

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, April 20, 2022

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business.
Mayor Frank Janakovic called the meeting to order at 6:00 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, Ms. Huchel,
Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock (7).

Ethan Imhoff, City Manager; Alex Ashcom, Assistant City Manager; Robert Ritter, Finance Director; Brandon Palmer, EADS Group; Jared Campagna, Public Works Director; Richard Pritchard, Police Chief; Robert Statler, Fire Chief; Elizabeth Benjamin, Esquire, City Solicitor were also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 9, 2022 and the Special Meeting Minutes of April 5, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Britt and passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

PROCLAMATIONS, AWARDS, HONORS, RESOLUTIONS OF RECOGNITION

Mayor Janakovic, on behalf of City Council and the City of Johnstown, read into the record the following proclamation recognizing Fair Housing Month:

Whereas, April 10, 2022, marks the 54th Anniversary of the passage of the U.S. Fair Housing Law Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 which annunciates a national policy of fair housing without regard to race, color or creed, national origin, sex, familiar status and handicap and mandates fair housing opportunities to all citizens. The Fair Housing Law prohibits discrimination of the sale or rental of residential housing based on race, color, creed, national origin, sex, familiar status or handicap.

Whereas, the assistance of the Fair Housing legislation renders to citizens their efforts to gain access to affordable housing as considerable though perhaps intangible. The commitment and effort of the public and the government must continue to assure that such assets access to fair housing for all Americans.

Therefore, Whereas, the City of Johnstown, historically has proven its support for the concept of and the right to fair housing, I Frank J. Janakovic, Mayor of the City of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, do hereby join in the national celebration in pursuit of the shared goal responsibility of providing equal housing opportunities for all our citizens.

Be It Further Resolved, That I, Frank J. Janakovic, Mayor of the City of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, do hereby declare the month of April 2022 to be Fair Housing Month in the City of Johnstown.

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, addressed Council regarding Old Business, the Pasquerilla Conference Center, and the deadline for request for proposals. He noted the upcoming Showcase for Commerce and inquired how Council plans on moving forward with the center to keep such events in our city.

Joseph Warhul, 44 Clover Street, addressed Council regarding codes violations, and the City is excessively conservative with regard to fines. He talked about conditions of a building at 701 Coleman Avenue, the former business address of Johnstown Capital Partners, and inquired why a condemned sign is not "hanging on this building". Mr. Warhul had concerns that the City is still not proactively going after owners of "crappy" buildings many by Capital, which had an office in a rotted, blighted building in his neighborhood that is not being kept. He remarked, "With low income residents, there's going to be a low income revenue base and low income services" and implored that City "not have another Citrona mess."

Regarding Vision, Mr. Warhul suggested that the City "walk away from a nondisclosure agreement", that Council has a "public duty to be trusted by him and every other taxpayer".

REPORTS

CITY MANAGER:

Ethan Imhoff reported he and staff are moving forward with the public information meetings for the ARPA sewer lateral and home repair programs, that two meetings will be held tomorrow night, 5:00 and 6:00. He noted the schedule could be found on the City's website.

He noted a recent meeting with the new DCNR Director of Outdoor Recreation, Nathan Reigner, who was very impressed with many of the projects the City has in the pipeline when it comes to recreation.

Mr. Imhoff and Mayor Janakovic presented before the Gunther Leadership class put together by the Chamber of Commerce. There was discussion regarding activities involving the City.

The State of the City Address will be held at Aces on May 18, 2022 at 8:00 a.m. Any Council member interested in attending that event should RSVP either himself or Sara.

MAYOR:

Frank Janakovic, Mayor, reported that he has been working with the Visitors Bureau for rebranding, to give people a visual of Johnstown to relocate here, and for tourism.

He noted his attendance at the Easter Bunny Stroll held downtown.

Mayor met briefly with the 1889 Foundation to review available funding and how to support the City projects.

He was honored to attend the recent Vietnam Veterans ceremony at the 1st Summit Arena,

He noted upcoming JAHA events, regional partnership meetings and Vision board meetings.

