

WILKINSBURG BOROUGH
Planning Session
April 10, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President McCarthy-Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 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. Evans, Ms. Trice, Ms. Moore, Ms. Goodman, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson and Ms. Macklin. Mayor John Thompson, Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager and Michael Witherel were also present. Ms. Ervin and President Cohn were absent. A quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Wilbert Wright – 1315 Clark St. – Welcomed the guest from Charlotte, South Carolina. He thanked Council for the EBT system being up in Pennsylvania for people to buy food. He asked to speak to Chief Coleman after the meeting.

Menwhe Redd – 1524 Center St. – Addressed Council regarding a problem she has with two trees on her property which are lifting the sidewalk. She requested that someone inspect the trees and believes they need to be removed.

Chief Ophelia Coleman informed Council that Detectives Rourke and Knox were awarded the Officers of the Year Award for bravery by the Teamsters. They won a trip to Washington D.C and will be recognized during Police Memorial Week.

Mayor John Thompson introduced Ms. Estina Baker, Regional Director for Mayors Against Illegal Guns. Ms. Baker will be addressing Council regarding a press conference to be held in Council Chambers on Saturday, April 13, 2013 at 3:00 p.m. Ms. Baker provided Council some background information and informed Council that she will be in the area for six months. Ms. Baker commented on the need to take the conversation to the population in outlying suburbs in addition to inner city communities. Mayor Thompson commented that other mayors in the area have signed on to the initiative and will be attending the press conference.

AGENDA ITEMS

- 1. Approving Council Meeting Minutes of 3/6, 3/13, and 3/20/13.**

Moved: Ms. Macklin

Second: Mr. Lefebvre

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

- 2. Approving March Checks Issued in the amounts as follows:**

Regular Disbursements 03-01 – 03-31-2013	\$ 456,806.38
Payroll Disbursements	279,998.01
Voided Checks	<u>(522.00)</u>
Total Disbursements	\$ 736,282.39

Moved: Ms. Evans

Second: Mr. Lefebvre

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

No: Ms. Macklin, Ms. Trice,

Motion carried 5:2

- 3. Approving Resolution No. 13-034 – Approving VPRP Application – 789 Penn Avenue.**

Moved: Ms. Evans

Second: Mr. Lefebvre

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Macklin commented on the Wilkesburg School District's practice of reviewing and recommending properties for sheriff's sale. She stated that she plans to put forward a resolution which will require that the review and approval go before Council. She also inquired as to the reason more properties are not taken to sheriff's sale.

President Cohn arrived at approximately 7:16 p.m. due to a work commitment.

Ms. Marcinko recalled this matter being brought up some time ago and, since that time, there have been no properties suggested to the Borough for sheriff's sale by Portnoff Law Associates. Ms. Evans commented on the process in general and that this matter has been the subject of discussion at prior tax committee meetings. Discussion on other strategies to move properties to productive status have also taken place. Ms. Evans suggested designating someone to work with the school district and the Borough in identifying properties for disposal and reuse and not

necessarily Portnoff Law Associates. She commented that the goal of Portnoff Law Associates is revenue collection, not necessarily reuse. Ms. Macklin suggested an ad hoc committee. Ms. Moore asked about the status of the tax committee and whether there had been any discussions on these types of strategies. President Cohn stated that there was discussion at the last meeting on the need to develop better and more effective strategies to deal with vacant and blighted property. He commented that the tax committee should be the starting point for those communications. He stated that the Committee moved two applications forward for tax exemption and one for tax compromise at their last meeting. There is one application for tax exemption pending for the next meeting. The Committee meets the fourth Monday of the month at 5:30 p.m. Ms. Trice requested that minutes of those meetings be provided to Council.

Ms. Moore commented on dumping of televisions and furniture on Douglas Drive, Maple Street and in the central part of Wilkinsburg. Ms. Macklin also noted an increase in dumping of electronic items and believes this will continue to be an issue since these items can no longer be disposed of in a landfill. Ms. Marcinko informed Council of County-sponsored programs for collections of such items and that the information is posted in the lobby of the municipal building.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Moore announced to Council that on Tuesday April 16, 2013, 11:00 a.m., the Wilkinsburg Public Library is sponsoring a program to discuss aging and memory loss. For more information please call 412 244-2940. Betsey Swartz and Susan Holmes attended a program on March 26 which was led by the PA State Librarians on the PA Library Code changes. Bob Metz joined the Library staff on April 1, 2013 as an Adult Assistant Services Librarian. He works at the main library and the Eastridge Branch. The Wilkinsburg Public Library Annual Report was submitted to the ACLA office on time.

