

**BOROUGH OF WILKINSBURG COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Planning Session**  
**January 5, 2011**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Moore called the meeting to order at approximately 7:10 PM in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, 605 Ross Ave., Wilkesburg, PA.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were: Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin and President Moore. Also present were Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager and Isobel Storch from the Law Offices of Patricia McGrail, L.L.C. Borough Solicitor. Mayor John Thompson was absent. A quorum was established.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Following the pledge of allegiance, President Moore requested a moment of silence be observed for all victims of violent crime.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**David Wilson – Eastern Area Pre-Hospital Services** – Mr. Wilson reported that there were 329 calls in December with an average response time for emergency calls of six minutes fifty nine seconds and nine minutes twenty-nine seconds for non-emergency calls. The response time for life threatening calls was six minutes twenty one seconds. For calendar year 2010, there were 3,672 calls for service in Wilkesburg. For 2010, the average response time for emergency calls was six minutes thirty eight seconds and non-emergency calls were recorded at nine minutes seventeen seconds. For 2010, the response time for life threatening calls was six minutes twenty four seconds. Last month, Eastern Area provided sixteen flu vaccines at the annual Holiday Parade. EAPHS also assisted at the St. James Food Bank and sponsored blood pressure screenings at the Wallace Ave. Soup Kitchen. President Moore questioned how Eastern Area Pre-Hospital Services is promoting the availability of flu vaccines.

**Carol Advent – Save A Lot** – As the store manager, Ms. Advent expressed her concern regarding the report of two officers per shift coverage for the police department. President Moore requested that Chief Coleman respond to Ms. Advent's concerns. Chief Coleman clarified the content of the directive which was issued regarding manning to the police department and her commitment to act in the best interests of the community. Chief Coleman clarified that the staffing is not set at 2 officers per shift. Minimum staffing is observed and discretionary assignment of mandatory overtime to achieve minimum staffing levels is practiced. Ms. Macklin expressed concern with a two officer per shift staffing level, particularly with call-offs. Chief Coleman clarified that the patrol

officers are only one component of the entire department and does not include the Special Operations Unit and detectives. Chief Coleman advised that there are never only two officers on duty on a shift. Ms. Ervin referred to directly to the memorandum that was issued to officers regarding staffing. Chief Coleman commented on the grievance which was filed by the union due to mandatory overtime. Ms. Macklin questioned who makes the decision to force overtime. Chief Coleman replied that the Lieutenant makes the schedule. Mr. Lewis commented on what he believes to be insulting questions continually raised to Chief Coleman as a police professional with thirty plus years of experience. Ms. Macklin commented that Chief Coleman was not asked to be in attendance at the meeting.

**Detective Charles Knox** – Mr. Knox commented that he has been with the Wilkinsburg Police Department for nineteen years and spoke in support of Chief Coleman's work and her attendance at Council meetings.

**Frank Greenlee** – Mr. Greenlee stated that this is his first Wilkinsburg Borough Council meeting he has attended. He commented that Council must work together in the best interests of the community and set aside personal agendas.

**Linda Law – 908 Wood St.** – Ms. Law expressed her appreciation for Chief Coleman and the Police Department. She thanked Ms. McCarthy-Johnson and those who were instrumental in ensuring Holmes St. Park was locked. She also reported that Wilkinsburg Community Ministry had served two hundred people with food baskets and toys. Finally, she stated that volunteers are needed for Meals on Wheels.

**Gail Mitchell-Hall** – Ms. Hall provided a brief report on Weed and Seed activities for the month of December. Weed & Seed hosted a Toys for Tots drive. She thanked President Moore for her work on the event. Ms. Mitchell-Hall advised that the University of Pittsburgh would like to partner with Wilkinsburg Weed & Seed on some programming for the Children's Foundation. She further reported that Nancy Chavez is Wilkinsburg's site liaison and that she is in her second year as Site Coordinator. Ms. Macklin inquired as to the time of the AID Team meeting on Monday. Finally, Ms. Mitchell-Hall reported that she will be meeting with Archie Perrin, Superintendent of Wilkinsburg School District.

