

WILKINSBURG BOROUGH
Council Work Session
November 20, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

President Cohn called the meeting to order at approximately 6:35 PM in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal building, 605 Ross Ave., Wilkinsburg, PA.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were Mr. Lefebvre (via remote connection), Ms. Trice, Ms. Moore, Ms. Goodman, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson Ms. Macklin, and President Cohn. Mayor John Thompson and Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager was also present. Ms. Ervin and Ms. Evans were absent. A quorum was established.

President Cohn informed Council Ms. Evans is not feeling well.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the pledge of allegiance, a moment of silence was observed to remember victims of violent crime.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kate Luxemburg – 432 Rebecca Ave. – Ms. Luxemburg questioned if there are liens on the property at 710 Swissvale Avenue or if there are non-tax encumbrances which makes a difference to her in relationship to tax compromise process. The legislative basis for tax compromise is when there are tax liens and other liens standing in the way of productive use the other liens must be settled before the tax liens. In 2006 the Borough owned the property. Ms. Marcinko responded the Municipal Authority performed a title search report. She could not speak of other non-tax encumbrances found from the search. Ms. Marcinko further explained Ms. Luxemburg's correctness in believing the tax compromise process only applies to the Borough and school district tax encumbrances and does not cover any other non tax. The responsibility in the tax compromise process is with the applicant for any other liens. Ms. Luxemburg commented that any other encumbrances should be cleared before the tax compromise application process. She asked if there is a prospective buyer for the property with the answer being yes.

President Cohn recognized and welcomed Jason Wideman former Junior Councilperson. Ms. Macklin commented Mr. Wideman is working for the Hillman Center Library and asked if he is interested in serving on the Library Board in Wilkinsburg with his response being yes. There are two vacancies on the Library Board at this time.

Ms. Trice asked what type of business is interested in the purchase of 710 Swissvale Avenue. The response from Ms. Marcinko and President Cohn is they are not sure. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson responded the prospective buyer is a for profit business. Ms. Macklin commented a prospective buyer of a property on the corner of Franklin and Swissvale Avenues was present at a Planning Commission Meeting and was not sure about the type of business and remembers a construction company. Proposed use was not permitted in the recently revised Zoning Ordinance.

PUBLIC SAFETY

1. Discussion – 2014 Budget

President Cohn introduced Wilkinsburg Police Chief Coleman, for the purpose of discussing budget concerns. Chief Coleman informed Council about a report of a fifteen year old teenager and seven year old child missing. The fifteen year old has not taken her medications. Chief Coleman distributed a year-to-date crime statistics report from the Wilkinsburg Police Department. She provided an overview of the report explaining total crimes and most major crimes are down from 2012. Police Chief Coleman explained strategies used for directed patrols provided by the Wilkinsburg Police Department and explained more proactive patrolling would assist with effective law enforcement. She provided a report of the number of parking citations issued by the Parking Enforcement Department compared to the 2012 report. Ms. Macklin asked about the lack of School Crossing Guards at Kelly and Rebecca Avenues and the need for replacement. President Cohn questioned the relationship with the Wilkinsburg School District. Chief Coleman responded a Public Safety Committee has been implemented within the school district. State legislators, Chief Coleman and non-profit agencies meet with the school superintendent to work on a lack of reporting by the district to the Police Department. Wilkinsburg Police Department has been working with Student Council for reporting to the Police Department and has been noticing improvements. A weekly meeting with the school district has also improved communications. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson commented on police presence of outside agencies she has observed. Chief Coleman commented on Peoples Natural Gas special detail and will have a comprehensive report at the next meeting. Ms. Marcinko commented about the quick response by the gas company in paying for the police detail a day after cost figures were presented to them by the Borough. The gas company thanked the Borough by providing pizza to Borough departments. President Cohn asked about a bust Officer Minton was involved with. Chief Coleman reported about the Justice Department having met with the Police Department and the receipt of a lot of resources and pro-rated share of seizure monies based upon the number of officers the Borough has involved. Chief Coleman and Ms. Macklin questioned various strategies for use to de-stigmatize perceptions of Wilkinsburg to correct misrepresentations made by the media. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson suggested that leadership needs to make every effort to taut the positive changes occurring in the community.

