

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, November 28, 2022

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business.
Mayor Janakovic called the meeting to order at 4:57 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; Richard Pritchard, Police Chief, were also present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AMENDMENT

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the amended agenda to limit public comment on agenda items to five minutes and public comment on nonagenda items to three minutes. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mock and passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

The change would be posted within 24 hours to the City's website.

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Bishop Joseph McGauley, 1081 McKinley Avenue, Johnstown, expressed concerns regarding how COVID funds were dispersed by the City. Bishop McGauley apologized to Mrs. Mock and Mr. Capriotti for failing to attend a planned meeting as he was officiating at a funeral. He commented on a church in the area receiving \$200,000 while his church who feeds kids everyday could not receive any funds.

He had discussion with Mr. Britt regarding a Facebook posting.

He inquired about the connection between some Council members and Vision 2025 and expressed disappointment with the Mayor and the City Manager.

Tina McGauley, 1081 McKinley Avenue, Johnstown, program coordinator for

Destiny Outreach, had concerns as to why the after-school program was not able to receive funding. She stated everybody should have been able to receive some type of help that worked through the pandemic.

Chloe Cosby, 1018 Hudson Street, Johnstown, is one of the assistants at the church who helps with food service. She was previously one of the kids who was helped, and now she is helping with the kids and the church. She was commended for her efforts.

Jkiyah Bodnex is also an assistant at the church who helps with the kids and has been a church member for ten years. She inquired as to why the church was not able to receive funding.

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, Johnstown, had concerns regarding the agenda item for the proposed budget and the City Manager's involvement with the disbursement of ARPA funding. He noted that nonprofits controlled by Vision 2025, members of City Council, relative and friends received a lot of the funding and asked whether it was a "coincidence."

He talked about the ballot referendum that removed the residency requirement for the City Manager, which "allowed Ethan Imhoff to be hired" and asked if Vision had influence over taxpayer spending and funding.

Mr. DeBartola stated the 1889 Foundation was in receipt of \$250,000; ACRP, \$156,436; American Legion, \$34,500; Cambria County Library Association, \$350,000; Flood City Youth Fitness Academy, \$280,000; Gallery on Gazebo, \$250,000; Greater Johnstown YMCA, \$280,310; Johnstown Area Heritage Association, \$250,000 all with members or relatives who sit on the Vision Board; Learning Lamp, \$250,000; State Theater, \$250,000; United Way, \$156,927. Mr. DeBartola called it a "disgrace" that the ARPA funding was given to family, friends and influential people, and denied the church. He will continue reading the list in the public comment portion at the end of the meeting.

Aydahna Tisinger, Johnstown, has helped at Bishop McGauley's church since she was at least 15 and commented it was very sad that "we couldn't get money for the kids."

Ava Tisinger, Johnstown, read a Bible verse into the record. She noted it was ridiculous that the church didn't get the money that it desperately needs and would like to "see justice" and the right thing being done.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL READ AND ADOPTION

BILL NO. 24 OF 2022, AN ORDINANCE TO VACATE A 70-FOOT SECTION OF
GALENA PLACE BETWEEN PEELOR STREET AND COLLINS STREET
IN THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA, AS A PUBLIC THOROUGHFARE.

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

Reverend King asked that Public Works clear the brush for easier ingress and egress. The City Manager commented that this alley was never opened as an official city alley.

Deacon Jeffrey Wilson, Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, along with Reverend Clyde Williams, were present and stated for about 40 years there has been no traffic in that alley and the church would like to use the area for parking. He asked that Council move forward on the bill tonight.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion of 2023 Proposed City of Johnstown Capital Plan and Budget.

Ethan Imhoff, City Manager, referred members to the latest copy of the budget for further discussion.

Robert Ritter, Finance Director, discussed a few changes that were made including the training building relocation in the amount of \$62,000 that was carried over; the 2015 fire truck payment in the amount of \$96,754, which was not included in the prior capital budget; and the community messaging board was added to next year's budget.

Mr. Imhoff noted a conversation with Michael Bellvia, the owner of Pro Disposal, regarding spring cleanup next year involving a roll-off located at several sites throughout the City on various weekends, a \$25,000 to \$40,000 savings. Mr. Bellvia is willing to attend the codes workshop early next year for further discussion.

