CITY OF JOHNSTOWN- Special Council Meeting September 23, 2026 @ 6:00 pm

SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 23, 2026

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

MAYOR: The special meeting of Johnstown City Council is now being called to order. Let us have the invocation.

INVOCATION: Our dear God, we bless you and thank you and praise you for this privilege and opportunity to be gathered here one more time. Father, we just pray that you would lead, guide and direct us, that Lord, we just ask your blessings upon the City and the inhabitants thereof, and we ask, Father, that you would just lead and guide us so that we may make up a stronger City, a better City, a more unified City. In Jesus' name we do pray. Amen.

ALL: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic, for which it stands: one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ROLL CALL

ROLL CALL: Barber.

BARBER: Here.

ROLL CALL: Clark.

CLARK: Present.

ROLL CALL: Hamacek.

HAMACEK: Present.

ROLL CALL: Spinelli.

SPINELLI: Present.

ROLL CALL: Brandon Taylor.

BRANDON TAYLOR: Present.

ROLL CALL: King.

KING: Present.

ROLL CALL: Arnone.

ARNONE: Yes.

MAYOR: This time we do not have any proclamations, awards or honors or that.

SPEAKER: Yeah.

SPEAKER: Nobody saw them.

MAYOR: Okay. Our resolutions of recognition. So we'll call for the approval of the minutes from the regular Council meeting of September 9, 2026.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Motion.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Second.

MAYOR: Any questions?

ROLL CALL: Spinelli?

SPINELLI: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Hamacek?

HAMACEK: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Clark?

CLARK: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Barber?

BARBER: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Arnone?

ARNONE: Yes.

ROLL CALL: King?

KING: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Brandon Taylor?

BRANDON TAYLOR: Yes.

MAYOR: We do not have anyone signed up for public comment. We don't have any petitions. And City Manager, at this time do you have any reports if you would like to?

CITY MANAGER: Not at this time, Madam Mayor, not at this time. We'll speak on the resolutions as they come forward.

MAYOR: All right. Madam—

CITY SOLICITOR: No, I don't have any report at this time.

MAYOR: Okay. And as we move forward with our resolutions.

RESOLUTION NO. 10807

MAYOR: Resolution Number 10807, a resolution by the City of Johnstown, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, approving contract awards for renovations and improvements to the Public Safety Building.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Motion.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Second.

MAYOR: City Manager, please.

CITY MANAGER: I'm going to ask Karen also to come to the mic. Thank you.

So, as you know, we've been working long and hard to come to a resolution for the renovation of the building. We opened bids last week. Total bids came in, over $10 million for the renovation, including all of the alternates that were put out for bid.

We understand that we're going to be doing some value engineering as we go through this, but for the sake of our moving forward for the contract, in front of you have a resolution that outlines the costs that are associated with it.

One of the things that we were able to work through today was some additional funding through the American Rescue Plan Act of $1.9 million to put into the project, which helped lower some of the City's obligation.

This was money that had not been allocated previously that we were able to put into this, into this project to help, again, lower our costs from the City standpoint.

So, as you know, from previous meetings, we have some different areas of funding for funding stack.

We have a Congressionally Directed Spending fund of $2.8 million. We have $2.5 million in a RACP, or Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program. And as I mentioned, the ARPA money, which could be up to, up to $4.3 million.

Part of the resolution also outlines that we can take funds against ourselves through either one of our capital improvements CDs or General Fund CDs as needed, and/or, if needed, do a small borrow through an approved lending institution as selected by the City Manager and approved by City Council.

At this time, I'd like to turn it over to Karen, so we could talk a little bit about the project and then come back to the resolution. Karen, if you would.

KAREN WELSH: Certainly. We received four bids on our general, mechanical, plumbing and electrical contracts. The list of alternates, I believe, has been provided to you, and the bids associated with each one.

We have identified already $220,000 in savings related to mechanical controls that was provided on the bid board.

We have spoken to the contractors preliminarily to ascertain their ability and willingness to identify other areas of common cost savings, additionally, their ability to spend the money that they need to from the ARPA funds by the end of the year.

