

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
Wednesday, November 18, 2020

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business. Mayor Frank Janakovic called the Public Hearing to order at 5:33 p.m.

The following members of Council were present for roll call:

Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mr. Capriotti, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock, Mr. Vitovich (7).

John Trant, Interim City Manager; Elizabeth Benjamin, Esquire, City Solicitor; Robert Ritter, Finance Director; Robert Statler, City Fire Chief; Chad Miller, Interim Police Chief; Bruce Graham, Gibson Thomas Engineering; and John Dubnansky, Economic Development Director, were also present.

Remarks by Solicitor Benjamin

Ms. Benjamin explained the public hearing was being held to offer public comment on Bill Nos. 26 and 27 of 2020, which she read into the record as follows:

BILL NO. 26 OF 2020, AN ORDINANCE ESTIMATING THE AMOUNT OF REVENUES TO BE RECEIVED BY THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN FROM VARIOUS SOURCES AND APPROPRIATING SPECIFIC SUMS ESTIMATED TO BE REQUIRED FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES FOR THE OPERATIONS OF THE VARIOUS FUNDS, BUREAUS, DEPARTMENTS, THE PAYMENT OF DEBT SERVICE AND THE PENSION FUND OBLIGATIONS OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1ST, 2021, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING CITY OF JOHNSTOWN FUND SECTIONS AND THE RESPECTIVE FUNDS "BUDGET EXHIBIT A DETAILS" AND OTHER LETTERED BUDGETS INCLUDED WITHIN THE BUDGET AT LETTERS B THROUGH H.

BILL NO. 27 OF 2020, AN ORDINANCE FIXING THE SALARIES AND WAGES TO BE PAID ALL ELECTED OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS AND BUREAUS OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1ST, 2021.

Ms. Benjamin explained that this is referenced as the City's proposed Wage and Salary Ordinance for the 2021 calendar year. Both bills were previously presented to Council and voted on for First Reading and now would be appearing on the agenda for Council's meeting to be held later in the evening at 6:00 p.m.

for purposes of final adoption of the 2021 City Budget and Wage and Salary Ordinance.

She further explained that in accordance with Home Rule Charter requirements, the budget was posted for public inspection and made available to the public for review between the timeframe when it was adopted at First Read and this evening meeting and was duly advertised in accordance with requirements of the Home Rule Charter in the Tribune Democrat.

All City Council members and the City Manager were present at this public hearing as was Finance Director, Mr. Robert Ritter. Other members of the City administration and members of the public present as well as a telephone line open to those that wish to make comments.

Public Comment

Paul Ricci, 130 Palm Avenue, Johnstown, was present in person noting that he is a member of the Johnstown Healthcare Rights Committee of Put People First! and was present to comment on the addition of two police officers as part of the 2021 Budget. He questioned whether the City "really needed the extra police", where the City would come up with the \$250,000 in matching funds, and when the grant runs out, how would the City continue to pay those officers. Mr. Ricci stated, instead, the City needed to consider the needs of the community and invest in more comprehensive mental health services. He further stated Put People First! requested a meeting with the Mayor and had received no response. He asked the budget not be passed.

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, Johnstown, was present via telephone, stating he agreed with increasing the number of police officers. He suggested that the budget be amended to approve the City of Johnstown Ethics Board request to investigate any conflict of interest within City Council and the City government.

Robert Moose, 121 Dahlia Street, Johnstown, representing Put People First! was denied the opportunity to speak, as he was not a resident and taxpayer of the City of Johnstown. Ms. Benjamin explained that a representative of Put People First!, Mr. Ricci, had just spoken on behalf of the organization. Mr. Moose noted the presence of a City healthcare worker on his phone call who wanted to make comments. Flor Hernandez, who noted her address as 111 Market Street, Johnstown, was denied the opportunity to speak as she was not a property taxpayer or resident of the City of Johnstown.

Wednesday, November 18, 2020
Stated Public Hearing continued

3 of 3

Larry Blalock, with a business address at 423 Main Street, Johnstown, noted his support of professional license intervention services for mental-health related issues as opposed to the cost of additional police in light of the incident that occurred on the Hickory Street Bridge with George Corson. He asked that the matter be reconsidered.

Lonnie Rietscha, 121 Davis Street, Johnstown, was in agreement with additional police being hired and believed that a strong police presence was necessary due to the increased criminal activities in the City.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Public Hearing concluded at 5:58 p.m.