

WILKINSBURG BOROUGH
Council Work Session
October 15, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

President McCarthy-Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, 605 Ross Avenue, Wilkinsburg, PA.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Garrett, Mr. Taiani, Ms. Trice, Ms. Moore, Ms. Grannemann, Mr. Shattuck, Ms. Macklin, and President McCarthy-Johnson. Borough Manager Marla P. Marcinko 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

None at this time.

FINANCE

1. Monthly financial reports.

Mr. Lefebvre turned the meeting over to Mr. Egler, Finance Director and the following discussion ensued:

- Mr. Egler commented that a new delinquent real estate tax collector had been retained.
- Ms. Macklin noted that MBM Collections is not listed on the report. Mr. Egler stated that an account has been created but it will not appear on the revenue and expense reports until monies have been posted to the account. This should occur on the next monthly report.
- Ms. Macklin commented that parking fine revenue is down and attributed it to the parking enforcement officers not having a vehicle. Mr. Egler commented that this may be a contributing factor but also stated that there is a new system and that citations are not being generated consistently.

2. Business Privilege Tax Collection.

Ms. Marcinko commented on the preliminary discussions on a change in tax collectors for the collection of business privilege tax. A proposal was received from Keystone Collections Group. Ms. Macklin had forwarded several questions and request for additional information for which responses have yet to be received. Some information was provided relative to the type of reports Keystone provides. Ms. Marcinko would like to review a sample agreement and agrees that it is important to have an understanding of their collection process. Mr. Egler reported that Keystone requires the Borough to work with them by providing information on those persons/businesses who should be paying the tax. Mr. Taiani commented on the importance of multi-unit and rental properties. Mr. Lefebvre recommended waiting on additional information from Keystone before moving forward. Mr. Taiani questioned whether property owners are forthright in self-reporting. Ms. Marcinko stated that multi-unit information has been submitted to Berkheimer. Ms. Marcinko commented on her efforts to sort data from the County's tax certification in order to identify potential rental properties – those without homestead exemptions. With increased collections as the goal, having one collector for EIT, LST and BPT may be the means to that end. It would also make it easier on taxpayers. Mr. Taiani questioned whether the BPT tax payments are audited. Mr. Egler commented that it is possible to cross-reference earned income tax payments with business privilege tax payments. Ms. Moore questioned what is meant by the Borough playing a greater role in the BPT collection process. Ms. Marcinko stated that the Borough needs to make a better and greater effort to provide information to the tax collector to identify taxpayers. Ms. Marcinko commented that WPJWA could be providing information which would assist in identifying new owners and occupants of properties but they have not been able to provide the requested reports. Ms. Macklin commented that there is now new leadership at the WPJWA.

3. Amusement machine fee process.

Ms. Marcinko stated that the need for enforcement of this ordinance has been discussed for at least 4 years. Sample ordinances have been obtained from other communities to compare processes and procedures employed for collection of these fees. Which department would be responsible for identifying those businesses which may have amusement devices was discussed. Enforcement rests with the police department. Presently there is no collection of an annual fee. An amusement device is defined as a video or mechanical amusement device i.e. jukebox, pool table (if not electronic) and any other electronic device, machine or apparatus for the playing of games and amusement or entertainment. A gambling device would not qualify. Cigarette and vending machines are not considered amusement machines. Ms. Marcinko suggested that Council instruct that the current ordinance be followed for enforcement for licensing of amusement and amusement devices. It was suggested that letters be sent to those establishments with amusement machines/devices advising of the requirements of the ordinance.

4. Permit Fees – building, planning and zoning.

Code Enforcement Director Friedson is recommending several fee increases. A residential occupancy inspection covers smoke alarms, etc. Mr. Taiani suggested paying a one-time fee, annual fee, as opposed to a fee every time there is a change in tenancy. Mr. Friedson explained

that there is a one-time fee for an occupancy permit for single-family, owner-occupied units. Rental property owners are charged a fee for changes in tenancy. Ms. Marcinko suggested reviewing each item in greater detail and having a current to proposed comparison, as well as looking at fees charged by comparable communities.

GENERAL MATTERS

- 1. Approving Resolution No. 14-091 – Street Closure – Taylor Way from Wood Street to alley adjacent to Penn Avenue Parklet for the purpose of a roof repair to Pittsburgh Asian Market. A date has not yet been determined.**

Moved: Mr. Lefebvre

Second: Ms. Macklin

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Ms. Macklin questioned Mr. Egler as to the status of the financial trend analysis. Mr. Egler stated that he is in the initial stages and is trying to complete quarterly reports done. Once that is accomplished he will be moving fairly quickly to complete the trend analysis and will have a report at the next meeting.

President McCarthy-Johnson expressed disappointment that there were several Council members who were not present for the commencement of the public hearing at 5:30 as they had not reviewed their agenda packets in advance. She requested that Council behave responsibly by reviewing their agenda packets and coming prepared to the meeting.

Mr. Taiani suggested that any additional meetings be scheduled after regularly scheduled meetings as opposed to before.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Pastor Pope – Reported a street light outage on Laketon Rd - pole number 218047 between Robinson Boulevard and Remington Drive.

Jim Richard – 925 Rebecca Ave. – Commented on graffiti on Penn Avenue and side streets. He requested that the Borough require property owners to be responsible for the removal. Mr. Friedson has compiled an information piece on resources for graffiti removal to issue to property owners. Ms. Bahn has also researched information on the effects of graffiti and is working with Mr. Friedson to address the problem.

President McCarthy-Johnson requested an executive session to discuss litigation.

President McCarthy-Johnson announced a meeting for the Whitney Park Master Plan on October 16, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will move to Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church at 6:30 p.m. The Ferguson Park/Playground ribbon cutting ceremony will be held on Friday, October 17 at 12:00 PM. The Frank Conrad marker rededication will be held on October 17 at 2:00 PM at Community Life on Meade St.

Ms. Bahn announced that there will be a flu shot clinic on October 16, 2014 in Council Chambers from 10AM-12PM and 2PM - 4:00PM. Saturday is Pitt Makes a Difference Day/ Community Clean-Up. Dumpsters are in the community and Pitt students will be out cleaning in the business district and Linear Park.

Ms. Luxemburg asked about signage for Ferguson Park/Playground.

Council recessed into executive session at approximately 7:42 PM.

Council came out of executive session at approximately 8:00 PM and the meeting was reconvened.

A motion was made by Mr. Lefebvre, second by Mr. Taiani, to authorize the execution of a settlement agreement with Debora Jackson relative to her federal civil rights complaint.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

President McCarthy-Johnson reminded Council about confidentiality.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President McCarthy-Johnson adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:02 p.m.

Vanessa McCarthy-Johnson
President of Council