CITY SOLICITOR:

Elizabeth Benjamin, Esquire, City Solicitor, noted she is available to answer questions throughout the agenda.

CITY ENGINEER:

Brandon Palmer, EADS Group, reported that an evaluation feasibility study for a stand-alone AC unit was provided for the Conference Center. There would be additional discussion in the upcoming weeks regarding the matter.

Terra Works is making progress on the Fairfield Avenue storm water project. He noted the section from Strayer Street to Marbury Avenue was completed and work has commenced on Virginia Avenue towards D Street. He

anticipates that the work will be completed closer to the June timeframe with final paving by the end July.

Bids for the Sam's Run and Cheney Run flood protection projects were opened and will be evaluated. Further information would be provided at the next meeting.

Mr. Palmer noted design work has commenced on the Elk Run debris basin (Stackhouse Park) to get it back to capacity where it can function as originally intended.

NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISONS:

Mr. Capriotti noted his attendance at several events, including the Easter event downtown. He spent some time at a few of the safe havens started up in the City which are becoming more and more attended by the kids of the community.

Mr. Britt noted his attendance at some recent Easter events.

Mr. Arnone stated, as he has done in the past, he was providing an update of statistical information related to the population of the public housing communities located within the City of Johnstown. He reported, as of March 31, 2022, the total population of the public housing communities was 2,628. Section Eight voucher holders totaled 984, which amounted to a total combination of 3,610 families. Currently, 48 percent of the people living in poverty in the City of Johnstown were being assisted.

He noted that the JHA recently received enough COVID tests from the PA Department of Health for each of their 1,500 units, three to four test kits per family. With help from the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, fresh produce was distributed to the residents in the Oakhurst and Solomon Homes.

As Council's representative to the GJWA, he reported that over \$100,000 was received from the LIHWAP program to assist GJWA customers with paying off delinquent water and sewage bills.

He stated over 55 lead services have been renewed so far this year, and the plan is to replace 250 renewals this year. In the month of March, 76 pressure tests were completed, and thus far this month, 20 were tested. The GJWA was still experiencing SSOs and will continue to work on the system over the next two years.

A walk-through inspection revealed no deficiencies within the system.

Mr. Arnone noted that the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association regarding a group trying to buy all independent water companies, which would increase the cost of water, opposes Senate Bill No. 597.

Mrs. Mock reported that the hockey arena at Roxbury Park is near completion and a league is in the process of being organized.

Fence and garden box painting will be done at the community garden this Saturday.

Reverend King reported that a job fair would be held on May 3, 2022 at the 1st Summit Arena.

A praise service will be held in Central Park on May 22, 2022, beginning at 3:00 p.m.

Ms. Huchel noted she is looking forward to the Welcoming Johnstown celebration to be held April 30, 2022 at the State Theater. Over a dozen local immigrants will be present to share their stories. She indicated the matter is being cosponsored by the Johnstown Heritage Association, the Gallery on Gazebo and the Unity Coalition.

She is in the process of reviewing a proclamation for June and thanked John DeBartola for presenting some draft language. She offered further information regarding the matter.

PETITIONS

None.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL READ

BILL NO. 7 OF 2022, AN ORDINANCE UPDATING THE PERSONNEL ORDINANCE AND POLICY TO RECOGNIZE JUNETEENTH AS A CITY HOLIDAY TO COMMEMORATE EMANCIPATION.

Mr. Capriotti made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Mr. Arnone and passed by the following vote:

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

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Nays: None (0).

BILL NO. 8 OF 2022, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 5322 ADOPTED DECEMBER 8, 2021, AMENDED ON MARCH 9, 2022 AND AMENDING THE SALARIES AND WAGES TO BE PAID TO CERTAIN EMPLOYEES OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2022.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Mr. Capriotti and passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READ:

BILL NO. 9 OF 2022, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, PART FOURTEEN - BUILDING AND HOUSING CODE, TITLE TWO-BUILDING AND HOUSING STANDARDS, CHAPTER 1428, SECTION 1428.99, PENALTY, ORD. 5144 PASSED 3-15-14; ORD 5238 PASSED 9-13-17 AMENDING PROPERTY MAINTENANCE RULES AND REGULATIONS.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Mr. Britt.

