

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, April 1, 2020

City Council met telephonically in a stated session for the general transaction of business. Mayor Frank Janakovic called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Reverend King offered the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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).

Elizabeth Benjamin, Esquire, City Solicitor; John Trant, Jr., Interim City Manager; Deborah Grass, Act 47 coordinator; and Robert Johnson, Police Chief, were also in attendance via telephone.

John Trant, Jr., Interim City Manager, reviewed the ground rules for conducting this meeting telephonically, which was necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Charlene Stanton, 184 Sell Street, Johnstown, stated the City did a poor job of notifying the public of this meeting being held telephonically, instead of in Council Chambers, and suggested the City's website be updated. She further noted that the March 20, 2020 Declaration of Emergency was improper and there was no authority to issue the proclamation. She stated a meeting should have been held to adopt a resolution. She referred to the declaration of emergency for further discussion of corrections since this was a formal document and the facts contained therein should be accurate.

Mrs. Stanton stated an appointment of a director of emergency management should be made by the Interim City Manager and confirmed by the Governor. If there was no appointed director of emergency management, the City may not be eligible to receive federal monies available in a state of emergency situation. Mrs. Stanton requested the Codified Ordinances be referred to for clarification of the matter.

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, Johnstown, requested that Council, following its vote on the agenda resolution, take actions and steps that mirror that of other cities around the country, which would demonstrate true leadership and concerns for the City.

Deborah Grass, Act 47 Coordinator, offered her assistance to Council, if so requested.

Charlene Stanton commented that the Interim City Manager should be aware of the playgrounds and basketball courts being occupied by kids playing. In light of these unusual circumstances, steps should be taken regarding the matter.

Mayor Janakovic stated Council and the Interim City Manager have been proactive. He announced very recently receiving information that the City would be receiving \$759,000 from the federal government.

Resolution No. 10277

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, RATIFYING THE DECLARATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY EXECUTED BY THE MAYOR AND INTERIM CITY MANAGER ON FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2020, AND AUTHORIZING A CONTINUANCE AND RENEWAL OF THE DECLARATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY NOT TO EXCEED A PERIOD OF 90 DAYS OR UNTIL FURTHER ACTION IS TAKEN BY COUNCIL.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vitovich.

Mr. Capriotti commented for the record that the Fire Chief was indeed the emergency management director by virtue of the position, and he has been in constant contact with Council and the Interim City Manager regarding the emergency situation.

Reverend King thanked Mayor Janakovic, Mr. Trant, and everyone involved for keeping City Hall and the Public Safety Building safe during this emergency.

Mrs. Mock commented on her contact with the Police Chief regarding kids playing on the playgrounds, and the police are doing their best to keep the kids away from those areas. It is a difficult matter to control.

Mrs. Mock also commented that the Fire Chief is the "man in charge," and he was working hand-in-hand with the county, state and federal governments.

Mr. Britt commented, "This is our city, and we all are concerned. We all have families."

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

Chief Robert Johnson explained how the "stay at home" order that was issued by the Governor would affect the City residents. He stated, while the order was issued, the ability of the police to enforce the order is "difficult, if not impossible." People are being asked to leave playgrounds, but there was only so much that can be done to secure the parks and playgrounds. Chief Johnson did note that a curfew would be enforced starting the evening of April 1, 2020. He commended all departments for working together.

Mr. Vitovich inquired whether taking basketball hoops down would be an option to keep the kids off of playgrounds. Chief Johnson explained that the City of Pittsburgh placed two-by-sixes at the bottom and top of the rims, so the ball could not go through the hoops, which he noted might be a better solution. He also suggested there be no organized games for the sake of safety.

Mr. Arnone read a letter from the Johnstown Housing Authority into the record as follows:

Since the virus is in the forefront of everything we're dealing with on a daily basis, we'd like to give a brief summary of some of the measures that the Johnstown Housing Authority has undertaken to help reduce the spread of the virus. All in-person services have been suspended. All business is being conducted by phone, email fax or mail. All move-ins were suspended in both the housing voucher programs and public housing programs. All annual inspections of both housing voucher programs and public housing programs were suspended. Work orders are being prioritized as to the necessity of the work. Only emergency nature work is being completed by the maintenance department. The aforementioned is not an in-depth account of the measures being taken but be assured that the health and well-being of the staff, residents and community is of utmost priority to the Johnstown Housing Authority as we continue to monitor the situation and implement procedures as needed.

Interim City Manager Trant reiterated some of the efforts the City has taken with respect to access to public facilities in terms of dealing with the virus.

He stated all City public events were cancelled through May 11, 2020. Items put in place two weeks ago would be updated on a rolling basis based on guidance from the CDC and government. All City meetings with outside

entities through April 15, 2020, are cancelled. Meetings for the Planning Commission and City Council will be held via conference call.

City Hall is closed until further notice. All doors are posted with CDC guidance regarding the virus. The Public Safety Building is closed to visitors without an appointment. Collection of parking ticket fines and parking enforcement is suspended. Sargent's Stadium at the Point is closed, and building permits are being distributed on a case-by-case and by appointment basis.

Updates are being received from Conemaugh Health System on a regular basis through Chief Statler. First responders are updated daily for treatment and exposure protocols. The City will regularly monitor guidance issued by the CDC and pass that information on to the directors and departments as needed.

City Hall and the Public Safety Building were cleaned and sanitized. Staff has been provided access to hand sanitizers and sanitizing wipes. Procedures were modified to allow for appropriate social distancing as employees go about providing services to City residents.

Mr. Trant asked John Dubnansky to keep track of all expenses and lost revenue due to COVID-19, as well as to evaluate all potential sources for funding for reimbursement. He stated all directors are providing information to Mr. Dubnansky upon receipt. A budget line item number was assigned to keep track of all the expenses.

Mayor Janakovic noted, on an upcoming call with the Senator, he would be asking for instructions as to the proper utilization of the funds. He anticipated some of the money could be used to help keep the City running. He urged Council members and administration to email him with their thoughts and/or ideas on the matter.

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the special meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

This meeting was followed by a scheduled and advertised workshop.