

**BOROUGH OF WILKINSBURG COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Planning Session**  
**February 2, 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., Wilkinsburg, PA.

President Moore announced that an executive session was held at 6:00 PM to discuss litigation.

**ROLL CALL**

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were: Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis and President Moore. Also present were Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager and Patricia McGrail, Borough Solicitor. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin and Mayor John Thompson were absent. A quorum was established.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Following the pledge of allegiance, President Moore requested a moment of silence be observed for all victims of violent crime.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Gail Mitchell-Hall – Wilkinsburg Weed & Seed Site Coordinator** – Ms. Mitchell-Hall advised that the January meeting was held on January 10, 2011. She advised that concerns had been voiced regarding the dissemination of meeting minutes and that the issue has been resolved. Ms. Mitchell-Hall spoke to the Wilkinsburg Christian Church on January 23, 2011, announced that a field trip is being sponsored to the Andy Warhol Museum and that the Wilkinsburg Service Directory is ready to go. The next meeting will be held on February 28, 2011 at 12:00 PM.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

**Nine Mile Run Watershed Association** – Brenda Smith, Executive Director of Nine Mile Run Watershed Association presented an overview of the plan to partner with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy TreeVitalize program and the Borough of Wilkinsburg to plant five hundred trees over the next eighteen months with funding from PENNVEST. She spoke of the benefits of trees to the environment in the management of storm water and how trees help clean the air of pollutants.

Justin Hynicka presented the results of the recent street tree inventory conducted by Nine Mile Run Watershed Association. Mr. Hynicka discussed inventory methods, proportions of trees, tree species and the importance of the need for tree care.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

President Moore acknowledged two future social workers who are attending the University of Pittsburgh. The students explained their involvement with a group project to assess needs of the community, identify a specific need and write a grant application to address the need.

**David Wilson – Eastern Area Pre-Hospital Services** – Mr. Wilson announced that Brian Maloney has resigned from his position at Eastern Area. Mr. Maloney will remain involved in the community as he will be instructing classes related to first aid. There were a total of (304) calls in the month of January with (211) transports. The average emergency response time was 7 min. 35 sec. President Moore thanked Mr. Wilson for Eastern Area's work and encouraged everyone to subscribe to EAPS service.

**Jerome Garrett – 1422 Laketon Rd. President of Historical Society**- Mr. Garrett announced an upcoming event and commented that Council will be receiving an invitation to same. Mr. Garrett commented on residents failing to clear their sidewalks of snow and that there is a tree cut up on the sidewalk at 1423 Laketon Rd.

**Kate Luxemburg – 432 Rebecca Ave.** – Ms. Luxemburg spoke on behalf of the Wilkinsburg Redevelopment Authority and wanted to ensure that Council is apprised of their efforts specifically relating to estate administration. A grant has been offered to initiate this effort. Redevelopment Authority meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. Eric Graybill, Matthew Kaus, Pamela Macklin, and Kate Luxemburg who are members of the Redevelopment Authority can be contacted for questions. Mr. Cohn questioned the funding source for the grant. Ms. Luxemburg advised that information would be released at the next Authority meeting. The Redevelopment Authority will not be the owner of the property but will serve as the administrator for the estate when there is no will. Mr. Cohn questioned whether legal advice had been sought or obtained.

### **REPORT FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

#### **President Moore reported:**

- Commented on the deterioration of the central part of Wilkinsburg. She noted that several properties are not secured - specifically 906, 908 Hill Ave, 930 Hill Ave. and Center Street. She recommended that efforts be focused on this area this year. She expressed concern regarding the safety of children.
- The reflector mirror on Penn Avenue near Beacon Hill Drive is covered by trees.
- The tax program is not being offered this year due to lack of volunteers. Other locations which are offering the service are the Squirrel Hill Library and the William E. Anderson Library in Penn Hills.

- On a communication with a resident with a sanitary sewer problem and complained about the lack of response from the Borough. Ms. Marcinko advised that the issue was addressed with the resident the day it was received and that she personally spoke with the resident regarding this issue with her sewer lateral.
- The Borough is recruiting for School Crossing Guard positions.

### **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

#### **Capital Planning Committee**

Mr. Lefebvre reported that the January meeting had been cancelled due to inclement weather.

