

WILKINSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
Legislative Session
September 21, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

President Moore called the meeting to order at approximately 7:08 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. Council members present were: Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin and President Moore. Also present were Mayor John Thompson, Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager and Matt Racunas, Esquire, from the Law Offices of Patricia McGrail, L.L.C., and Borough Solicitor. Ms. Trice was absent. A quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the pledge of allegiance, President Moore requested the audience remain standing to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of victims of violent crime in and around the Wilkesburg Borough community.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Justin Emerick – 407 Todd St. – Expressed his desire to address Council regarding concerns relating to the condition of the vacant property at 613 Whitney. He commented on the historic value of the property and that pieces of structural value were being removed from the property apparently at the instruction of the property owner. Mr. Emerick would like to see the property protected from being further stripped of items of value. Matt Racunas responded as to options available to the Borough. Mr. Cohn questioned whether the police department can prevent the removal of items from property. Mr. Racunas advised that if the owner provides authorization, items can be removed. Ms. Macklin questioned how liens on the property could be affected when items of value are removed which further reduces the value of the property. Mr. Racunas advised that this would not provide the Borough any further recourse and that the owner still has legal title to the property. If a party or parties are not authorized to remove items from the property, that would constitute a criminal act. There is also a possibility to handle any nuisances caused through the Code Enforcement Department. Ms. Evans commented that new enabling legislation may allow the Borough to lien the property owner's personal assets. Additionally, the new conservatorship legislation may provide a tool to assist in preventing this from happening with similar cases in the future. Mr. Lefebvre questioned who would initiate the action against the property owner's personal assets. Mr. Racunas advised that would be Ms. McGrail's office.

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

Ordinance No. 2875

Approving the issuance of debt.

Moved: Ms. Macklin

Seconded by: Ms. Evans

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

Motion carried

Ordinance No. 2876

Removing Handicap Parking Space – 1607 Clark Street

Moved: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson

Seconded by: Mr. Lefebvre

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

Motion carried

Ordinance No. 2877

Establishing a Handicap Parking Space – 7311 Beacon Hill Drive

Moved: Mr. Cohn

Seconded by: Ms. Macklin

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

Motion carried

Ms. Evans requested to take a moment to briefly explain the issuance of debt.

Mr. Mike McCaig of PNC Capital Markets distributed a two-page packet for Council to follow along with his presentation regarding the bond issue. Mr. McCaig commented that much work has been done by the Finance Committee, administrative staff and bond counsel over the past several months in preparation for this issuance. He commented that the 10-year US Treasury note is at the lowest interest rate level since 1953. The Borough held its bond sale today at a great time. Ms. McCaig commented that the Borough obtained a bond rating directly from Standard & Poors for the first time with this issuance. Standard & Poors issued an A rating of stable which reflects an excellent rating, as well as is a good reflection on the financial standing of the Borough/ He further commented that the rating is a very positive reflection of what is happening in the

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Borough and also resulted in a better interest rate. Mr. McCaig advised that the current bond issue will provide for the refunding of the prior issue which will result in a net savings of \$158,000, will provide \$3 million par for capital improvements, and will fund the pension obligation for current retirees under the Firefighters Pension Plan. The interest rate for the tax-exempt series is 3.21% and 4.85% for the taxable pension bond series. Ms. Macklin commented that the Finance Committee carefully evaluated the affordability of the debt issuance and resulting increases to annual debt service. The Borough Manager and Finance Director have advised that the increased annual debt service can be absorbed without a real estate tax increase over the next five years. Ms. Macklin commented that the increased debt service payments will be covered by the operational costs savings experienced as a result of contracting fire protection services with the City of Pittsburgh. Mr. Cohn thanked everyone for their work, particularly staff, and expressed his appreciation for the creativity demonstrated by PNC Capital Markets with the hybrid plan which was proposed for a 17-year issue. Mr. Cohn further commented that the City of Pittsburgh avoided a State take-over of their pension plans which will result in a significant credit for the Borough in 2012 against annual costs for contracted fire protection services. President Moore thanked everyone involved on behalf of Council.

RESOLUTIONS

11-080

Approving the Borough Council Meeting minutes of July 6, July 20 and August 3, 2011.

Moved: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson

Seconded by: Mr. Lewis

Yes: Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin.
Mr. Lefebvre (abstain from vote to approve July 6, 2011 Minutes), President Moore

Motion carried

11-081

Approving the July Checks Issued in the amounts as follows:

Regular Distributions 07/01/11 – 07/31/11	\$ 887,331.93
Payroll Disbursements	\$ 264,856.99
Voided Checks	<u>\$ 3,300.00</u>
Total	\$1,148,888.92

Moved: Mr. Cohn

Seconded by: Mr. Lefebvre

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Yes: Mr. Cohn, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Evans, President Moore

No: Mr. Lewis, Ms. Macklin, Ms. Ervin

Motion carried 5:3

11-082

Approving the August Checks Issued in the amounts as follows:

Regular Distributions 08/01/11 – 08/31/11	\$ 683,078.29
Payroll Disbursements	\$ 227,910.27
Voided Checks	\$ <u>-0-</u>
Total	\$ 910,988.56

Moved: Mr. Cohn

Seconded by: Mr. Lefebvre

Yes: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Mr. Cohn, Ms. Evans, Mr. Lefebvre, President Moore

No: Mr. Lewis, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Macklin

Motion carried 5:3

11-083

A Resolution approving the procedures for compliance with the procurement of professional services pursuant to the provisions of Act 44 of 2009.