Ms. Macklin requested an executive session to discuss litigation and personnel issues.

President Cohn announced that on April 22, 2013 at 9:30 a.m., Western PA Conservancy and Nine Mile Run Watershed Association will be planting the last of the five hundred trees at the Municipal Building. This will be the John Metzler memorial tree.

President Cohn asked Ms. Marcinko to explain the proposed amendments to the Civil Service Rules and Regulations. Ms. Marcinko stated that the changes must be implemented before the testing process can begin to establish a new eligibility list. If the ordinance is authorized for advertisement at this meeting, it can be adopted at the meeting on May 1.

A motion was made by Ms. Macklin, second by Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, to authorize the advertisement of Ordinance No. 2903.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

President Cohn apologized for being late and cautioned residents to remain proactive in working with the Police Department to address and overcome violence in the community. He commented

on the increase in the number of youth carrying guns. Ms. Moore reported increased gunfire in her neighborhood.

Mayor Thompson provided a report from the Police Department for the period March 6th – April 10, 2013.

Confiscated 8 weapons, 3 harassment, 5 criminal mischief, 10 drugs, 13 assaults, 8 warrants, 8 DUIs, 6 disorderly conducts, 3 disturbance fights, 5 robberies, 1 criminal trespass, 2 motor vehicle accidents, 1 fraud, 1 motor vehicle theft, and 1 domestic charge.

There were 3,052 calls for service from January 1, 2013 through April 10, 2013. No call for service at Kelly School of disruptive students.

Shots fired calls at several locations with the most calls reported about 1011 Mill Street, Ella Street, and Campbell Street.

April 10, 2013 evening patrol responded with Port Authority Police about two males who had jumped from the bus trestle onto Wood Street in an attempt to get away from an unknown male who was trying to rob them. The two young men sustained broken limbs from the jump.

April 7, 2013, a 13 year old black male in possession of his cousin's 9 millimeter shot himself in the hand. The weapon was left in his father's bedroom dresser. Criminal Investigation Division arrested four individuals and seized 156 bags of heroin, six guns and \$2,921.00 in U. S. currency.

The detectives, in addition to working cases, are also working on a daily basis performing surveillance. Detectives are also working with other agencies, FBI, U.S. Attorney's Office and the County.

April 10, 2013 an unknown black female was found lying in the street in the 300 block of South Trenton Avenue with a gunshot blast to the face. Allegheny County Detectives are handling the case. Directed patrols are being placed in that area.

Tiburon training was held at the Allegheny County 911 Center. All the command staff were present.

Rochelle Davis will conduct a demonstration of the parking ticket automated system on Wednesday, April 17, 2013.

Renovation work in the Police Department began today. DPW is assisting with the removal of furniture.

Some damage was done to the rear lens of the Chief's vehicle; a report was made and placed.

Several initiatives are ongoing with the Public Safety Forums continuing.

A meeting was held with tenants at 1208 Wood Street. Intervention is needed as related to living conditions. The apartments are infested with rats and roaches and lack heat and water at times. Tenants have contacted Sean Gramz but are reluctant to complain for fear of retaliation. Drug arrests and domestics have been made out of that facility.

Citizens' Police Academy is ongoing with five weeks until graduation.

Police Department met with the U.S. Attorney at Vintage on Highland Avenue. The next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2013 and is a combined meeting for all the Boroughs.

Sanctuary Project has scheduled a Youth Day on May 18, 2013 12-4:00 p.m. in the parking lot across from the high school. About 500 youth participated in the last youth event.

A festive celebration will be held on May 24, 2013 as part of the Community Day. Funds left over from the 125th Anniversary Celebration will be used for programs for youth over the age of 13.

Vice President McCarthy-Johnson has been working with G-Tech on how to make houses more affordable and greener with simple solutions. Some solutions are surge protectors, solar night lights, and light bulbs that can be obtained from Duquesne Light.

Mr. Lefebvre informed Council that the report provided by Mayor Thompson was emailed by Chief Coleman to Council members. Mr. Lefebvre thanked Chief Coleman for the comprehensive report.

Ms. Moore welcomed Mr. Ward back to Council meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, on motion by Mr. Lefebvre, second by Ms. Macklin the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:52 P.M.

Jason Cohn, Council President