

WILKINSBURG BOROUGH
Council Work Session
January 15, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

President McCarthy-Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 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 telephone connection), Ms. Garrett, Mr. Taiani, Ms. Trice, Ms. Moore, Mr. Shattuck, Ms. Macklin, President McCarthy-Johnson. Cindy Bahn, Administrative Assistant to the Borough Manager was also present. Mayor John A. Thompson was 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

Mike Milberger – 311 Barnes St. –Thanked veteran Borough Council members for their service to the community, and recognized newly-elected Council members and thanked them for their dedication to the community and future service. He also thanked Ms. Bahn for her professionalism. He asked about when the names of candidates for the vacant Council seat will be available to the public and if they will be available prior to the Special Council Meeting. Ms. Moore responded that letters of interest are due January 24, 2014.

FINANCE

President McCarthy-Johnson turned the meeting over to Dave Egler, Finance Director. Mr. Egler explained that Council has in their packets preliminary numbers for the General Fund for 2013. He highlighted the following Revenue items:

- Real Estate tax revenue is up but will go down because of appeals that result in refunds to property owners. The Borough will end the year in fairly good shape.
- Earned Income Tax collection has increased significantly, and delinquencies are down.
- Business Privilege Tax collections- are down again.
- The borough has not yet received the December installment of the \$6,000+ State Police payment.
- Year-end numbers are preliminary; Mr. Egler will work with the auditors over the next 2-3 months to finalize.

- PILOT (Payments in Lieu of Taxes) have been received from Dumplin Hall, Covenant Church, and Family Links. Ms. Macklin commented that Hosanna House is supposed to be paying because they have taxable income, and asked about the agreement arising out of a court case. Mr. Egler will check on this. Ms. Moore asked if letters will be sent out this year for payments in lieu of taxes. Mr. Egler responded that he thinks so.
- Mr. Taiani asked why magistrate funds are off by 50% with Mr. Egler's response that he will have to research an answer.
- There was a marked increase in code-related payments with occupancy permits up and the continued receipt of tenant registration revenues, Tax certifications are collected by Berkheimer; Mr. Egler has contacted them for an answer as to why monies have not been received. He predicts this revenue will be nearly \$10,000.
- The Tax Amnesty Program has collected about \$180,000, nearly half in the last week of 2013. The School District has collected approximately \$728,000.
- Mr. Taiani questioned demolition permits budgeted for \$2,000 with no income reflecting that amount, and the sale of recyclable material has no amount listed. Mr. Egler responded that the number is up for permits and down for recyclables.
- Ms. Macklin asked why parking meters revenues are way up. Mr. Egler responded that he is not sure why there are fluctuations.
- Mr. Egler noted that the Liquid Fuels Fund transfer is based upon a formula. Monies are used for road salt and street lighting.
- An additional \$32,900 is expected from the COPS grant.

On the expense side, Mr. Egler reported that he is pleased with department heads and their good coordination to keep expenses down, as well as the Police Department keeping overtime expenses down. He also noted:

- Legal expenditures are difficult to control.
- The expenses related to the DPW garage repairs, including the roof.
- Police Department vacation buy back (not budgeted) and the arbitration ruling. Health insurance costs are -down; due in part to the Police Department being under a different insurance plan.
- The expense for ammunition was late this year.
- "Major equipment" reflects costs for lockers and two handheld devices for parking enforcement.
- Mr. Taiani asked if there had been an increase in expenses for Police Department meetings and conferences and why the cost increased by nearly \$4,000 over last year. Mr. Egler explained monies have been transferred between two accounts and the difference is mostly due to accounting classification.
- Ms. Trice asked about animal control, line 410.358. Police Chief Coleman responded that the Borough pays to have stray dogs picked up. Raccoons, however, are the responsibility of the resident.
- Ms. Moore asked about executive salary increases. Mr. Egler reported that management staff increases are across the board, while new hires are shown at original pay.