We have the mechanical and general contractor, both that they will be starting the work of the demolition, the structural repairs of the Fire Department.

Additionally, the elevator addition foundations, they think those will be significant expenditures that will draw down the ARPA resources.

Additionally, the mechanical contractor will be fabricating ductwork, order equipment, things that can be delivered to the site, not reliant on stored materials, so that the monies can be spent.

The mechanical—sort of plumbing contractor thinks there is only around $100,000, $150,000 they can invoice by the end of the year.

The electrical contractor I've not yet spoken—we've traded phone calls, but I don't have much information from him.

We have some additional ideas related to finish selections that seem to elevate some of the budgets for some of the restrooms that were beyond what they thought was reasonable.

We have evaluated each of the bids for responsiveness. Each of them has been responsible.

And so we would look to the Council. We recommend to you that they were responsive. They were low bids.

They were all fairly close in nature, so there was nothing. There were some that stood out, but the fact that we received three bids for three of the contracts and four for the fourth, we were able to evaluate fairly that they were within reasonableness.

MAYOR: Council, any questions?

CITY MANAGER: So, I think it's important to—I think it's important to point out, Council, that with the current funding stack, the remodel for this project for the entire building looks to be about $900,000, possibly out of the City coffers.

So, it's a $10 million project of which we possibly put in $900,000.

I feel comfortable that we're going to be able to garner some savings, as was already mentioned by Karen, $250,000 already, and we'll be able to get that down even further as we go through this.

Again, this is the resolution that's in front of you. I would ask Council for approval.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARNONE: I would like to make it in layman's terms; we're getting a $10 million building for less than a million dollars of our own money.

CITY MANAGER: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARNONE: So that is that general statement so that we can understand what we're talking about.

CITY MANAGER: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARNONE: Thank you.

MAYOR: Anybody else? Did you have something?

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: Yeah, I understand that we got a prior resolution that circulated that said we have 2.1 million for ARPA. And then you said we added 1.9 million.

CITY MANAGER: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: My back to the envelope says that's 4 million. Why in the resolution are we saying 4.3 million?

CITY MANAGER: There's a couple other ARPA might still be able—

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: Correct. Okay.

CITY MANAGER: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: So, it could be more than 1.9?

CITY MANAGER: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: Okay.

CITY MANAGER: Correct.

MAYOR: Any other questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: When will we be able to finalize that?

CITY MANAGER: Hopefully within the next few weeks. I think the biggest challenge that we're going to have is of the ARPA funding, is spending that.

The money doesn't have to be out of the door before the end of the year, but we have to spend it.

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: So we really won't know until it's done whether we actually met that objective.

CITY MANAGER: No, we'll know sooner than that because it'll be hard equipment. That won't be on future services. That's for hard equipment, you know, supplies, those types of things.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMACEK: And the labor for the concrete.

CITY MANAGER: If that starts before, then yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: Okay. And besides finishes to the bathrooms, what are some other areas where we could trim some of their costs?

KAREN WELSH: We are looking at a design option for the elevator itself.

We have the windows in the—aren't windows in the elevator. Also, the elevator itself has windows.

We've learned from the general contractor that the elevator itself, that cost was $100,000 for just the cab to have the glass doors and the window panel in the side walls.

That does not include the exterior glazing or lighting.

It is also an additional three-month lead time for the elevator.

So, in addition to the normal six-to-eight-month production period of the elevator, it would add three more months for production of the elevator itself.

We could design that. That would be a decision Council could let us know.

We could remove the glazing. We could recreate what I'm calling a beacon on that outside of the building with some lighting that we already had planned for the exterior of the building, and that would save the glazing, curtain wall and the flashing labor details.

So that could be another—I don't really want to estimate this time because the contractor was not able to provide that to me in time—but that could be some additional savings.

We went through a number of—the plumbing contractor told me that all the plumbing fixtures were reasonable, except that the vanity tops that we had specified, which were BABA compliant, because we took the approach that everything in the project to be BABA compliant, which is made in the United States.

That increased the price. That was the feedback we also received from the contractors.

That, however, in the BABA compliance requirement, we're allowed to purchase up to 10 percent of the products that are not made in America.