### **REPORT FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

President Moore commented on looking into the future as opposed to living day to day. She stated that the Committees of Council are working on behalf of the Borough as a whole and the current Committee assignments will remain the same for 2011. President Moore stated she was pleased that the toy drives were a success but expressed her disappointment that there had been divisiveness which resulted in two events. Finally, she commented that full Council needs to work together.

### **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

#### **Capital Planning Committee – Ms. Macklin reported:**

- There was no meeting in December.
- The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 26, 2011 at 6:00 PM.

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- The Committee is seeking input from departments and Council for capital projects.

**Finance Committee – Mr. Cohn reported:**

- The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2011 at 9:30 AM. The Committee will be reviewing open issues from 2010 as well as longer range goals for 2011.
- He thanked Ms. Marcinko, Borough Manager, for leaving the Borough in a respectable financial position under very difficult circumstances.
- The Committee will continue to look for innovative ways to save money and improve efficiencies citing the contracted fire protection services with the City of Pittsburgh as one example. He thanked Ms. Marcinko for her work on that project.

**Personnel Committee – Ms. Trice reported:**

- There was no meeting in December.
- The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 12, 2011 at 6:00 PM.
- Personnel Committee meetings are not open to the public.

President Moore suggested moving the meeting to January 13 as she is unable to attend on January 12. Ms. Evans stated that she could not attend on January 13. Mr. Lewis commented that the meeting dates are set and should not be changed because one member is unable to attend.

**Public Safety Committee – Mr. Lefebvre reported:**

- Chief Coleman attended the last meeting of the Committee and clarified the minimum manning issues.
- The Committee discussed snow removal plans and operations.
- DPW will continue to pick up recycling for properties with six plus units.
- The next meeting will be held on January 19, 2011 at 5:30 PM.

Ms. Macklin questioned whether a fee will be charged for recyclable collection for six plus units. Ms. Marcinko commented that the Finance Committee should take a look at the costs in providing this service and make a recommendation to Council.

President Moore suggested that the Borough clarify which structures are collected by the City and which are collected by Waste Management. Ms. Marcinko advised that she spoke with representatives from the City and they confirmed that they will continue to perform collection for all structures they have collected from in the past.

**REPORT FROM BOROUGH MANAGER**

Ms. Marcinko reported that she has received an application from the Wilkesburg Ministerial Alliance to hold the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day march to be held on January 17, 2011.

A motion was made by Ms. Macklin, second by Ms. Trice to authorize the Wilkesburg Ministerial Alliance to sponsor the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day march on January 17, 2011.

**Yes:** Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, President Moore.

**Motion carried**

A motion was made by Ms. Macklin, second by Mr. Cohn, to sponsor two banners for the Wilkesburg Baseball Association at Penn Avenue and Hay Street and Penn Avenue and Swissvale Avenue to advertise the Association's baseball registration period.

**Yes:** Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, President Moore

**Motion carried**

**OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Macklin reminded Council of a petition received from residents of and around Marlboro Ave. to explore various options to slow down speeding motorists. Ms. Macklin advised that she is seeking Council's support of a resolution for the next Council meeting to authorize the expenditure of funds to install rumble strips in the pavement. She further commented that a larger "One-Way" sign is needed at Marlboro Ave. and Princeton Boulevard. Mr. Cohn inquired as to which line item in the budget would be charged. Ms. Macklin responded that the Capital Improvement Fund would be charged. Mr. Cohn expressed concern with establishing a precedent in responding to similar requests in the future. Ms. Macklin commented that the accident occurrences in this area warrants action to slow traffic as well as the fact that children play in the street. Mr. Cohn commented on the need for specific criteria to evaluate these types of requests in order to make a reasoned decision. Ms. Ervin suggested that the criterion should be safety. Mr. Lefebvre questioned the number of accidents that have occurred in this area. Chief Coleman inquired as to why the Police Department was not consulted. Ms. Marcinko responded that the original request had been to establish a stop intersection and that the Borough Engineer is required to conduct a traffic study in order to do so. Ms. Evans concurred with the comments made by Mr. Cohn and commented that these requests should be reviewed by all Borough departments. Chief Coleman commented that it is a safety hazard for children to play in the street and that parents' could be held responsible