#### **Finance Committee – Mr. Cohn reported:**

- The next meeting will be held on February 16, 2011 at 9:30 AM.
- The status of the negotiations for contracted fire protection service. The parties are currently working on some outstanding issues and Council will need to take action to authorize the execution of an intergovernmental cooperation agreement with the City of Pittsburgh with a working date of March 1, 2011.
- He is working with Senator Ferlo's office to obtain funding for a direct mailer to residents to publicize what is happening.
- All Council members are encouraged to review the information which has already been provided and bring back questions as soon as possible. A special meeting may be necessary for the legislative action which is needed.

Mr. Lewis questioned why the date for the Finance Committee meeting had been changed. Mr. Cohn answered because he will be out of town on the standard day. Mr. Lewis commented that the new meeting date will need to be advertised.

President Moore questioned what the goals are for the Finance Committee for the year 2011. Mr. Cohn responded that the focus will be on strategies to increase revenues and decrease expense and to implement as many of the EIP (Early Intervention Plan) recommendations as possible. The five-year financial plan contains numerous recommendations for all departments.

#### **Personnel Committee – Ms. Trice reported:**

- The Committee met on January 13, 2011 and discussed manager evaluations and the Weed and Seed Site Coordinator position.
- The positions of DPW Director, Code Director and the Police Chief's contract were discussed.
- Ms. Marcinko discussed residency requirements of the SEIU and Police Department employees and provided an update on the upcoming hiring of two police officers.
- Talent Bank Applications were reviewed and recommendations made for appointments.
- The next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2011 and is a closed meeting.

**TCVCOG Report: - Ms. Trice reported:**

- She attended the meeting on January 27, 2011 along with Ms. Ervin. Business was as usual with some discussions. Wilkinsburg has two open projects under CD36 - Safe Neighborhood Demolition which is in progress and the Singer Place Storm Sewer Project which has been completed.

President Moore inquired as to the Committee's long range goals for 2011. Ms. Trice responded that she would like to improve the morale of all employees of the Borough of Wilkinsburg and ensure the Borough is an equal opportunity employer. Ms. Trice suggested annual evaluations of all employees including managers and use of progressive discipline if and when necessary to alleviate costly lawsuits due to prior undocumented behaviors, annual requirements of goals and objectives for all managers, residency requirements for all new hires, and use of a time clock.

The annual dinner for the Turtle Creek Valley COG will be held on February 25, 2011 with an open bar at 5:30. The program will begin at 6:30 with the guest speaker being Senator Jim Brewster.

**Public Safety Committee -Mr. Lefebvre reported:**

- The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 16, 2011 at 5:30 PM.
- At the last meeting, goals were discussed. The priority for the Code Enforcement Department and Department of Public Works is to hire directors to lead those departments.
- The Police Chief's goals for the Police Department were discussed. These goals as well as the goals contained in the Comprehensive Plan will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

A motion was made by Mr. Cohn, second by Mr. Lefebvre, to remove from the table the motion to hire Directors for the Department of Public Works and Code Enforcement Department.

Mr. Lewis questioned who has the ability to take the motion off of the table. Pat McGrail, Borough Solicitor checked Robert's Rules of Order and advised that any member of Council can take the motion off the table. There was a question as to whether there could be debate. Ms. McGrail advised Council that if there were questions, they should be answered prior to the motion being voted upon.

**Yes:** Ms. Evans, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lefebvre, President Moore

**No:** Ms. Ervin, Ms. Trice, Mr. Lewis

**Motion carried 4:3**

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A motion was made by Mr. Cohn, second by Mr. Lefebvre, to advertise the positions for the Department of Public Works Director and Code Enforcement Department Director immediately.

Ms. Ervin questioned whether residency would be required in the job description. Mr. Cohn responded that it would not. Ms. Trice commented that the Personnel Committee recommended the residency issue be presented and discussed before full Council. Mr. Cohn commented on the high turnover and instability in management positions in the Borough and that requiring residency in such an organizational climate may limit the number of qualified candidates who may have otherwise applied. President Moore questioned whether the residency requirement could be applied after one year. Mr. Lewis questioned whether there was a residency requirement for the firefighters taking positions with the City of Pittsburgh and how many were willing to take positions because of the requirement. It was answered affirmative for residency requirements and that all but one was willing to establish residency in the City of Pittsburgh. Ms. Ervin commented that most feel it is important for you to live in the community in which you work. Ms. Evans expressed the need to keep this moving forward and fill these positions. She further commented on the need to focus the recruitment effort on hiring and retaining the best people possible for these positions. Mr. Lewis commented that the Borough has been unsuccessful with other hires who were not residents. Mr. Lewis further commented that the positions remain vacant even with increased salary and no residency requirement. Mr. Lefebvre commented that the top goals in the Comprehensive Plan for both of these departments was to hire managers.

