cash grants that are sent directly to your fuel/utility provider. The program also includes crisis grants should there be an emergency or if a resident is in danger of losing his or her heat due to broken equipment, lack of fuel, or termination of utility service.

The income limit for an individual is \$20,385; for a couple, the limit is \$27,465; and for a family of four, it is \$41,625. The grant award amounts vary from \$300 to \$1,000 depending upon income, fuel source, and household size.

Residents may apply for LIHEAP online or by contacting your County Assistance Office.

Water quality report available

In accordance with the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requirements, the Borough monitors, tests and reports to the agency and public on an annual basis regarding its water quality.

The report for 2021 is available for review or download from the Borough website at PineGroveBorough.org. Water customers are also able to get a free hardcopy at the Pine Grove Borough Hall, One Snyder Avenue, during open hours.



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Historical Society Preserves the Past

Re-Opening of the Stanhope One-Room Schoolhouse

After eight years of restoration work - by more than 100 volunteers who provided over 2,500 hours of labor - and spending \$18,000, the Stanhope Schoolhouse project of the Pinegrove Historical Society is now the only one-room schoolhouse open to the public in Schuylkill County.

The before and after pictures show the work the volunteers accomplished to get to this point.

The grand re-opening celebration on August 13 was attended by 57 individuals, including five Stanhope alumni.



RE-OPENING VOLUNTEERS and ribbon cutting participants included, front from left, Mike Moyer, volunteer; Susan McCartney, Dave Thompson, and Toni Groff from Team Orwigsburg; Linda Mills, project chairperson, and Terry Winters, volunteer; back row, George Stralkus and Madison Derfler, volunteers; Tina Keefer, project co-chair; Jane Kruse, volunteer; John Ziegler, Stanhope alumnus, and Kevin Derfler, volunteer.

Education returned after 70 years when four Stanhope alumni shared first-hand information during the inaugural educational



program. They discussed their school days, life during that period, and what they have done since leaving the Stanhope School House.

STANHOPE ALUMNI - seated from left, Gertrude Lengel Pezzoni, Janet Lengel Miller, Patricia Lengel Wackle, and John Ziegler are joined by guests (standing) Heath Renninger, superintendent of Pine Grove Area School District, Linda Mills, project chairperson; and state Senator David Argall.



The schoolhouse will be open on selected dates from May to September for educational programs and as a museum. Details will be posted online at www.PGHS-StanhopeSchool.org.

Museum hours by appointment can be arranged for groups of 10 or more with at least a two-week notice during those months.

Contact info@pghs-stanhopeschool.org to provide information regarding Stanhope alumni you are aware of so their information can be added to our database.

As with any property and project, there is still work to be completed. Current opportunities for volunteers and needs are listed at www.PGHS-StanhopeSchool.org.

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The PA Department of Environmental Protection mandated all water systems are required to notify customers quickly when a situation with the water system arises. From time to time, we have had to contact our customers when our water system was compromised and issue a Boil Water Advisory.

Pine Grove Borough has contracted with Rave Mobile's Smart911 to contact our customers and residents. Smart911 is a Public Notification System using cutting-edge technology to swiftly contact our residents via telephone or e-mail. Now when a Boil Water

Advisory is necessary, or any time the Borough needs to be in contact with its residents such as a declared snow emergency, we can do so in a matter of minutes. This would also include other states of emergency, disaster announcements, road closures, parking restrictions, and other announcements as necessary.

We need your help!

In order to make Smart911 work, information regarding you, including your address, phone number, cell phone number, e-mail address, and your preferred method of notification is necessary. If you were registered previously with Swiftreach, your information has been transferred to the Smart911 system. If you have not sent this to date, complete the form and mail it in, deliver in person, call or e-mail your info today! Or, go to the Borough website and click on the Smart911 tab.

Mail or deliver to Pine Grove Borough; One Snyder Avenue; Pine Grove, PA 17963. You can also call 570-345-3555 with the information or e-mail us at pgborough@comcast.net.

Property owners with apartments should provide information regarding their tenants. Tenants should also complete the form to ensure optimum notification.

Pine Grove Borough • Water Customer Information System

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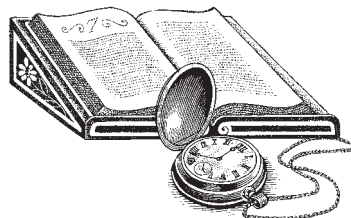
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**2022 Remaining
Holiday Schedule**

*Pine Grove Borough Offices will be closed
the following days*

- Thursday - November 24th | Thanksgiving
- Friday - November 25th
- Friday (Half Day) - December 23rd | Christmas (observed)
- Monday - December 26th
- Monday - January 2nd | New Year's Day (observed)

*We wish you and your families a very safe and
happy holiday season and look forward to a
great new year of serving you.*

