

THE EVERGREEN

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

Vol. XV, No. 4 - Issued Quarterly

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE, PA

NOVEMBER 2023

State of the Borough ... Continued Progress on Many Fronts

2024 Budget Being Finalized; Water Rates to Rise

As the leaves turn from green to orange, then red, we are in the midst of autumn. The beauty of autumn also signals changes to come ... brisk morning temperatures, winds, falling leaves, killing frosts, and the eventual snow and ice of winter. It's time to look ahead and get prepared.

Just as we all plan for the change in seasons, the Borough also can see changes on the horizon, some good and some that will prove to be very trying.



TOM FICKINGER
Council President

Work on next year's budget is coming along. There will be an increase in the water rates, dictated by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), in order to secure grants for the maintenance and repair of our water system. We will maintain the bare minimum increase. Also affecting our operating budget,

rising costs of everything the Borough purchases has been hit as a result of inflation. The Borough will work vigorously to hold the line on any increase.



PROPOSED LVHN FAMILY MEDICAL FACILITY

convince one of our local hospital groups to consider providing this service.

Improvements at Union Canal Park area

There are also additional events planned for the Veterans Memorial Drive and Union Canal Park area. The annual 9-11 service and enjoyable Autumn Stroll were held this fall. New community activities are being planned, in particular a Christmas Light event in December. So, stay tuned.

You may notice work along the canal for stream improvements. Large rocks will be staged and then interdicted into the stream bank for stabilization. This type work is also planned in the area of the future Pleasant Valley Park (the former PP&L site).

The old boat dock on the canal has become unsafe and will be removed shortly. The Joint Treatment Authority has also completed a sewer cleaning program.

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PROGRESS AT FORMER RED ARROW SITE

Now for some good news. As of this printing, you will notice a new doctors' suite on the sight of the former Red Arrow gas station. It's architecture will brighten the center of town. There is also additional space left for a future urgent care facility if we can

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2023 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..... One Atlas
 Floodplain Admin. Light-Heigel & Assoc.
 EMA Coordinator..... Dave Sattizahn
 Code Enforcement..... Light-Heigel & Assoc.
 Health Officer Lew Moyer

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 Thomas Fickinger • Wade Gettle
 Elaine Holley • Devin Lymaster

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 Jacob Dinger • Robert Kolb
 Zach Peters

BOROUGH OFFICE

Melissa A. Dyer
 Amanda Lutz • Mandy Miller

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET & FINANCE

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 Elaine Holley

PERSONNEL

Leroy Bates • Thomas Fickinger
 Elaine Holley

PUBLIC WORKS

Tom Fickinger • Len Clark • Wade Gettle

PROPERTY & NATURAL RESOURCES

Leroy Bates • Skip Butler • Elaine Holley

FLOOD MITIGATION

Len Clark • Thomas Fickinger • Skip Butler

COMMUNITY DEV. • PARKS & RECREATION

Len Clark • Leroy Bates • Devin Lymaster

PUBLIC SAFETY

Skip Butler • Elaine Holley • Wade Gettle

STORM WATER COMMITTEE

Leroy Bates • Len Clark • Tom Fickinger

State of the Borough

- Continued from Page 1

Looking ahead to winter and summer

After an exciting summer season at the pool, it is not too early to recruit lifeguards and snack shop employees for next summer.

With winter approaching, a thorough inspection of our snowplow equipment has been done. One of the plow trucks did not pass inspection due to extreme corrosion. The Borough has traded this truck for a newer vehicle to keep the fleet in working order.

Safety needs are priority one!

Several items regarding safety are needed and must be heeded in order to ensure our quality of life.

Motorists failing to observe posted speed limits near the schools, and along the walking paths to and from the school, heads the list. Please slow down and observe the cross walks, especially during school hours. The radar speed-indicating sign will remind motorists of the speed limit as they approach different areas.

The Borough police force has been able to fill a request by the Pine Grove Area School District for a second school safety officer. This officer is financed by the school district for the protection of the students and staff.

Pine Grove is very fortunate to have the support of its school district. Our police force will also be looking for an additional patrol officer in the near future.



Also, be cautious and slow down to protect your own vehicle and our wildlife. There are a large number of “tame” deer walking the neighborhoods, so be alert for the unexpected.

- Tom Fickinger, Council President

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Protect Yourself from Holiday Cyber Scams

Enjoy Your Holiday; Don't Be a Scam Victim!

By Pine Grove Councilor Wade Gettle

The holiday season is a time of joy, celebration, and giving. Unfortunately, it's also a time when cyber-criminals are working overtime to scam unsuspecting individuals. As we embrace the spirit of the season, it's essential to be vigilant and protect ourselves from holiday cyber scams.