Moved: Mr. Lewis

Seconded by: Ms. Evans

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

Motion carried

11-084

A Resolution of the Borough of Wilkinsburg ratifying the filing of an application for funds with the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County (RAAC) for demolition.

Moved: Mr. Cohn

Seconded by: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson

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Ms. Macklin commented that the property at 1437 Woodlawn Street has been damaged by fire with a hole in the roof which threatens adjacent property. She requested that this property be prioritized as #1, highest priority for demolition.

Ms. Evans commented that several properties appear on multiple demolition lists.

Mr. Cohn stated his objection to the proposed demolition of 831 Rebecca Avenue as the structure is sound, albeit in bad condition. Mr. Cohn requested to amend the motion to remove 831 Rebecca Avenue from the demolition list.

Council agreed to the amended motion relating to 1437 Woodlawn and 831 Rebecca.

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

Motion carried

11-085

Authorizing extending an offer of employment to Daniel White for the position of full-time patrol officer in the Wilkinsburg Police Department contingent upon the successful completion of a physical examination to include drug and alcohol screen and a psychological examination. Mr. White will be compensated in accordance with the Collective bargaining Agreement between the Borough of Wilkinsburg and the Teamsters Local 205.

Ms. Macklin questioned whether the candidates are residents of the Borough of Wilkinsburg. Ms. Marcinko responded that neither are currently residents but that the Collective Bargaining Agreement requires that they establish residency within one year of hire.

Moved: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson

Seconded by: Mr. Cohn

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

Motion carried

11-086

Authorizing extending an offer of employment to Matthew Benick for the position of full-time Patrol Officer in the Wilkinsburg Police Department contingent upon the successful completion of a physical examination to include drug and alcohol screen and a psychological examination. Mr. Benick will be compensated in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Borough of Wilkinsburg and the Teamsters Local 205.

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Moved: Mr. Lewis

Seconded by: Mr. Cohn

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

Motion carried

Ms. Macklin questioned whether two or three officers are being hired. Ms. Marcinko advised that only two full-time positions were budgeted. The officers should be on patrol in approximately four to six weeks.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Macklin commented that the July and August minutes were posted on the website prior to being approved by Council. Ms. Macklin also questioned why the service locator feature was removed. Mr. Cohn commented that he could not recall the specific issue with that feature but would like to see that it is operational again. Ms. Macklin said that it was imperative that the service locator button is reconnected so that residents can “look up” by their address their voting poll location. This is critical. The National and Pennsylvanian efforts afoot to suppress the vote by instituting stringent voter identification requirements impacts Wilkinsburg’s minority and senior voters. Council cannot appear to be a party in suppressing the vote. We need the service locator reconnected as soon as possible before November 8th Election Day. Ms. Marcinko will look into these matters.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson announced the MAD DAD’s Harvest Festival and tours of the community gardens.

Mayor John Thompson announced that the Sanctuary Project is sponsoring a youth participant clean up October 1, 2011. Mayor Thompson commented on the need for support from DPW with this project.

President Moore announced a free clinic sponsored by the Muslim Community and Council in Braddock at the Braddock Municipal Building on Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM.

President Moore announced that the Library is participating in the Pittsburgh Foundation Day of Giving on October 4, 2011. There is a minimum donation of \$25.00 with a match for donations received via the website at www.pittsburggive.org with Visa and MasterCard. Please give to your local library.

The Children’s Library Programming for the Month of October includes Movie Night on Monday at 6:00 PM at the main library in the Children’s Department and a celebration of Grandparent’s Day with a special story time beginning at 1:00 PM on Saturday

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September 24, 2011. Every Tuesday at 11:00 AM the pre-school story-time is held at the main library. On Wednesday at 11:00 AM, Story Hour for children age three years plus is held at the Eastridge branch. On Friday, October 28 at 11:00 AM, the Eastridge branch will hold favorite character story time. Please contact the library for more information.

A meeting at the Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments and the Future of Local Government Impact for the 2012 Municipal Budget Meeting will be held on Wednesday September 28, 2011 at the Monroeville Municipal Chambers, 2700 Monroeville Blvd., with hors d'oeuvres being served at 5:30.

Ms. Evans attended a meeting at Forbes Regional Hospital with Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and West Penn Hospital. The meeting was hosted by the Turtle Creek Valley COG.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, on motion by Mr. Lewis, second by Ms. Ervin, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 PM.

Eugenia Moore, Council President