

THE EVERGREEN

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

Vol. XVI, No. 4 – Issued Quarterly

BOROUGH OF PINE GROVE, PA

NOVEMBER 2024

Council President's "State of the Borough"

Website and Meeting Agendas Keep You Informed

Since our last issue of *The Evergreen*, Pine Grove Borough and our town council have had a busy season. Fall signals it is time to prepare the 2025 budget. Talks to that end have been at the forefront of activity with public budget meetings taking place in September and October. The proposed budget will be advertised and available for public inspection by November 25. Public comment can be given and revisions may be considered prior to final approval at the December 12 meeting. Scheduled meetings begin at 6 p.m. at the Borough Municipal Building, One Snyder Avenue.



LEROY BATES
Council President

If you are new to Pine Grove, I welcome you to our Borough and kindly ask that you refer often to our Borough webpage - <https://pinegroveborough.org/>. You will find a wealth of information on this webpage, as well as recent posts regarding things that are newly occurring.

Important announcements needing your immediate attention are delivered right to your designated phone via RAVE. When a season of draught became more critical this October, we let you know, asking your help to protect the "greater good" to ensure water in our faucets. RAVE is the way our Borough communicates directly with you 24/7. If you didn't get this message, you probably haven't provided us with your contact information. See more on Page 7 of this newsletter issue. The Borough's website homep-

age can direct you to sign up.

Also, in the tabs on the left, you will find a complaint form tab. Instead of stewing over the topic and biting your spouse's ear off about stuff, please fill out a complaint form. Our council receives these complaints, we are then able to take action, as may be appropriate, on these complaints. If you want to speak at our next meeting, please notify the borough office at least 24 hours before the meeting. We are required by law to post the agenda in advance of the public meeting so that interested persons may attend and/or comment before any official action is taken. We are not required to take action on items not announced in advance.

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Budget for 2025

No Tax Increase; But...

Pine Grove Borough Council motioned to advertise the proposed 2025 General and Water Fund Budget at their Budget Meeting held Monday, October 28, 2024. There will not be a need for a tax increase for the General Fund; but, there will be a 10% increase in water rates for industrial customers. The increase will first appear on the April 1, 2025 billing.

The 2025 Budget will be available for public inspection and comment beginning Monday, Nov. 25 between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Municipal Building located at One Snyder Avenue, Pine Grove and will be posted on our website. The final budget will be adopted at the Regular Meeting of the Borough Council to be held on December 12, 2024 at 6 p.m. in the Municipal Building.

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Free Parking for the Holidays

Parking Will Be FREE at
Meters in Pine Grove Borough
Monday, Dec. 2 Thru Friday, Jan. 3

2024 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..... Leroy Bates
Vice President of Council..... Elaine Holley
Pro Tem..... Kyle Burke
Borough Manager Melissa A. Dyer
Tax Collector..... Katie 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

COUNCIL

Leroy Bates • Kyler Burke • Skip Butler
Elaine Holley • Devin Lymaste
Aimmee Reilly • Debra Thompson

POLICE

Thomas J. Trotter, IV – Chief
Mike Dissinger • William Gelgot
Greg Pritchard • Gino Ricigliano • Jeff Sampson
Mark Vandermartin • Beau Yarmush

STREETS & WATER DEPARTMENT

Earl Kreiser, Streets Crew Leader
Jacob Dinger • Robert Kolb
Zach Peters

BOROUGH OFFICE

Melissa A. Dyer
Amanda Lutz • Mandy Miller

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET & FINANCE

Leroy Bates • Kyler Burke
Elaine Holley

PERSONNEL

Leroy Bates • Kyler Burke
Elaine Holley

PUBLIC WORKS

Kyler Burke • Devin Lymaster • Debra Thompson

PROPERTY & NATURAL RESOURCES

Leroy Bates • Elaine Holley • Debra Thompson

FLOOD MITIGATION

Skip Butler • Elaine Holley • Devin Lymaster

COMMUNITY DEV. • PARKS & RECREATION

Kyler Burke • Elaine Holley • Aimmee Reilly

PUBLIC SAFETY

Skip Butler • Elaine Holley • Aimmee Reilly

STORM WATER COMMITTEE

Leroy Bates • Devin Lymaster • Debra Thompson

State of the Borough

- Continued from Page 1

The agenda posted on our website is your window into what is before the Borough Council each monthly meeting. Some of our most recent agenda items have included...

- the intentions of the Borough to sell land it owns on the east side of Berger Road;
- reopening the discussions and research regarding a conservancy that wants to protect many acres the Borough owns; and,
- there is a continued push to acquire an easement of land next to Highway 125, north of Pine Grove where our water line exists, in order to make much needed updates to our water system.

Additional major efforts included our Mayor working through Senator David Argall's office, lobbying the release of restrictions on our water system update. This is needed in order to connect two new wells behind the old power plant, east of the Borough, to the existing water system.

Borough Manager position created

One of the very important items that came before our Borough Council was to elevate Secretary/Treasurer, Melissa Dyer, to our newly-minted position of Borough Manager. When I assumed the president position on Borough Council, I was told, "Mature Boroughs have managers that take care of day-to-day tasks."