President Cohn commented his main question was about furniture and asked if there were other resources. Chief Coleman explained not necessarily an option and has scaled back as much as possible. Many purchases especially large purchases have been made using grant monies. Chief Coleman expressed morale is picking up due to changes made to the physical plant in the department. Ms. Macklin inquired about expiration date of the COPs Grant and wanted to know

about budget provisions. Ms. Marcinko talked about importance of the physical plant and the impact for employees and residents. Ms. Marcinko talked about the walk through of the Municipal Building by her and Cindy Bahn, Administrative Assistant. She commented about the need for painting and not being able to recall when the last time the interior of the building has been painted. Ms. Marcinko talked about the handicap accessible button for entrance to the building moved to the inside of the building for the concrete work. Placement will be at a different location outside of the building and she will contact the Borough Engineer for installation by the end of the week.

Chief Coleman talked about leasing of a Parking Authority vehicle. Ms. Marcinko believed parking enforcement officers were using another vehicle belonging to the Police Department. that was having lights and sirens removed. Chief Coleman explained parking enforcement have never had a new car. Ms. Marcinko introduced Ms. Bahn who has been working on fleet inventory and removing vehicles from the insurance policy. She has identified about fifteen vehicles that needed taken off of the insurance. Ms. Bahn informed Council about an Impala that is available after several thousand dollars in work has been done. The conversation with Tom Culgan gave her the impression the vehicle can be used by parking enforcement officers because they tend to scrape and wreck vehicles. The vehicle needs two new tires and inspected. Chief Coleman believes the vehicle can be used as a pool car. Ms. Macklin and Ms. Moore agreed with lease purchase of a new vehicle for the Parking Enforcement Department.

Chief Coleman talked about the Police Department has been operating under budget and about revenues brought in. Ms. Moore questioned how the department is being kept operating under budget. Chief Coleman responded by talking about department understaffing, assignments of officers, and streamlining court appearances by officers that are not needed for testimony. The department has been very effective with its current operations.

Ms. Macklin asked about the lack of expense for the cost of ammunition in the Police Financial Statement for October. It was explained by Ms. Marcinko the purchase had not been made until November. Ms. Macklin referred to page four of the document distributed by Chief Coleman. Chief Coleman informed Council she emailed Council Police Department goals and objectives.

CAPITAL PLANNING

1. Discussion – Traffic Circulation Study.

President Cohn asked for the consensus of Council to discuss the Traffic Circulation Study at the next meeting due to Ms. Evans' absence. Ms. Macklin commented that in discussing this before she asked if something can be included about stop and shop. She noticed there aren't any changes and asked incorporation with the study.

President Cohn questioned Council about items for discussion that are non-personnel related. Ms. Macklin expressed her disappointment about the lack of a tape for last week's meeting because she had a lot of questions related to the budget. Mr. Lefebvre commented his questions related to the budget have been answered. Ms. Macklin has concerns that are personnel related and concerns the Finance Department and the Library.

Mayor John Thompson announced a brunch to be held at the Bible Church the newest church in Wilkinsburg on November 23, 2013 from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. He suggested Council stop by. The address is 809 Center Street. The Holiday Parade will be held on December 14, 2013 and starts at 11:00 a.m. A winter concert will be held at Wilkinsburg High School following the parade at the cafeteria.

President Cohn announced that on Tuesday, November 26, 2013 from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. the 49th Annual Community Give Thanks Breakfast sponsored by the Greater Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce will be held at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf 300 E. Swissvale Avenue. Tickets are \$7.50 per person. Guest speaker this year will be Honorable Judge Kim Berkley-Clark of the Court of Common Pleas who is a graduate of Wilkinsburg High School.

Ms. Marcinko asked for the consensus of Council to add a vehicle lease purchase for use by Parking Enforcement.

Ms. Macklin announced an open forum discussion about the Affordable Care Act on November 21, 2013 at the YWCA in Homewood, Frankstown Avenue from 6:30-9:00 p.m.

President Cohn announced a meeting will be held December 9, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers about the Wilkinsburg Penn-Joint Water Authority rate increase.

Council recessed into Executive Session for discussion. No action is expected to be taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, on motion by Ms. Goodman second by Ms. McCarthy-Johnson the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:39 p.m.

Jason Cohn, President