- The cost for fire protection services is down significantly from the past. The total cost for services is \$1.6 million, paid quarterly per contract.
- The dollars budgeted for an additional Code Enforcement Officer and health insurance were not used, resulting in savings.
- The costs for demolition services were significantly over budget due in part to the Mill Street apartment building demolition.
- Ms. Macklin questioned the contracted services account; Mr. Egler responded that he will send the information by email.
- Staff salaries in Public Works were down while overtime is up a little; and vehicle maintenance is down significantly. The cost for parts is over budget but is more than offset by a significant savings for vehicle maintenance. Street lighting is very expensive, but this has been offset by liquid fuels monies.
- Ms. Macklin questioned line 455.352 “Shade Tree Contracted Services” and the payment of \$8,600 to Urban Tree Forestry Consultant. She had a copy of the invoice from Mr. Egler, but no details to explain what he was doing during hours billed. Mr. Egler will request more invoice detail in the future.
- Line 472.900 Tax Anticipation Note – there has been no loan since 2007. The Borough has not had to borrow money since Mr. Egler has been Finance Director.
- Mr. Taiani asked about line 430.730 showing lease payments on vehicles over budget by about \$20,000. Mr. Egler responded the amount reflects the emergency purchase of a leaf loader machine. The amount is included in the 2014 budget.
- Ms. Macklin asked if the general fund paid back the sewer fund. Mr. Egler responded it is being paid back over ten years, at the rate of \$17,500 per annum.

Ms. Moore asked that Mr. Egler identify the page and account number to make it easier for Council members to follow. Mr. Egler responded that the item Ms. Macklin most recently referred to was line 495.040, “Sewer Fund”.

- Library financials were handled by the Finance Department for the first time in 2013; there has been a lot of activity, but it hasn’t caused undue burden on staff.
- Some monies have come in for façade enhancement.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Adopting Ordinance No. 2924 – Establishing Handicap Parking Space – 324 South Avenue.

Moved: Ms. Macklin

Second: Ms. Moore

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

This was voted upon in error.

On motion by Mr. Taiani, second by Ms. Macklin to strike the vote to establish a Handicap Parking Space 324 South Avenue.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

1. Approving Resolution No. 14-006 – Appointing Jason Cohn to the WCIDA.

Moved: Mr. Lefebvre

Second: Mr. Shattuck

Mr. Taiani asked for identification of the acronyms for those who are unfamiliar with them. Ms. Bahn replied that WCIDA stands for Wilkinsburg Commercial and Industrial Development Authority.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

2. Approving Resolution No. 14-007 – Reappointing Barbara Ervin to the WCIDA to serve a five year term commencing February 1, 2014 and continuing through January 31, 2019.

Moved: Ms. Moore

Second: Mr. Shattuck

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

3. Approving Resolution No. 14-008 – Appointing Jason Cohn to the Wilkinsburg Municipal Authority to serve the unexpired term of Rick Hawkinberry which will continue through January 31, 2018.

Moved: Ms. Macklin

Second: Ms. Moore

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

4. Approving Resolution No. 14-009 – Appointing Jason Cohn to the Zoning Hearing Board to serve a four year term commencing January 1, 2014 and continuing through December 31, 2017.

Moved: Mr. Lefebvre

Second: Mr. Shattuck

Mr. Taiani asked to abstain from voting on Resolution 14-009 and 14-010 due to conflict of interest.

Yes: Ms. Moore, Mr. Shattuck, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Garrett, Ms. Trice, President McCarthy-Johnson

Abstention: Mr. Taiani (conflict of interest)

Motion carried 7:0 with 1 Abstention

5. Approving Resolution No. 14-010 – Reappointing Rick Hawkinberry to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Moved: Mr. Lefebvre

Second: Ms. Moore

Yes: Ms. Moore, Mr. Shattuck, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Garrett, Ms. Trice, President McCarthy-Johnson

Abstention: Mr. Taiani (conflict of interest)

Motion carried 7:0 with 1 Abstention

6. Approving Resolution No. 14-011 – Memorandum of Agreement for Historic Preservation-Penn Lincoln Hotel.

Ms. Bahn introduced Alex Smith from the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County (RAAC) who was present to answer questions from Council. Ms. Garrett asked about Council plans to demolish the historic structure. .