There was further discussion regarding the ordinance. Mrs. Mock had concerns that two employees recently hired have resigned. Mr. Capriotti suggested that other options be explored moving forward.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mr. Britt, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock, Ms. Huchel, Mr. Arnone (6).

Nays: Mr. Capriotti, (1).

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution No. 10499

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, ENTERING INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE GREATER JOHNSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT TO PROVIDE A SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THE SAME.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve. Mr. Britt seconded the motion.

There was further discussion regarding a school resource officer being employed year-round. Chief Pritchard noted that there are extended school-year programs throughout the district.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

Resolution No.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, ENTERING INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH FIRST CREDIT RESOURCES TO PROVIDE TOWING SERVICES FOR ABANDONED VEHICLES AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER AND DIRECTOR OF CODE ENFORCEMENT TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THE SAME.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve. Mr. Britt seconded the motion.

There was further discussion regarding the resolution. Mr. Capriotti inquired if an RFP was done. The matter would be reviewed further.

Mrs. Mock made a motion to table. The motion was seconded by Mr. Capriotti and passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 10500

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER AND FINANCE DIRECTOR TO SIGN ALL DOCUMENTS AND TAKE ANY/ALL OTHER ACTIONS NECESSARY IN THE PURCHASE OF HYDRAULIC RESCUE TOOLS FROM WITMER PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP.

Mr. Capriotti made a motion to approve. Mr. Arnone seconded the motion.

Chief Statler explained this is for equipment commonly referred to as the Jaws of Life used in vehicle extrication and would be battery powered instead of hydraulic making it more mobile.

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

Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 10501

A RESOLUTION OF CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING ACTING CITY MANAGER DESIGNEES AS PROVIDED FOR IN SECTION 604 OF THE HOME RULE CHARTER.

Mrs. Mock made a motion to approve. Mr. Arnone seconded the motion.

Designees would include the Assistant City Manager, Director of Community and Economic Development, Director of Public Works and Director of Finance.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 10502

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO SUBMIT

A GRANT REQUEST TO THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STATEWIDE LOCAL SHARE ACCOUNT FUND GRANT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,000,000 TO BE USED TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW CITY OF JOHNSTOWN FIRE STATION.

Mr. Capriotti made a motion to approve. Mr. Arnone seconded the motion.

It was noted there is no plan for a new public safety facility now, but the grant has to be applied for in a certain timeframe. Chief Statler commented that upgrades to both fire stations were last done after the '77 Flood, and the Ash Street Station is of higher priority.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Ms. Huchel, Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mr. Capriotti,
Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock (7).
Nays: None (0).

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Agreement with the Johnstown Redevelopment Authority

Mr. Imhoff explained that an agreement for consideration would be placed on next month's agenda with regard to JRA's administration of the sewer lateral home repair program utilizing the City's program and funds.

Mr. Capriotti suggested that options be explored with code enforcement and property maintenance, including outsourcing, and determine whether it requires and RFP or workshop discussion. Ms. Benjamin explained it could be a directive to the City Manager and would not require a motion.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Pasquerilla Conference Center.

Mr. Imhoff noted that proposals have been received. Repairs necessary include separating the facility's HVAC system from the 1st Summit Arena, \$800,000 an additional \$200,000 for new carpet/flooring and \$150,000 for concrete and masonry repairs. He is working on a plan to bring in some grant funding to address those repairs. Staff will be evaluating the proposals and further information would be provided at the next meeting. There was further discussion.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

1. Public Works.

Jared Campagna, Public Works Director, reiterated that bids were opened for the two flood channels, and a resolution for approval would be on next month's agenda. There was further discussion regarding water levels being low enough to start the projects.

The new street sweeper was received and is in the process of getting ready to be put on the road.