We didn't want to take that approach because we're spreading it across all the contractors, and we had to balance that.

The lavatory sinks were very expensive. $10,000 for a lavatory sink, which is unreasonable.

Now that we have the contractors, we can find a solid-surface material that have the same performance but doesn’t cost as much.

And there are numerous things within the project. So that could be a significant area.

I do believe there will be other finishes like that that won't impede the quality.

The porcelain tile, it just may not be the exact one we specify.

There still will be solid surfaces. They just won't be the exact ones we specified.

We'll continue looking at performance. We'll continue to evaluate products made in the United States.

There's also the RACP requirement that all steel be produced in—there's Pennsylvania steel certification that will be complied with, but that did elevate the cost, and we're not looking to change any of that.

So, there's certain requirements that were fixed, that we had to do alternative on.

But I think everything else that is—we were always conscientious of the costs as we went into this for selecting finishes, but sometimes just made in America bumped the cost up beyond.

And now we have a chance to discuss that with the contractors specifically.

But I don't think there's not any design changes, quality changes, security-type changes that we're proposing.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMACEK: We looked at the other day at the bids, and the electrical bids seemed a little high on some of their stuff, like fourth floor.

If you look at that, this or something like just the one bathroom, might have just electrical stuff seemed really high, just for the bathroom and electric.

KAREN WELSH: We very much wanted to have that conversation because we've not been able to connect with the electrical contractor in the two days, we've had to try to reach him.

But I do know that on the fourth floor, specifically, there were security items, cameras, wiring, data for communication to the public, for broadcasting, for the audiovisual needs that were not on the other floors.

So, there is some additional costs related to those.

However, we will be looking to verify the lighting selection for the fourth floor.

And again, perhaps we can find alternates of equal performance, equal aesthetics, but lower costs.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMACEK: Okay, because this came out in on a line item. And I saw that as well, and I did not understand that.

KAREN WELSH: There are automated fixtures in the bathrooms, but that's not any different than the other bathrooms, which were much lower cost.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMACEK: Yes.

KAREN WELSH: Yes, absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: In terms of the value engineering that's going to be ongoing and some of these decisions that are going to be made, is it possible that we get some Council input or, you know, at least one of the Council members on too at the table?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARBER: We've already established it.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMACEK: We don't want to sacrifice. At one point, we're going to attempt $10 million project. We don't want to cheap out on the company.

If it's going to cost a little bit more, but we'll get a lot better stuff, we just want to be able to look at it, one of the decisions are made.

KAREN WELSH: Performance is key.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMACEK: Yeah.

CITY MANAGER: We've tried to keep Council involved as much as we could with a walk through the building, meeting with engineers, you know, and so on and so forth.

I will say, I want to give a couple compliments and thanks to Karen and her staff, folks from CGL, Jenn, and some of the other folks, obviously, on staff.

And it's a good problem to have them. We've got the word of the Congressionally Directed Spending. That put a lot of other collars on what we needed to do.

And as you guys know, we're under an extreme time frame moving forward, and what they were able to pull together in the course of a few days and a few weeks was amazing.

We got HUD approval, and it was a yeoman's job, so I wanted to make sure that you get acknowledged for that.

KAREN WELSH: Thank you.

SPEAKER: That was also Urban Design Ventures

CITY MANAGER: So, we have to make sure that we word it properly as far as this being amended.

CITY SOLICITOR: And so, the motion to approve the resolution will be the amended resolution that was presented before Council with the increase in the ARPA funding.

ROLL CALL: Brandon Taylor.

BRANDON TAYLOR: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Spinelli.

SPINELLI: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Hamacek.

HAMACEK: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Clark.

CLARK: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Barber.

BARBER: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Arnone.

ARNONE: Yes.

ROLL CALL: King.

KING: Yes.

RESOLUTION NO. 10808

MAYOR: Resolution Number 10808, **A RESOLUTION OF CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA APPROVING A CONTRACT WITH HERBERT, ROWLAND & GRUBIC, INC. FOR STORMWATER ENGINEERING SERVICES RELATED TO A MULTI-MUNICIPAL STORMWATER MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE**

COUNCIL MEMBER: Motion.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Second.