Creating a Borough Manager position is not so cut-and-dry. We first had to write a code to create the position. This code went through meticulous critiquing by our executive team as well as our personnel team, working closely with Melissa on each portion of the new code. Once we completed the writing of the code, it was presented to council for a vote. Council voted unanimously to advertise the ordinance. Several months later, after extensive legal review, we now have a Borough Manager position created.

Melissa has been doing most of this job without the compensation and without the ability to enforce things needing to be done. Melissa has taken a huge burden from the council's shoulders by graciously accepting the job of Borough Manager for Pine Grove and we deeply appreciate her efforts.

- Leroy Bates, Borough Council president

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Borough Services Update . . . And Seasonal Tips!

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. 27. 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. Stop in Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to purchase your compost permit.

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. 28-29, (Thanksgiving); half day on Tuesday, Dec. 24 and full day on Wednesday, Dec. 25 (Christmas); and Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025 (New Year's Day).

Water bill payments

Quarterly water bill payments were due November 5. If you missed it, a late fee will be assessed. Upcoming bills will be due February 5, May 5, August 5, and November 5 of 2025.

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.

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 a 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.

Safe & Clean Sidewalks

Sidewalks are the arteries of Pine Grove, serving as essential pathways for pedestrians and contributing significantly to the quality of life. Maintaining safe and clean sidewalks benefits everyone, from residents to businesses and to visitors.

Maintenance is a basic need to keep these pathways safe for all. This entails regular inspection and repair of cracks and uneven surfaces. Ensuring proper drainage on and around sidewalks will prevent water pooling and ice formation. Clear marking is necessary to warn or guide against potential hazards and level changes. Obstacles and protruding objects need to be removed from the sidewalk lane.

Cleanliness measures include sweeping in high-traffic areas, prompt removal of litter and debris, power washing to remove stains and grime, and providing disposal facilities at regular intervals.

Safety issues become particularly acute during fall and winter seasons. Snow removal during and immediately after a storm is critical. Ice treatment and its removal through the freeze and thaw cycles of winter months demands diligent maintenance. Leaf debris, when wet, leads to a slippery surface.

Sidewalk maintenance, safety and cleanliness is not solely a Borough responsibility. Homeowners and businesses, property owners, and residents of rental units all have a stake to maintain safe walkways for their neighbors, customers, and visitors. Pick up and dispose of personal waste and pet waste. Keep private walkways clear. Report maintenance issues or, if on your property, fix what is unsafe and unsightly. Organize or support community clean-up initiatives.

- Councilor Skip Butler

God Bless You & Your Family with Peace & Joy this Christmas Season



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Lisa A Harner, Funeral Director

www.hlsnyderfuneralhome.com

Borough Services Update . . . And Seasonal Tips!

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 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.

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 2023 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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Pinegrove Historical Society Preserves the Past

Busy Year at Stanhope School; Plans Set for 2025

Stanhope School, the only restored one-room schoolhouse in Schuylkill County that is open to the public, had a very active and successful second year of operations. Key highlights included...

Pine Grove Girl Scout Troop 32840 spent a “Day in the Life of a Student at the Stanhope One-Room Schoolhouse.” Shown here with their “teacher” – Kutztown University education major and Stanhope intern, Reanna Reynolds – the “students” proudly display their certificates of completion.



Installed by volunteers, Pine Grove Township Board of Supervisors vice-chairman, Andrew Lesh, and Stanhope School project chair, Linda Mills, dedi-

cated a historical-type marker at the school.

Staff members from Girl Scouts of Eastern PA visited with Stanhope Alumnus, John Ziegler, during a private event this summer. The slate chalk boards shown in the picture below were originally used and taken from the Pine Street School in Tremont. Team Orwigsburg members provided the labor and expertise to install them. The permanent lines shown above the slates helped the teacher write in a straight line.



Many supporters to be thanked

The year would not have been a success without the work and support of many individuals. Thanks to all the members of the public who viewed the Stanhope School exhibit during the two-and-a-half-month run at the Schuylkill County Historical Society in Pottsville. And, thanks to all who attended our three educational programs held at the schoolhouse, the five museum openings, and three private events.

Thank you to everyone who supported the project financially through the Schuylkill Gives event, those who gave privately, and to those responsible for grants from the Snayberger Memorial Foundation, Schuylkill Area Community Foundation, and the Bustelo Family Foundation.

Stanhope volunteers – Terry Winters, Erin Reynolds, Linda Mills, Jane Kruse, Lauren Versailles, Jean Waitkaitis, Sandy Kemmerling, John Ziegler, Michael Moyer, Josh Krammes, and Kevin Derfler – thank you!

What's in store for 2025?

The Stanhope Schoolhouse display will be at the Schuylkill County History Fair at the Fairlane Village Mall on Saturday, Feb. 8.

The schoolhouse “season” begins May 1. Go to www.PGHS-StanhopeSchool.org to schedule a private event for your group of ten or more people.

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FOREIGN & DOMESTIC REPAIRS

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.

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Pine Grove Borough: One Snyder Avenue, Pine Grove

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**2024 Remaining
Holiday Schedule**

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

- Thursday - November 28th
- Friday - November 29th | Thanksgiving
- Tuesday (Half Day) - December 24th
- Wednesday - December 25th | Christmas
- Wednesday - January 1st, 2025 | 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.*