Online shopping scams

One of the most common scams during the holidays is online shopping fraud. With the convenience of e-commerce, it's easier than ever to fall victim to fake websites, counterfeit products, and enticing deals that are too good to be true.

To avoid this, only shop from reputable websites and be cautious of unsolicited emails or pop-up ads. Make sure the website's URL starts with "https" to ensure it's secure and always use a credit card instead of a debit card for added protection.

Phishing emails and messages

Phishing emails and text messages increase during the holiday season. Cybercriminals send fake messages impersonating well-known retailers, banks, or delivery services, requesting sensitive information or asking you to click on malicious links. To stay safe,



never click on suspicious links, and double-check the sender's email address. Legitimate companies won't ask you for sensitive information via email or text.

Gift card scams

Gift cards are a popular choice for gifts during the holidays. Scammers have found ways to exploit this by selling counterfeit or partially used gift cards. To avoid falling for gift card scams, purchase them from authorized retailers and inspect the cards for tampering or scratches on the PIN area.

Charity scams

The holiday season is also a time for giving back, and scammers take advantage of this goodwill by setting up fake charity websites or calling to solicit donations for non-existent causes. To protect your donations, research charities before giving and consider donating directly through their official websites.

Social media scams

Social media is a treasure trove for scammers during the holidays. Beware of posts or messages that promise free gifts, prizes, or sweepstakes that require your personal information. Always verify the authenticity of such offers and never share your personal details on social media.

Protect yourself

To protect yourself from holiday cyber scams, here are some important tips:

1. Use strong, unique passwords for your online accounts.
2. Enable two-factor authentication whenever possible.
3. Keep your devices and software up-to-date.
4. Be cautious of unsolicited communication.
5. Educate yourself and your loved ones about common scams.
6. Trust your instincts. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

The holiday season is a time to cherish. Being proactive in guarding your online presence will help ensure that you can enjoy this time without becoming a victim of cyber scams. Stay safe, stay vigilant, and have a wonderful holiday season!

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Green Tubes? Inquiring Minds Want to Know!

Pine Grove Takes the Lead in Flood Control

Many townspeople and visitors to Pine Grove have been asking, "What are those green tubes doing in areas around the Borough?"



Mayor Willard Shiffer and Riparian Ranger Leah Zerbe

Pine Grove Borough teamed-up with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to help with flood control, provide streambank stabilization, and create forested riparian buffers. Two plantings of young trees have been accomplished - one in April 2022 and the other just recently in October 2023. All of the plantings

have been done by local volunteers.

The Borough expressed interest in reforesting certain parcels within the town. Six sites have been identified as devoid of native woody vegetation and/or are being managed as mowed lawns. Many of these sites lie within the floodplain of the Swatara Creek or are adjacent to waterways.

Some sites have been purchased by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and/or PEMA (Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency) to mitigate flood damage. Those adjacent to waterways are to be planted with trees and shrubs to create forested riparian buffers. Other areas where plantings are proposed will be reforested to enhance the urban forest canopy within the town itself. The reforestation of these sites will provide the town with increased canopy cover, improved aesthetics, streambank stabilization, nutrient capture, and edible nuts and berries.

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Borough Services Update . . . And Seasonal Tips!

Country Christmas concert & celebration

If you haven't done so already, get your reservations to attend the holidays kick-off - a Country Christmas Concert and Celebration - presented by Mended Heart and The Pine Grove Theater.

Three shows are available - Saturday, Dec. 2 at 6 p.m.; a Sunday afternoon matinee, Dec 3 at 2 p.m.; and a final performance on Sunday evening, Dec 3 at 6 p.m.

This Country Christmas concert features a variety of professional musicians and vocalists that have joined together over the last several years at a local Pine Grove church concert to bring this the community.

Due to the growth of the audience and the overwhelming response, the location has changed this year to The Pine Grove Theater, 213 S. Pine Grove.

Parking will be available at School Yard Square, just one block from the theater. Free shuttle service, courtesy of Newhurst Bus Company, will be available to take you from School Yard Square to the front door of the theater and return after the show.

This concert is open to the public. General admis-

sion is free of charge, but a free-will offering will be taken. Reserved seating can be secured, in advance, with a \$10 donation per seat (check made payable to "PG Christmas Concert Board of Directors") mailed along with the NUMBER OF SEATS to be reserved and the show DATE and TIME of your reservation.

Mail reservation donations and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

PG Christmas Concert Board of Directors, 83 Harris Ave., Pine Grove, PA 17963. Call Keith at 570-691-6673 with questions or for additional information.

What to do with all those leaves?

Bagged leaves are being picked up curbside every Thursday during November. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the pick-up that week will be on Wednesday, Nov. 22. 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.



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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

E-mail: printing@southschuylkill.net
www.SouthSchuylkillPrinting.net

Publication dates for the next three issues are February 22, May 16, and August 22, 2024

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.