**Yes:** Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Evans, President Moore

**No:** Mr. Lewis, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Trice

**Motion carried 4:3**

President Moore opened for discussion the requests from the Chamber of Commerce and Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh to lease office space in the municipal building. Ms. Moore expressed her support of these requests. Mr. Lewis commented on the need to look at the future needs of the Borough before considering others. He referenced the conditions in the Police Department and other office space within the municipal building. Ms. Evans commented that both proposed leases are short term and she recommended proceeding. Ms. Ervin questioned if the policy on evaluation criteria for these types of requests had been established. While the evaluation criteria has not been established, Ms. McGrail described the lease agreement in general terms. Mr. Lewis expressed concern with not having a formal policy and problems which could be encountered if the request of another entity is denied at some point in the future. He stated the importance of having a larger plan. Ms. Trice questioned whether space issues in the Police Department were resolved. Ms. Evans suggested a small committee of Council look at this issue, possibly the Capital Planning Committee. It was also suggested that the Mayor be consulted.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Marcinko advised that the Borough will be applying for additional demolition funding through the CDBG Program for the demolition of 7962 Tioga St., 1515 Wood Street and 1521 Wood Street. Action of Council is required in order to make application.

**11-012**

**Authorize application for funding for the demolition of 7962 Tioga Street, 1515 Wood Street and 1521 Wood Street.**

**Moved:** Mr. Lewis

**Second:** Ms. Evans

**Yes:** Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Lefebvre, President Moore

**Motion carried**

**11-013**

**Declaring Blight – 7962 Tioga St., 1515 Wood Street and 1521 Wood Street**

**Moved:** Mr. Lewis

**Second:** Ms. Evans

**Yes:** Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, President Moore

**Motion carried**

A motion was made by Mr. Lewis, second by Ms. Ervin, that Borough Council issue a directive in the form of a resolution to the Borough Manager and other employees that all legal matters of the Borough be directed to the Borough Solicitor for determination as to disposition for the Borough Solicitor or referred to outside counsel, effective immediately.

Mr. Cohn commented that this matter had been discussed in executive session and that the issue was the Borough Solicitor needed to be better informed regarding legal matters requiring her action and that the resolution was not to have everything cleared through the Solicitor. Mr. Cohn questioned how current legal matters which are handled directly by the Manager without the assistance of the Solicitor would be addressed. Mr. Lewis clarified that matters which the manager and other employees currently refer to special counsel would first be referred to the Solicitor who would decide whether the matter should be referred or handled by her firm.

**Yes:** Mr. Lewis, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Trice, President Moore

**No:** Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Evans

**Motion carried 4:3**

Ms. Evans announced the Wilkinsburg Municipal Authority and the Wilkinsburg Commercial and Industrial Development Authority will meet on Thursday February 8, 2011 at 6:00 PM in the Borough Manager's conference room. She announced the following projects which the WCDC is working on and which require cooperation with the Borough of Wilkinsburg:

- Banner installation
- Trimming trees on Wood Street
- Repairing and repainting decorative light posts in the business district
- Litter receptacles
- Updating the WCDC website
- Engaged with Pop City to do a neighborhood page
- Marketing assistance for music in the park
- Real estate inventory on-line
- Continuing work on the Penn Ave Signal Enhancement project punch list.
- Researching delinquent properties in the business district
- Completed an organizational capacity assessment with the recommendation to engage in a strategic planning process with the board

Ms. Ervin questioned whether the research on the delinquent taxpayers was for business privilege or real estate. Ms. Evans replied that the research is on real estate tax delinquencies.

Mr. Cohn reminded everyone that March 1, 2011 is the deadline to apply for the Homestead Exemption.

Being no further business, on motion by Mr. Cohn, second by Mr. Lewis, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:06 PM.

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Eugenia Moore, Council President