CITY MANAGER: Yes, this is—this is—this is a stormwater management study that's being funded through the federal government, passed through to PEMA excuse me as I get through my documents here and have it in front of me.

This is to include different municipalities in and around the City of Johnstown.

We've had one—Geistown, two—Southmont. And Southmont responded to be involved with this project.

The total project cost—the grant is around $36,000.

There is a match, which you see in your resolution, of $12,187.59. Part of that funding is also the other municipalities.

One of the things that we had to do in order to manage this grant was to put our name on it and then get the other municipalities to come on board.

As I mentioned, two of them have done that.

The total from the other municipalities totals around $3,000 and some change.

So this is, again, funded primarily through a grant process and as a professional service.

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: What precipitated the need or the desire to do this project?

CITY MANAGER: Well, this is something that started before my tenure.

It was because after we finished the sewage project, we realized that there's a very significant problem with this stormwater runoff, that being the break in a line on Chandler Avenue.

And because of that, we knew that we had—because everything flows downhill into the City—we had to do a study.

And this was the first way.

It started by Alex some time ago to get this information together.

It was suggested by all of them that we come together to do it as a group, which is unheard of in this town.

But everybody, because everything flows out here, and that's how this came up.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARBER: Specifically, all the water comes to us.

COUNCIL MEMBER CLARK: And the mitigation aspect of it specifically, that's all water in the City, known flooding—

COUNCIL MEMBER ARNONE: Because what we did was use the old sewer system to become more stormwater. It hasn't been inspected or taken care of other than winter's drainage. So that was another necessary evil for this.

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: We've asked, or we've gotten feedback, that two are joining in. Who are the two do we have?

CITY CLERK: Geistown and Southmont have sent in their letters that they're going to participate.

COUNCIL MEMBER SPINELLI: Can we hear back from the other?

CITY CLERK: I talked to Lower Yoder the other day. She had some questions. They were reaching out to the PEMA staff to get those questions answered.

MAYOR: Anyone else

ROLL CALL: Barber

BARBER: Yes

ROLL CALL: Clark

CLARK: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Spinelli

SPINELLI: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Brandon Taylor

BRANDON TAYLOR: Yes.

ROLL CALL: King

KING: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Arnone

ARNONE: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Hamacek

HAMACEK: Yes.

RESOLUTION NO. 10809

MAYOR: Resolution Number 10809, a resolution of the City Council of the City of Johnstown authorizing the award of the fueling system site improvements and upgrade project.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARNONE: Motion.

COUNCIL MEMBER CLARK: Second.

CITY MANAGER: Yes, ma'am. This is something that's been long overdue.

This is for our fueling system at the City garage.

You know, we had budgeted some monies for this, even when Jared was still on staff, finally got it out to bid.

The initial bid process came back very high, so we rejected those, and decided to try again.

We put these out. We only got one bid back on this go-round, but for a much-reduced cost.

And this is one of the reasons that not only the money that we had budgeted, but the additional money that we've taken out of the capital CD to cover the cost of this to bring the system—

The system was put in, if memory serves correctly, the system was put in in the early '90s, '92, '93, and around there.

So, it needs repaired.

There's a lot of ad hoc repairs that have gone on.

And for those of you who go down to the City garage, you'll see, for example, there's a plate over the one tank, because they can't get some parts for it.

And so I'd like to get—and the company that did put the bid in is prepared to start work as soon as possible to get in and do it.

MAYOR: Any other questions?

ROLL CALL: King

KING: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Arnone

ARNONE: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Clark

CLARK: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Barber

BARBER: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Brandon Taylor

BRANDON TAYLOR: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Hamacek

HAMACEK: Yes.

ROLL CALL: Spinelli

SPINELLI: Yes.

NEW BUSINESS

MAYOR: Any new business?

OLD BUSINESS

MAYOR: Old business?

MAYOR: We have no one signed up for public comment.

So, at this time, we will adjourn our meeting. Our next regularly scheduled Council meeting will be October 14th

MAYOR: Brief executive session.

PREPARED BY: Jennifer Burkhart, City Clerk