Borough Services Update . . . And Seasonal Tips!

“Spirit of Beauty” recipient

The South Schuylkill Garden Club is at it again, scoping out the yards around the county looking for landscaped yards worthy of the “Helen Moyer Curb Appeal - Spirit of Beauty Award.” The club has chosen to recognize individuals, businesses, and municipalities throughout the county whose landscape efforts enhance the appearance of our communities.



This year’s special recipient was Dana and Greg Glantz of Pine Grove. A certificate and lawn sign were given to Dana and Greg at their home. The photo here shows Greg with garden club members Jane

Kruse (left) and Carol Haldeman. All can appreciate why Dana and Greg’s property was chosen to be this year’s recipient of this award as you view their property along Sweet Arrow Lake Road, Pine Grove.

Need a dumpster? Get a permit!

A permit is required to place a short-term dumpster or roll-off container, between 10 and 40 cubic

yards, within Pine Grove Borough. Smaller refuse containers, commonly located on residential or commercial properties for long periods and emptied periodically, do not require a permit.

At present, the Borough is waiving any fees associated with obtaining a permit that is required. Permits are only valid for a two-week period when located on Borough streets and for three months if located on private properties. Permits must be obtained from the Pine Grove Borough Office before having the dumpster/roll-off placed onto the street or private property.

Residents or property owners may access the permit and ordinance online at www.pinegroveborough.org or stop in for a copy at the Borough Office.

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.

Borough holiday closures

Pine Grove Borough offices and employee operations will be closed in observance of these upcoming holidays: Thursday and Friday, Nov. 23-24, (Thanksgiving); half day on Friday, Dec. 22 and full day on Monday, Dec. 25 (Christmas); and Monday, Jan. 1 (New Year’s Day).

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Borough Services Update . . . And Seasonal Tips!

- Continued from Page 7

Water bill payments

Quarterly water bill payments were due November 6. If you missed it, a late fee will be assessed. Upcoming bills will be due February 5, May 6, and August 5 of 2024.

You can pay your water bill online by going to www.pinegroveborough.org. You can either go to the Home Screen or Pine Grove Water Department and click on the phrase that is in all caps - PINE GROVE WATER ON-LINE BILL PAYMENT. This will take you to MuniPAY to make your water bill payment.

The Pine Grove Borough Office will not take payments over the phone. Your payment options are:

1. Pay online using MuniPAY
2. Cash, check, money order, or credit card at the Borough Office



3. You may drop your check/money order payment in the gray drop-box located by the police entrance (do not drop cash).

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.

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.



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.

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.

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.

Clear snow at fire hydrants

A reminder to residents ... during the snowy winter weeks, please clear snow away from any fire hydrants near your home. The Borough crews are out clearing the streets and battling to keep water, sewer, and drainage moving. In the event of a fire emergency, you want the firefighters to be able to have quick access to their source of water. Help them out before the emergency occurs.

Building a home or adding a rental unit?

Did you know there is a procedure to obtain a new address when building a new home or adding a unit to your rental property?

The first step is to reach out to your local municipality and discuss the address for the property in question. The local municipality will then reach out to the 911 Communication Center to verify the address.

Once the address is approved by the 911 Center, a letter will be sent to the property owner with the new



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Borough Services Update . . . And Seasonal Tips!

address. It is then the property owner's responsibility to provide a copy of the letter to the appropriate U.S. Post Office.

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.

Dispose of unused/outdated drugs

Each year the Pine Grove Police Department coordinates the local DEA Drug Take-Back Program. This provides for the safe and secure disposal of expired and unused prescription drugs commonly found stored in households. To protect our landfills and

waterways, drugs should not be thrown away with your household trash nor by toilet flushing.

A safe and secure Red Box drop-box is available in the lobby of the Pine Grove Municipal Hall.

The drugs will be properly disposed of during the Drug Take-Back Program. Contact the Pine Grove Police Department at the non-emergency number of 570-345-8100 with any questions or concerns.

Water quality report available

In accordance with state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requirements, the Borough monitors, tests and reports to the agency and public on its quality.

The report for 2022 is available for review or download from the Borough website at PineGroveBorough.org or water customers can get a free hardcopy at the Pine Grove Borough Hall, One Snyder Avenue, during open hours.

Joint Treatment Authority

The Pine Grove Joint Treatment Authority sewage treatment plant is at 235 Suedberg Road. The Administrative Office is at 115 Mifflin St., Pine Grove.

Customers having questions about rates, billing, and the requirement for metering should contact the Administrative Office in person or call 570-345-6433. Information can also be found online at www.pinegrovejta.com.



