

THE BOROUGH OF SPRINGDALE

Incorporated Oct. 17, 1906

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

There has been a significant amount of discussion on social media regarding an incident that occurred at the April business meeting of Springdale Borough Council which led to the arrest of a resident of the Borough who had been providing public comment to Council. Because much of this discussion is from anonymous individuals or individuals with no nexus to Springdale Borough and offers false narratives, Mayor and Council believe it is important to the members of the Community to understand fully what occurred.

First and foremost, the public comment section of the agenda is an essential part of our local government meetings. It is so essential, that Council offers two separate occasions to offer public comment, first at the beginning of the meeting on agenda items, then at the end of the meeting on matters of general concern. Springdale Borough has a policy on its public comment periods and limits the time for each speaker to three minutes for each comment period.

Providing time limits serve various purposes. For instance, they help to maintain efficiency and productivity by ensuring that meetings stay focused on the agenda, allowing Council to complete their required tasks and monthly municipal business. Time limits keep meetings orderly and prevent disruption from excessively long or repetitive comments. They prevent a single person from monopolizing discussion time, ensuring that all residents and taxpayers have an equal chance to be heard. The Office of Open Records has confirmed that three minutes per speaker is a common public comment time limit in municipal government. When a member or representative of Council interrupts a speaker to respond, that speaker's time is paused while the Council member or representative is speaking to ensure the speaker received the full three minutes allotted.

Until this past Tuesday, there has never been an occasion when police physical intervention became necessary to ensure that the public comment policy was being followed and to maintain the efficiency of the meeting. The April business meeting was like any typical Council meeting, until the final public comment period. At this

time, a resident commenced addressing Council and when his three minutes were up, he was advised by the President of Council that his time was up and that he needed to take his seat so that other members of the public who wished to do so could address Council.

Instead of complying with the directive of the President of Council, the resident continued speaking in a louder voice and after several attempts by Council during which the resident's voice got louder and louder, the resident was informed that if he did not comply, he would be removed from the meeting.

The resident again failed to comply, and two police officers walked over to him and directed him to leave the meeting. This individual has had a history with initially failing to abide with the public comment rules and has been asked to leave the meeting on an occasion previously and complied. On this occasion, the resident refused and was now screaming at Council. The Officers attempted to physically remove the resident due to his defiant conduct. Instead of complying, the resident began physically resisting the officers' attempts to remove him from the meeting and the Chief and another officer had to assist to properly restrain the resident and bring the meeting back to order.

It is very important to note that there have been documented threats made toward Springdale Elected Officials and Police Officers in recent times. The Springdale leadership does not take these threats lightly and Police Officers are present to ensure that both the elected officials and the community members who attend the meetings are safe.

It is also important to note that the video clips circulating on social media, as well as the content published in the local newspaper, capture only a limited and selective portion of the overall incident. These brief excerpts do not provide the full context, sequence of events, or the totality of circumstances encountered by council or officers at the time. When viewed in its proper context, the response reflects a professional and controlled effort to manage a dynamic situation while ensuring the safety of all individuals involved. As a result, any conclusions drawn from these partial depictions are incomplete and misleading.

Springdale Borough Mayor and Council