WILKINSBURG BOROUGH
Council Work Session
June 18, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

President McCarthy-Johnson 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, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Taiani, Ms. Trice, Ms. Moore, Ms. Grannemann, Mr. Shattuck, Ms. Macklin, and President McCarthy-Johnson. Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager was also present. Mr. Lefebvre and Mayor John A. Thompson 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

None at this time.

CAPITAL PLANNING

President McCarthy-Johnson turned the meeting over to Mr. Shattuck, Chairperson of the Capital Planning Committee.

1. **Approving Resolution No. 14-052 – Awarding contract for Salt Storage Project.**

Mr. Shattuck stated that the bids received for this project were significantly higher than budget, therefore, no action is recommended at this time.

Ms. Macklin questioned the 97 locations for street sign replacement. Ms. Marcinko stated that this project will not provide for the replacement of all street name signs, only those which are missing, or in poor condition.

Ms. Marcinko stated that the scope of work for the Salt Storage Project, provided for a doubling of storage capacity. The low bid was $118,700. For a new structure which would maintain current capacity level, the low bid was $64,250. $20,000 was budgeted for the project. Ms. Marcinko recommended that the scope of work, and design, be reviewed with the Engineer, and alternatives suggested. Remaining funds in the Capital Improvement Fund will also be reviewed. Ms. Marcinko stated that the proposed facility is similar to that which is located in

Wilkins Township, Business Route 22, near McCrady Road. Mr. Taiani questioned whether the project could be completed prior to winter. Ms. Marcinko stated that effort would be made.

Mr. Taiani questioned whether the Street Sign Replacement Project includes the "welcome" sign(s). Ms. Marcinko stated that the street name sign lettering and placement are as dictated by the PA DOT Publication dealing with Traffic and Street Signs. Street name signs are to be lettered with both upper and lower case. The sign color will be green, with white lettering.

2. **Approving Resolution No. 14-052 – Awarding contract for 2014 Street Name Sign Replacement Project to Plavchak Construction in the amount of $35,010.00.**

Moved: Ms. Moore **Second:** Mr. Shattuck

Mr. Taiani questioned the qualifications of the company. Ms. Marcinko stated that the Borough Engineer, Dave Gilliland, has had experience with the company and he stated they are qualified to perform the work. Ms. Bahn stated that Mr. Gilliland had mentioned that he had good experience with this company on a similar project in Liberty Borough.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCE

1. **Monthly Financial Reports.**

Mr. Egler, Finance Director, stated the he is satisfied with the Borough's current financial status, relative to budget. He reported that real estate tax collection, the largest revenue producer, is up 14% from last year which indicates that more people are taking advantage of the discount period, which is a good sign. Earned income tax collection is up nearly 10% over prior year, which indicates that Keystone is performing well. Corrections relative to Code Enforcement department earnings are now in line. He noted a correction to Inspections for Sale, which should be $3,406 and Lien Letters should be $4,020. These corrections have been made in the financial accounting program.

Mr. Taiani questioned real estate tax refunds. Mr. Egler referred to Department 403 for current and prior year refunds.

Ms. Macklin commented on her request for the Business Privilege Tax report from Berkheimer Tax Service. She stated that she had requested that the report identify both employer location and payer address. Mr. Egler has spoken with a representative from Berkheimer and was told that there is no single report containing that information. A report is available with payer information and the associated property on which the tax is being paid, but this report does not indicate the amounts of the remittance. Mr. Egler stated the report would be available in a week.

Ms. Macklin questioned the status of Tenant Registration. Last year's collections were $31,000 and year-to-date collections for 2014 are only $3,000. Ms. Marcinko stated that the letters have

not yet been issued, due to staff transitions in the Code Enforcement Department. The mailing list has been prepared and the letters will need to be created and sent. The letters will be sent by July 1.

Ms. Macklin questioned MSF collection. Mr. Egler stated he expects revenue to equal that which was collected last year. He attributed the lag to timing of disbursements from the TCVCOG. Ms. Macklin questioned whether an analysis had been performed to ensure that costs of collection are being covered by the fee. Mr. Egler will provide a report.

Ms. Grannemann questioned the Special Detail account in the Police Department budget. Mr. Egler stated that the Chief books certain personnel expense to Special Details, which exceeds the amount which is budgeted specifically to provide contracted special details. Mr. Egler stated that the accounts will be broken down and expenses will be split out for next month's report. Ms. Marcinko explained that budget figures were based upon anticipated, specific contracted engagements where the contractor approaches the Borough for the police service. The budgeted expense and revenue match, for these accounts. This will be addressed during the budget process.

Ms. Macklin questioned the increase for worker's compensation insurance. Ms. Marcinko stated that the costs have increased dramatically. Costs are assigned to departments, based upon level of risk. Ms. Macklin commented that the decrease in healthcare costs was positive. Ms. Macklin expressed concern regarding the amount of real estate tax refunds. Ms. Marcinko stated that this amount cannot be determined, simply based upon the information received on the appeals filed. Ms. Macklin questioned the status of the current eligibility list for police officer hiring. She questioned whether a new list can be created. Ms. Marcinko stated that, in accordance with the Borough Code, the current list is valid for a one-year period and a new list cannot be created until the current list expires. The Civil Service Commission can take action to extend the current list for an additional twelve-month period.

Ms. Macklin asked about the status of an RFP for technical support to maintain the Borough computers. Ms. Marcinko commented that she did not believe the Borough's interests are best-served by an outside contractor. Discussions were held during last year's budget preparation about the benefits of having an on-staff IT support position.