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Historical Society Preserves the Past

Stanhope School Set to Reopen May 1st in 2024

The Stanhope Schoolhouse, a project of the Pinegrove Historical Society, concluded its scheduled 2023 educational programming and museum hours with a September 23 presentation - "Then & Now - From Patchwork to Pre-Cuts" - by Cindi Hershey, quilt education and development director for the Kutztown Folk Festival Quilt Barn.

The history of quilts began long before European settlers arrived in the New World. While the fabric used has changed over time, many of the quilt designs continue to be used.

One of the most fascinating uses of quilt squares was to provide information for individuals traveling in the Underground Railroad. Each of the nine blocks had a different meaning to guide them on their journey.

Thanks to our financial supporters

The schoolhouse project received financial support this year from the Charles Werner Endowment Fund and the Fred V. Knecht Memorial Fund, directed through the Schuylkill Area Community Foundation (SACF).

Pictured at the SACF Emerald Anniversary honors event are, from left, Amanda Campbell, executive director of SACF; Linda Mills, chairperson of the Stanhope Schoolhouse project; and Terry Winters, Stanhope



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Internship to leave a lasting legacy

Kutztown University elementary education student, Reanna Reynolds, is continuing her internship with the Stanhope School through her fall semester. So far, she has completed research on one-room school education and gained valuable experience working at the one-room school staged at this year's Kutztown Folk Festival.

Her internship at Stanhope will conclude by developing experiential lesson plans for school children. Going forward, volunteer docents will be needed to teach these lessons. Retired teachers are encouraged to contact us to learn more about this opportunity to continue to educate children.

Opportunities to help the Schoolhouse

While the Stanhope School is now closed until May 1 next year, there are a number of opportunities to support this important project in the interim.

DINE AND DONATE on Wednesday, Nov. 29 - All day at the Friedensburg Country Restaurant, you can dine-in or take-out breakfast, lunch, or dinner and Stanhope School will receive 20% of your bill. A paper coupon - available at www.PGHS-StanhopeSchool.org - must be presented at the restaurant. Digital copies will not be accepted.

VOTE FOR OUR CHRISTMAS TREE - The Schuylkill County Historical Society is hosting a Christmas Tree Decorating Contest. Trees will be displayed at the society's headquarters in Pottsville from November 8 through January 6. Visitors are asked to vote for their favorite. Each \$1 vote for our tree will be a donation to the Stanhope Schoolhouse.

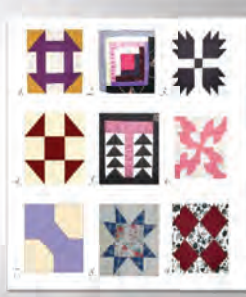
HISTORY FAIRE - The annual Schuylkill County History Faire will be held Saturday, Feb. 10 at the Fairlane Village shopping center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Stop by our table to learn more about the Stanhope Schoolhouse.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND - There is a wide variety of tasks, suitable for all ages and interests, now through April as we prepare to reopen in May. Details can be found at www.PGHS-StanhopeSchool.org or <https://www.facebook.com/StanhopeSchoolhouse>.

SCHEDULE YOUR SPECIAL EVENT - Do you have a group of 10 or more looking for a private event at Stanhope Schoolhouse in 2024? Contact us through our website to schedule a date and time. Private events can be scheduled from May 1 to September 30.

Familiar blocks from the Underground Railroad

- #1) Monkey Wrench, Gather your belongings together
- #2) Log Cabin, A "safe" person to speak to
- #3) Bear's Paw, Follow the bear tracks over the Appalachian Mountains
- #4) Shoofly, A friendly guide
- #5) Flying Geese, Points to the direction to follow
- #6) Drunkard's Path, Travel in a zigzag path to avoid pursuers
- #7) Bow Ties, Dress in disguise
- #8) Star, Follow the North Star
- #9) Crossroads, Routes to Cleveland, Ohio (freedom)



Rave Mobile's Smart911 - Critical Info Fast!

Rave Mobile's "Smart911" is a communication service that allows the Pine Grove Borough to notify residents quickly and efficiently in the event of an emergency or need to convey critical information.

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

Contact Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Please check the line for your preferred method of notification.

Primary Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

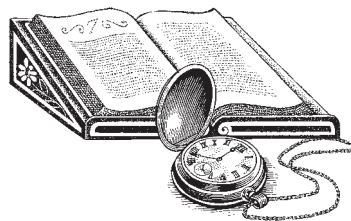
Email Address: _____

Please return the information sheet to the borough office at
Pine Grove Borough: One Snyder Avenue, Pine Grove

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**2023 Remaining
Holiday Schedule**

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

- Thursday - November 23rd
- Friday - November 24th | Thanksgiving
- Friday (Half Day) - December 22nd
- Monday - December 25th | Christmas
- Monday - January 1st, 2024 | New Year's Day

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

