

Wilkinsburg Borough Council
Council Work Session Meeting
Minutes
May 4, 2022
7:00 PM

Call to Order

7:03PM

Roll Call

Ms. Santella

Mr. Smith

Ms. Atkins

Mr. McMullen

Ms. Haughton

Ms. Macklin

Ms. Gibson

Ms. Trice

President Edwards

Mayor

Present

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence:

Peace for Ukraine and Russia, and also for our neighborhoods.

Executive Sessions

Port Authority

Casey Jablonka

Presentation

Wilkinsburg Penn-Joint Water Authority Update --- Kathleen Rawlins

- Discussed Grant Infrastructure Investment Authority
- 9.3 Million dollars project – Approximately 1,000 lead service lines (within service area) for 20 different communities.
- Replace all lead service lines in Wilkinsburg to copper lines
- This will be no cost to the consumer and will also include two years, free maintenance.
- This could cost the consumer almost \$8,000 to \$10,000 if not done.

Public Comment Items on Agenda

Pam Cohen Panchak - 425 Center Street

- Planning & Blight are not represented.
- Planning Commission is not reporting to Council full report
- What is being done with the \$318,000 reimbursement should be discussed.

Deb Rose – 726 Whitney Avenue

- Questions on the COG's and Landbank Ordinance of Agenda, Ordinance 22-002.
- County reassessment ruling of yesterday, what does that mean in general for our finances?
- Pres. Edwards: Development of Landbank Ordinance – first reading on how it works. Make public, view online and in the library. Solicitor drafted ordinance with addressing many of the issues.
- Mayor: COG's – There are other COG's out there but there will only be one or two homes for Wilkinsburg. More opportunity for residents to do their own.
- Ms. Macklin: New county reassessment and we are reviewing how that will affect the borough's revenue.

County Councilman – Dewitt Walton

- Office of Public Defenders – County Executive Offices.
- Expungement/Job Clinic – May 21, 2022, 9:30a-2:30p Irene Kaufmann (next to the Hill House on Centre Avenue
- Career links, County Resources, Employment opportunities and more.
- Would like to do a Expungement/Job Clinic in Wilkinsburg

Agenda Items

1. First reading of **Ordinance 22-001**, an ordinance of the Borough of Wilkinsburg, prohibiting the use of engine brake retarders within the Borough of Wilkinsburg.
 - Additional section for fines. Violators of noise ordinance.
 - Specific streets will be added to resolution
 - The Ordinance was read in its entirety by President Edwards.
 - Ms. Trice: Ordinance should be rewritten. As it stands Penn Dot would have to be involved. There are state operated roads in Wilkinsburg.
 - Street names should be noted in rewrite
 - Linda Atkins: Solicitor Salina will rewrite Ordinance.

2. First reading of **Ordinance 22-002** an ordinance of the Borough of Wilkinsburg, authorizing Council President, on behalf of the borough of Wilkinsburg, to form and establish a land bank to be known as the Wilkinsburg Land Bank.
 - President Edwards reads Ordinance in its entirety

- Ms. Trice: Seems as though they are concentrating of vacant/blighted and abandon properties.
 - There are no intentions of removing people from their homes.
 - Mayor – Tangled Title means the owner is deceased and caretaker now lives in the home.
 - China: Would like to start Tangled Title, considered owner acceptant if they have a lease.
 - Landbank addresses vacant and abandon properties. Able to obtain little for property.
3. Proclamation in honor of traffic enforcement officer Janet Rhodes upon the occasion of her retirement from Borough service.
- President Edwards read the proclamation for Janet Rhodes who served 16 years as a Police Department, Traffic Enforcement.
4. **Resolution 22--044**: Awarding the contract for the 2021 Act 152 Demolition Project to reputable and qualified low bidder, contractor Minniefield Demolition Services, LLC, in the amount of \$150,770, with Borough providing \$13,830 toward project budget.

Motion: Ms. Macklin

Second: Ms. Gibson

A Vote of 9-0 Motion Carried

5. **Resolution 22–045**: Approval of slums and Blight Resolution in support of Act 152 demolition grant application (Housekeeping only)

Motion: (No motion was given)

Second: (None given)

A Vote of 9-0 Motion Carried

6. **Resolution 22–046**: Authorizing Borough Manager to apply for Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County (RAAC) Trail Development Fund grant in a to-be-determined amount for the purpose of a Wilkinsburg Walking Path design and reconstruction project. Grant application due on May 13.

- Council requested that map should have been included in package.

Motion: Mr. Smith

Second: Ms. Haughton

A Vote of 9-0 Motion Carried

7. Authorizing Borough Manager to contract with HHSDR Architects in the amount of \$3,500 of bond funds for the purpose of structural analysis of Borough Building portico and columns and initial assessment of requirements for replacing entrance ramp and low stone walls in front of building.

Motion: Ms. Macklin

Second: Ms. Gibson

A Vote of 9-0 Motion Carried

8. Authorizing Borough Manager to advertise, for public review, **Ordinance 22-001**, an ordinance prohibiting the use of engine brake retarders within the Borough of Wilkinsburg.

➤ Include writing from solicitor reflecting changes.

***Ms. Macklin motions the Authorizing Borough Manager to advertise, for public review, Ordinance 22-001. Second: Ms. Haughton
A Vote of 9-0 Motion Carried**

9. Authorizing Borough Manager to advertise, for public review, **Ordinance 22-002**, an ordinance to form and establish the Wilkinsburg Land Bank.

***Hold until May 18th**

**Motion: None Second: None
A Vote of 9-0 Motion Carried to hold until May 18th.**

10. Authorizing support for Upstream’s intention to advertise for public bid the construction work for the Wilkinsburg Stormwater Resiliency Project.