Mrs. Mock stated roll-offs were utilized when Ms. Denny was city manager and called it an "absolute disaster", that people were bringing items in from other municipalities.

Mr. Imhoff indicated the LST tax from Act 47 will be disabled and is not included in the current information. There will be a meeting scheduled with Judge Krumenacker regarding the matter.

Ms. Huchel referred to information regarding salaries and wages and noted she does not draw a salary.

Mr. Imhoff indicated \$10,000 was budgeted for animal control which is being doubled for next year. There would be further discussion with the Humane Society and hopefully an updated contract would be provided by December or January.

There was discussion about vacant property revenue and additional police funding.

Chief Richard Pritchard commented part of the money would fund new taser equipment, body cameras, in-car plate readers, and upgrades to equipment, management software. Retention funds would be funded through grant funding. There was further discussion regarding other budget items.

2. Discussion of Appointments to City Boards, Commissions, Authorities

Mr. Imhoff referred members to updated information of the various boards, commissions and authorities. Those members whose terms are expiring or have expired and have expressed interest in being reappointed are highlighted in green. Applications will be accepted up until the December meeting. There was further discussion.

3. American Rescue Plan Status Update

Alex Ashcom, Assistant City Manager, reported the City received a combined \$8 million in total requests for the \$4 million funding which was reviewed and scored by himself, Mr. Dubnansky and Mr. Ritter, and 22 organizations were funded for a total of roughly \$3.8 million. He stated these funds would be matched with an additional \$2.5 million in grants outside of the City that would be bringing funding into the City. Checks have been distributed to all but one organization and projects should begin shortly. Expense reports are due at the end of January and due every 90 days thereafter.

Round two of small business and nonprofit programs closed on September 30. Mr. Ashcom indicated 22 applications had been approved for showing demonstrative losses as a result of the pandemic, and \$500,000 had been distributed to that program.

Mr. Ashcom indicated that last year the City moved \$567,000 from the ARPA fund to the general fund to cover losses incurred by the City as a result of the pandemic.

He reported the entire revenue loss for the City will be roughly \$5.65 million and another \$1 million that has gone into lost revenue to cover JRA's sewer lateral program.

Hundreds of applications have been received for the Home Weatherization Program. As of November 18, 2022, 237 homes had been approved. Of those, 128 had been successfully weatherized with another 75 in improvements. Overall, \$2.3 million of the allotted three million dollars has been committed. Fewer than 10 properties have been denied.

As of November 18, 2022, six families had successfully closed under the home purchasing program. Six other families had successfully applied and await closing dates, and another six are partial applications.

The Fairfield Avenue storm line replacement project has been completed. The Cherry Run and Sam's Run wall replacements are near completion and may have been completed as of this date. The Elk Run debris basin project is underway and short be completed shortly.

Projects continue on Main Street in conjunction with the RAISE grant. Environmental historic sites need to be completed before moving on to the next step.

Mr. Ashcom reported that \$150,000 was recently received from DCNR to create the Minersville Playground, and the remaining \$350,000 in the line item would be spent next year.

He discussed improvements at Sargent's Stadium which included a new playing surface, lighting and scoreboards, the establishment of a new office space and tests for concert turf will be discussed next year.

Mr. Ashcom noted a comprehensive playground study was performed last year which highlighted improvements that needed to be done. There was further discussion.

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Stated Meeting, continued

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PUBLIC COMMENT - NONAGENDA ITEMS

Bishop McGauley commented that there was no excuse for them not to have gotten a "slice of bread", that someone "put their thumb on the scale," and Mr. Imhoff "had lied to him."

Tina McGauley does not understand why the church did not receive any funding and the money wasn't distributed "more fairly", that "everybody should have got something even if it wasn't what they requested."

Mr. DeBartola continued to note that West End Ambulance was in receipt of \$241,506 of ARPA funding; Carlos Gunby, former Johnstown City Manager who was caught "stealing taxpayer money"; St. Mary's Church, \$90,000; Monsignor Balta, JRA Chair, \$2,839,679. And not a single slice of bread for Jefferson Memorial Church and its Destiny Outreach Program.

With regard to appointments, Mr. DeBartola commented the City appoints "yes people."

EXECUTIVE SESSION

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6:03 p.m.

The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.