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for endangering the welfare of a child/children. President Moore commented on the need to review signage in the Borough. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson concurred with the comments made by Mr. Cohn and Ms. Evans for a standardized procedure to review these requests. Mr. Lewis questioned why a stop intersection could not be established at this intersection. Ms. Marcinko responded that the intersection must meet certain design standards established by PA DOT.

Ms. Evans requested that inoperable decorative light poles on Wood St. be addressed this year.

President Moore requested that Mr. Lefebvre and she review street lighting needs in the Borough. Ms. Trice questioned the status of the request for street lighting in the 1500 block of Swissvale Ave. Ms. Marcinko advised that the request had been sent to Duquesne Light Company.

President Moore questioned the status of the disposition of vehicles in the underground parking garage. Ms. Marcinko advised that Mr. Focareta was handling that matter and she will obtain an update from him. Ms. Marcinko reported that an inventory had been prepared by the Police Department and vehicle titles were being obtained.

A motion was made by Mr. Lefebvre to remove from the table the motion to reappoint Councilman Carl Lewis to the Board of Directors for the Wilkinsburg Penn Joint Water Authority for discussion.

A motion was made by Ms. Macklin, second by Mr. Lefebvre, to approve Resolution 10-130 reappointing Carl Lewis to the Wilkinsburg Penn Joint Water Authority Board of Directors for a six-year term commencing on February 1, 2011 and continuing through January 31, 2017.

**Yes:** Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, President Moore

**No:** Mr. Cohn

**Motion carried 8:1**

Ms. Evans commented on a meeting scheduled with PA DOT officials to review the punch list for the Signal Enhancement Project.

Beverly McCoy, resident, commented on faded signs on Ardmore Boulevard and suggested that this issue could be brought to PA DOT's attention.

**NEW BUSINESS**

With regard to the request of the Chamber of Commerce for office space rental in the municipal building, Ms. Marcinko advised that the action of Council had been to direct

the Borough Solicitor to prepare a draft lease agreement to be presented to the Chamber of Commerce for review and that, concurrently, consideration be given to the development of a policy or procedure for these requests. Mr. Lewis questioned where the policy was for reviewing these requests. Ms. Marcinko clarified that the direction of Council had been to have a draft lease agreement prepared and the request to prepare a review policy was made by Mr. Lewis.

Following significant discussion, it was the consensus of Council to review the Space Allocation Study and take this matter up again at a future meeting. Ms. Macklin commented that Council should be careful in this decision and future capital needs should also be considered, such as improvements to the Police Department.

Ms. Evans reminded Council of the discussion at a previous meeting and that other municipalities do lease space in their buildings to other entities. She requested that Council make a decision as soon as possible.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Natural Gas Drilling – Marcellus Shale**

Ms. Marcinko advised Council that Ms. Terry Suppowitz could not be in attendance at this meeting and requested support to return with an expert to address Council at a later date.

Ms. Macklin commented that this topic is on the agenda of the Planning Commission. Drilling operations will be reviewed as part of the Zoning Ordinance update for which the Borough has sought funding for through a Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program grant from the Department of Economic Development.

Mr. Cohn commented on the request to support the legislation adopted by the City of Pittsburgh to ban natural gas drilling in the City. Mr. Cohn suggested that it may be advisable to seek an organization that would be able to assist the Borough with the defense of any legislation which the Borough may enact. Ms. Evans commented that there is an agency which has specific expertise regarding the impact of drilling operations on source water.

Mr. Cohn questioned the efforts of Wilkinsburg Penn Joint Water Authority to monitor the impacts on its source water. Mr. Lewis advised that he will have a report for Council at the next meeting.