**Motion: Ms. Haughton Second: Ms. Macklin
A Vote of 9-0 Motion Carried**

11. Authorizing Borough Council support for Jody Guy and Center for Civic Art’s applications for two planning grants—the Project for Public Spaces grant (due May 13) and National Endowment for the Arts Our Town grant (due July 31)—for the purpose of aligning several green storm water infrastructure projects within the Borough.

- Judy gave a background on the two planning grants: Project for Public Spaces and Arts Our Town.
➤ This is a planning grant were there is a vision and great possibilities.

**Motion: Mr. Smith Second: Ms. Santella
A Vote of 9-0 Motion Carried**

12. Council Committees:

Finance, Budget & Capital Planning – Pamela Macklin – Chair, Denise Edwards, Ariel Haughton

- Met last month, next meeting May 9th.
➤ Auditors have been to borough, waiting for year-end before closing out books.
➤ Personnel will announce that the Finance Director will be retiring, looking for replacement.
➤ Received January ledger of 2022, in process of closing year end.
➤ 2021 was a good year in spite of Covid19. Ms. Macklin will get a more detail analysis next month.

- Personnel, Polices & Procedures Committee – Paige Trice – Chair, Pamela Macklin, Linda Atkins
 - Nothing to report. Next meeting May 5 @ 1pm
- Public Safety Committee/Chief Coleman – Paige Trice – Chair, Sabrina Gibson
 - Committee met April 21.
 - Solar speed display lights will be installed in key locations of the borough.
 - Removal of yellow lines on Ross from Hay to Swissvale.
 - Great American Clean-up was a success
 - Need for borough officials to meet, all utilities and all projects plan for 2022
 - Next meeting May 12, 9AM
- Special Events, Music, Arts & Seniors Committee – Linda Atkins – Chair, Ariel Houghton, Denise Edwards
 - Summer concerts – June 11 opening day, African American Community Fest. Featured artist are Kevin Howard and Jackie Young, daughter of Harold Young.
 - Volunteers welcome.
- Joint Tax Committee – Denise Edwards, Pamela Macklin, Sabrina Gibson
 - Committee is being revitalized
 - Meet every fourth Monday of the month. Next meeting Monday, May 23 @6PM via Zoom or in person.
- Mayor’s Report – Dontae Comans
 - There was a promotion of two Wilkesburg police officers. Starting May 16th, Det. Brandon Rourke will be promoted to Lieutenant and Det. Doug Yuhouse will be promoted to Sargent.
 - Accepted Officer Emma Brown’s resignation effective May 8, 2022.
 - Suspect has been arrested for the murder that occurred on Franklin Avenue.
- Borough Manager’s Report – John Antinori
 - Discussed CFA Multi-Mobile Grant - \$220,000
 - Hay Street reconstruction - \$159,000
 - Discussed projects being done on the borough building.
 - Playground and parks were inspected
 - Hunter Park – Zipline and slides being completed
- Blight/Infrastructure
 - Discussed rehab of parking lots on Wallace and South Avenues.
 - Just wanted to acknowledge the great work Ms. Guy is doing on the Quality of Life projects.
 - Next meeting June 6th, 6:30pm.

- Library
 - Colleen Denne, Library Director - reported that 1,028 patrons, 1,941 check-outs, 689 public computer uses and 234 visited East Ridge.
 - Great programs coming up. Movie night on May 11th, Nature Walk on May 25
 - Great Power of Illusion Part 4 with Vince Neal. May 14, 2-4PM. Library has received great attendance for this program.

Public Comment General Information

Erica & Donald Givner – 619-620-627 Wood Street

- Called/emailed Code Enforcement and Borough Manager, calls/emails were never returned.
- Business owner in Wilkinsburg Business District, have had sidewalk problems, red brick causing water to run into building near electrical box.
- Code Enforcement will need authorization from Borough Manager because and architect will need to be involved.

Kate Luxemburg – 432 Rebecca

- Trying to get ‘Right to Know’ request information on budget authorization for David Gilliline’s engineering work, for planning the fence, which will destroy the business district. Request continues to be ignored. Where is purchase order?
- Money was spent without going through proper procedures.
- Appeal to state for determination on this information.

Pam Cohen Panchak - 425 Center Street

- Happy to see blight committee report to all of council. Where is the Planning Commission report? All council should be brief on Planning’s report.

Old Business

Voting to remove conditional offer of employment to Casey Jablonka, Junior Circulation Clerk for the Library, hourly wage of \$18.92, start date May 2, 2022, remove from being tabled at the April 20th meeting, Resolution 22-040

Motion: Ms. Haughton

Second: Ms. Macklin

Ms. Trice: Thought that when Agenda item was tabled, that the person who tabled it had to bring it back to the table? Would like to have an executive session to explain this hire.

President Edwards: Anyone who voted affirmative to table, it does not necessary has to be the maker of the motion.

- Mr. Smith – No information or letter with packet.
- Ms. Atkins – abstaining pending the information being discussed at the Executive Session.
- Ms. Haughton – abstaining pending the information being discussed at the Executive Session.
- Ms. Gibson – abstaining due to not have enough information

Roll call vote:

Favor – 4 Abstention: 4 No: 1

President Edwards: Move to resend last vote – go to Executive Session

Council goes into an Executive Session.

9:20pm – adjourned Executive Session – One pending issue.

Motion to adopt 22-040 – conditional offer of employment to Casey Jablonka, Junior Circulation Clerk for the Library @ \$18.92. Start date May 7, 2022.

Motion: Ms. Haughton

Second: Mr. McMullen

Favor – 8

Abstention: 0

No: 1

New Business

N/A

Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn – Mr. Smith

President, Denise Edwards