Ms. Macklin questioned the increase in the Borough's water bill. Ms. Marcinko stated that there had been a leak at 716 Park Avenue and a bill was received for nearly $14,000. Ms. Marcinko negotiated a reduced bill with Wilkinsburg Penn-Joint Water Authority. They agreed to only charge the Borough for the actual costs for producing the water. This reduced the bill by approximately 50%.

Ms. Grannemann inquired as to the process for hiring an IT support person. Ms. Marcinko offered to prepare a job description and submit to Council for comment. Ms. Trice stated that she sent two requests to Council President and the Manager to invite an IT company, with whom she had spoken with at the ALOM conference, to make a presentation to Council. She stated she did not receive responses. Ms. Trice recommended performing as assessment of IT needs, before deciding whether to have support provided in-house, or by an outside vendor. President

McCarthy-Johnson's expressed concern over the down time with the server. She suggested that Seven Green could assess the Borough's IT needs and make a recommendation. Ms. Marcinko commented that Mr. Lefebvre had responded to Ms. Trice's request and recommended that staff first identify their IT needs. Council agreed to move forward with such an assessment by staff, to be provided by the end of July.

2. Discussion – Review process for Delinquent Real Estate Tax and Municipal Service Fee Collection.

Ms. Marcinko stated that the RFP for delinquent real estate tax and delinquent municipal service fee collection was issued. Five responses were received. A meeting was held with Council President, Ms. Marcinko and members of the school board on May 29, 2014. It was suggested that only mutual proposers to both the Borough's and School District's RFP be interviewed. This would exclude Portnoff Law Associates and McGrail & Racunas. There are four mutual proposers. Ms. Marcinko will have summaries of the proposals and fee comparisons to Council by June 20. The Wilkinsburg School District is interested in conducting joint interviews. A proposed date in July has been suggested for interviews. President McCarthy-Johnson commented about the importance of having the same collector as the Wilkinsburg School District. The School District must have a new contract for a tax collector by August 1, 2014. The Borough is not under the same time restrictions. A meeting with Portnoff should be held to discuss transition. Ms. Grannemann questioned whether accounts could remain with Portnoff and new accounts be assigned to a new collector. Ms. Marcinko stated that such an arrangement would require a contract extension with Portnoff until December 31, 2014. The Borough, and possibly the Wilkinsburg School District, would both owe fees and costs to Portnoff for those accounts on which they have earned fees or incurred costs for same. President McCarthy-Johnson stated that the interview committee for the Borough will be comprised of President McCarthy-Johnson, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Shattuck and Ms. Marcinko. The date for the interviews has not yet been set.

GENERAL MATTERS

1. Discussion – Redevelopment Proposal – 800 Wood Street

David Himes, representing Lisa Vavro, referred to the drawings produced by a Penn State student in 2012. Ms. Marcinko provided a general review of the proposed project and WCDC involvement for redevelopment of the lot acquired by the Borough at the corner of Wood Street and South Avenue. She is seeking a consensus of Council to move the project forward at this time.

Moved: Ms. Macklin **Second:** Ms. Moore

Mr. Himes informed Council that a public charette will be forthcoming to refine some of the designs. He commented on the need to move forward at this time, in order to make arrangements for labor before the end of summer. Ms. Evans commented on the importance of having construction drawings and that funding was received to prepare same.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

2. **Approving Resolution No. 14-054 – WCDC Application for Main Street designation.**

Moved: Ms. Macklin **Second:** Ms. Grannemann

Ms. Trice questioned why information on the application was not submitted earlier. President McCarthy-Johnson stated that the matter was not specifically requested to be placed on this agenda.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

3. Blight Abatement Project – Status Report.

Ms. Marcinko introduced the summer interns to Council and informed them about the projects they are working on this summer to review abandoned structures and identify additional vacant properties. They are also responsible for evaluating the condition of those properties to update the abandoned structures inventory. Two interns are working on an Act 90 component to identify properties that are good candidates for some other tools available through the Neighborhood Blight Reclamation and Revitalization Act. Ms. Marcinko commented about the exemplary work being performed by the summer interns. Intern Charquinta McCray reported to Council that they are 68.5% complete with the property evaluations. They are building a comprehensive database with all of the pertinent and updated information. The interns have been working with the Code Enforcement Department and DPW.

PUBLIC SAFETY

President McCarthy-Johnson reported to Council an unfortunate incident related to a drowning victim. She would like to recognize the cooperation of the police officers, lifeguards, and fire department.

Ms. Grannemann acknowledged Chief Coleman and the officers for going above and beyond the call of duty to find and arrest perpetrators involved in a rash of robberies in Ward Three. There were no injuries in the incidents.

The Children's Police Academy will begin July 7, 2014 until August 1, 2014. Applications are available at the Police Department.

Ms. Moore stated that the Adult Library Report is available on the shelf, next to the agendas, in Council Chambers. All programs are available at both the Eastridge Branch and Main Library. An Adult 2014 Summer Reading Club Program is being offered by the library.

Ms. Macklin announced that she has been re-elected as the Chairperson of the Wilkinsburg Democratic Committee. A reorganization meeting was held on Monday. Other officers are Ms. Trice, Secretary, Ms. Luxemburg, Treasurer, and Mr. Watson, Vice-President. She spoke of the importance of voting for a new governor in November.

President McCarthy-Johnson stated that there will be no meeting of Council on July 2, 2014. She announced that Art in the Park and Farmers' Market begins June 19, 2014.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:37 P.M.

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Vanessa McCarthy-Johnson
President of Council