



1444 Hillsdale Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15216-2019  
(412) 561-8900  
FAX (412) 561-7805  
[www.boro.dormont.pa.us](http://www.boro.dormont.pa.us)

**Borough Manager** – Benjamin Estell  
**Mayor** – Jason Walsh  
**Solicitor** – Cafardi, Ferguson, Wyrick, Weis + Gabriel llc  
**Members of Council**  
**President** – Daniele Ventresca  
**Vice President** – Jen Mazzocco  
Kate Abel  
Ilene Dubin  
Brandon Ledford  
John Moore  
Alvaro Varela

**Friday, June 24, 2022**  
**For Immediate Release**  
**Contact: Benjamin Estell, Borough Manager**  
**Borough of Dormont**  
**[bestell@boro.dormont.pa.us](mailto:bestell@boro.dormont.pa.us)**

DORMONT, PA – The Borough of Dormont Council will be meeting in Special Session at 6:00 PM this evening to consider the termination of its bookkeeper, Sherri Pruce.

The Borough Administration had noted errors in the employee's work. The Borough worked with the employee's union to assist them before considering discipline. The employee was asked to take a leave of absence to address these issues before considering a return to work. After going on leave, the employee contacted Borough Administration to notify them that said employee had Borough documents in their possession at their home. These items were retrieved within a couple of hours of notification. Staff immediately began to review these documents and discovered numerous problems, including undeposited checks totaling more than \$300,000, personal purchases on Borough purchasing cards, and statements showing that the billing address for these accounts had been changed to the employee's home address. The Administration began working to remove this employee from all Borough accounts and to ensure the security of Borough finances.

The Borough of Dormont quickly identified a three-pronged approach to addressing these issues.

First, the Borough's auditing firm was contacted to request a special fraud investigation. The auditors are referring Dormont to a separate firm to avoid any potential conflict of interest due to their familiarity with the employee from years of working together. The Borough will welcome the forensic auditor and will utilize the advice of that auditor to strengthen internal controls.

Next, the Borough contacted the District Attorney's office to request an independent criminal investigation to avoid any conflict of interest with the Dormont Police Department.

Finally, the Borough contacted its insurance firm to begin the claim process for any losses due this employee's actions.

Internally, Borough Administration continued to investigate the employee's conduct and actions and found an email and other letters written by the employee using Borough of Dormont accounts that violated the Borough's Electronic Communications Systems Policy. It was also discovered that the employee had failed to complete necessary reporting to federal, state, and local agencies, as well as failing to make payments to supplementary insurance/service agencies despite deducting the funds from employee payroll. The checks had been issued and signed by Borough Council, so all systems showed payment, but the employee failed to mail these payments.

The employee and their union representative were notified of a Loudermill Hearing to ensure the employee's due process rights were protected. While the union representative attended the hearing, the employee notified the Borough less than an hour before the meeting that they would not attend. No defense was therefore provided to the Borough during the hearing.

Throughout the investigation, the employee has utilized local social media forums to post their own claims, which has led to exaggerated accounts of the potential financial impact of these incidents. While the Borough considers this a serious breach of trust by a longtime employee, internal controls helped mitigate potential damages from fraud.

Maintaining our residents' trust in their local government is of paramount importance to me, my staff, and each of our elected officials. While not all questions can be answered at this time, the Borough Administration does want to ensure taxpayers that we are working diligently to maintain current Borough operations, while securing all Borough accounts and bring all accounts/reporting that have been neglected through this period up to date.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Estell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Benjamin Estell  
Borough Manager