#### **Adult Library Report**

##### **Council President Moore reported:**

- Volunteers are needed to help with tax preparation for residents. Those interested are asked to contact the library at 412-244-2940 or contact Betsey Swartz at 412-244-4377.

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Ms. Evans offered to reach out to Leadership Pittsburgh participants to solicit assistance.

President Moore inquired as to Council's interest in holding an additional meeting each month to ensure that information is being distributed to and received by full Council.

Ms. Ervin questioned who would be providing the information in the meetings and President Moore responded that it would be Council members and the Borough Manager.

Ms. Storch commented on recent email exchanges wherein other persons were included beyond Council members. She cautioned against this and advised that discussions should take place at Borough Council meetings and requested Council members cease Council business email exchanges with members of the public.

Ms. Macklin commented that she would support an additional meeting each month.

Ms. Evans commented on the thoroughness of the report from the Borough Manager in providing information to Council. She disagrees that information is not being fully disseminated and commented that if she has a question or needs information, she asks the Borough Manager for same. She cautioned that decision-making via email may be a violation of the Sunshine Law. Ms. Ervin questioned the appropriateness of sending questions to the Borough Manager via email. Ms. Storch clarified that she was speaking about refraining from dialogue with full Council that could result in a decision being made. Questions and answers are not discouraged via email.

Mr. Lewis commented that the request to "reply to all" on questions on the bill list came from the Finance Committee Chairperson and commented that email messages are subject to the Right to Know Act.

Mr. Cohn commented that there is an apparent lack of trust of all Borough officials. He further commented on the change to the process for approval of the bill list which was necessitated by the fact that payments were being held up unreasonably to vendors. He also commented on the long-standing history of micromanagement in the Borough.

Ms. Macklin commented that there may be a need for an additional meeting each month until such time as all new policies and procedures are put into place. Ms. Macklin expressed concern regarding the roles of the WCDC and the Borough. Ms. Macklin learned from the Chairperson of the Planning Commission that he had met with the County and understood that an application for demolition monies for the Penn-Lincoln Hotel and 800 block of Penn Ave. had been made. Ms. Macklin stated that she was unaware of this as was Mr. Lefebvre who is also a member of the Planning Commission. Ms. Macklin commented that this issue demonstrates why she is in support of an additional monthly meeting.

Mr. Lefebvre stated he does not support an additional meeting as he believes he is being provided sufficient information.

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Ms. McCarthy-Johnson concurred with Mr. Lefebvre and stated that she believes more than enough information is provided to Council and she has always had timely responses to requests for information from the Borough Manager.

Mr. Lewis commented that on occasion he believes that sufficient information is not provided to full Council. He commented that sometimes information is not provided in a timely fashion but that can be conquered without the need for another monthly meeting.

Mr. Cohn concurred with Mr. Lewis and believes that issues may be resolved without the need for an additional monthly meeting.

Ms. Ervin stated she believes she needs to be better informed and would not be opposed to an additional monthly meeting.

Ms. Evans commented that there appears to be two different issues regarding the dissemination of information. Ms. Evans responded to the comments relating to monies for demolition for the Penn Lincoln Hotel and the 800 block of Penn Ave and advised that a formal application had not been filed with the County, nor had anything been done requiring the action of Council.

Ms. Ervin left the meeting at 9:42 PM.

Ms. Evans commented that she would support meetings for a strategic planning process to establish legislative goals for Council.

It was the consensus of Council members not to add an additional meeting at this time.

Ms. Marcinko requested that Council communicate to her when they believe that they have not received information that they should have from the Manager's Office.

Ms. Storch commented that there is no need to include Pat McGrail and her on email exchanges unless a legal opinion is sought and that request would come through Ms. Marcinko or Council President Moore.

Chief Coleman questioned status of requisitions. The requisition process was discussed.

Council President Moore announced that the discussion regarding use of special labor counsel would be held at the next Legislative Session.

Being no further business, on motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Mr. Cohn, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:52 PM.

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Eugenia Moore, Council President