Mr. Smith explained that the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) designates the historic site survey to be done by Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation (PHLF). Mr. Taiani has concerns about stipulations, Borough responsibilities, and liabilities. Federal funds will be used for demolition. Council has already agreed to the actions to be taken. The County and PHLF will assume the indicated responsibilities. Ms. Macklin wanted more information. Mr. Taiani spoke of having the same concerns as Ms. Macklin. Mr. Smith responded that Wilksburg is not responsible to pay for the historic site survey. The demolition is being paid for by RAAC through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The abatement portion of the property is being paid for by the PHLF through gaming and economic development funds received from the RAAC. A funding source for the historic site survey portion has not yet been identified.

President McCarthy-Johnson called the question.

Mr. Lefebvre moved, and Ms, Moore seconded the motion to approve Resolution No. 14-011

Yes: Ms. Moore, Mrs. Trice, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Lefebvre, President McCarthy-Johnson

Abstain: Mr. Shattuck (conflict of interest), Ms. Macklin (insufficient information), and Mr. Taiani (conflict of interest)

Motion carried 5:0 with 3 Abstentions

President McCarthy-Johnson commented about doors on the Penn Avenue side being open asked Mr. Smith if they could be secured. Ms. Macklin asked if Mr. Smith can get an answer to the question regarding the Borough's liability for the historical site survey.

7. Approving Resolution No. 14-012 - Accepting the resignation of Sean Gramz effective February 6, 2014.

Moved: Ms. Macklin

Second: President McCarthy-Johnson

Mr. Taiani asked if the matter should be discussed in Executive Session and who will be heading the department while the position is vacant. President McCarthy-Johnson responded that accepting the resignation does not require an Executive Session and Ms. Marcinko will be responsible for the day-to-day activity in the department. Mr. Taiani asked about managing hearings before the Zoning Board. Ms. Moore asked if Mr. Gramz had an exit interview. Ms. Bahn responded that they have met to discuss transition and would meet again for an exit interview. Ms. Macklin expressed concern regarding who would handle responsibilities and the computer system. Ms. Bahn reminded Council that in contrast to previous instances, the Department now has an Administrative Assistant. Ms. Macklin questioned the ability of the Administrative Assistant and his knowledge of Freedom Systems and Code Enforcement.

Yes: Ms. Moore, Mr. Shattuck, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Garrett, Ms. Trice, President McCarthy-Johnson

Abstention: Mr. Taiani (conflict of interest)

Motion carried 7:0 with 1 Abstention

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Trice asked about the Police Department renovations and the completion of punch list items. Police Chief Coleman informed Council that the Contractor began addressing items yesterday (1/14/14). Ms. Moore asked about issues with the side door leading to the parking lot. Chief Coleman reported that the door needs to be replaced. Mr. Taiani asked if penalties were imposed on the contractors for incompetence and requested an Executive Session to discuss. Ms. Macklin requested copies of construction bills, while Mr. Shattuck suggested the Borough should keep a ten percent retainer.

Ms. Trice asked about using the building as a warming/cooling center. President McCarthy-Johnson informed Council that she has had contact with the Emergency Management Center, and that this is moving forward. Ms. Bahn talked about the issues associated with use of the building as a warming center

Ms. Trice asked about the dip in the bricks in front of the Post Office on Hay Street. There was a discussion about sink holes on Hay Street and traffic by Port Authority buses and monies for paving. Everyone attributes sinkholes to bus traffic. President McCarthy-Johnson suggested a letter to the Wilksburg Community Development Corporation (WCDC) to question how they are moving ahead with meetings with the Port Authority.

Ms. Bahn asked about the sink hole near Nancy's Restaurant on South Avenue. The DPW will be asked to address the issue.

Ms. Trice announced that Jane McClung, former Parking Enforcement Officer died January 10, 2014.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Moore thanked Police Department employees who came out in the extremely cold weather on the day the building was closed.

Ms. Moore asked that the minutes of December 4, 2013 be amended to reflect Cindy's title as Administrative Assistant to Borough Manager rather than Assistant Borough Manager.

Ms. Moore talked about the Council seating arrangement and that changes from the arrangement President McCarthy Johnson decided upon are disrespectful to her. For the record, Ms. Trice stated that she preferred the end seat and that changing her seat was not done out of disrespect.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, on motion by Mr. Taiani, second by Ms. Trice the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 P.M.

Vanessa McCarthy-Johnson, Council President