2. Police Department

Richard Pritchard, Johnstown Police Chief, reported training was held and would be held again in six months.

He noted a meeting is scheduled with Representative Joyce regarding the NIBRS compliancy and whether grant funding could be obtained.

A meeting with Senator Langerholc is scheduled for Monday, April 25, 2022, regarding area crime. Chief Pritchard noted some "good progress with arrests."

A meeting would be held with Codes staff regarding towing vehicles off private property.

The Chief noted a sergeant's test would be conducted on June 3rd, 2022, for a possible promotion in July. He will be recruiting at IUP on May 3, 2022, and testing on May 11, 2022.

With regard to body-worn cameras, Chief commented that sensors are necessary so that when an officer draws a gun it turns on the camera automatically. The cost for that came in at \$9,000. An additional server necessary to back up data is \$15,000. There was further discussion.

Mr. Arnone thanked Chief Pritchard for attending a recent meeting with JHA, Sheriff and the DA.

Community response with regarding to reporting on the tip line or texting has not increased. There was discussion concerning when Penn Highlands Act 120 program would be up and running.

3. Fire Department

Robert Statler, Johnstown Fire Chief, reported that volunteer representatives of the smoke detector program through the Red Cross would be working the Hornerstown area next Thursday. He stated anyone interested in obtaining smoke detectors can contact the Red Cross or the Fire Department. One in every bedroom is recommended.

Chief Statler noted one retirement today and one of the captains would be offered a promotion to Assistant Chief. One new hire will start on Monday.

4. Community Development

Questions by the audience would be directed to the City Manager at the appropriate time.

5. Code Enforcement

None

PUBLIC COMMENT - NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Anthony Trigona, 306 Luther Road, Johnstown, addressed Council regarding Help is on the Way, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization granted on 7/9/2021 with a mission to assist veterans and non-veterans along the way. A building located at 927 Franklin Street was donated to the organization by an out of state group of investors and he would like to turn the building into a full service business called Veterans Auto Care where trained vets would work on cars, SUVs and pickup trucks owned by doctors, nurses and employees working at Conemaugh Hospital. He described all the services that would be offered and talked about the potential for a fully furnished home for veterans on a lot across the street for a vet's family to stay free of charge while visiting a veteran in the hospital. He estimated all this to cost an estimated \$800,000 and inquired if Council could help obtain funding that would assist in raising this capital.

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, Johnstown, appeared as president on behalf of the Keystone Alliance Gay Life Newsletter. He wore a pink triangle much as his gay brethren in Germany were forced to wear in the 1930s and 40s, so they

could be identified and falsely blamed for the country's problems much like Ms. Huchel did to him tonight. He talked about Lucy's Place, which openly accepts gay customers, and stated he was outraged that the police department would be used to enforce discriminatory homophobic law instead of targeting drug dealers and killers.

Mr. DeBartola indicated he was repulsive of the revelation that Vision 2025 is trying to bring refugees to the City despite earlier denials and voiced his disgust at the decision. He noted that Representative Burns uncovered emails from Mr. Tedesco to members regarding the matter. He asked that ordinance 840 be repealed immediately or, that otherwise, he would be "mobilizing the state's gay community to converge on homophobic City Hall in protest."

Laquan Marshall, 215 Franklin Street, was present to introduce himself as a real estate developer working with the Community and Economic Development, JRA and other local organizations to assist in revitalization of the Central Business District. He noted his group also owns and manages residential properties in Kernville, Moxham, the West End, Dale and Franklin. Mr. Marshall indicated that he lives here with his family and is here for full transparency to answer questions from the public and Council has.

It was noted that this is public comment portion of the meeting, and Council would be happy to meet with Mr. Marshall and anyone else after the meeting. Mrs. Mock commented regarding 701 Coleman Avenue.

Mayor Janakovic suggested a workshop be held to address the questions brought up during public comment.

Mr. Capriotti commented that he applauds anyone for trying to "make things better" and offered suggestions regarding those interested in purchasing blighted properties.

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7:20 p.m.

Next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.