

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 28th, 2023

City Council met in a special session for the purposes of considering an Amendment to the 2021 HOME-ARP Allocation Plan and Annual Action Plan. The Special Meeting was called to order at 5 P.M. by Mayor Frank Janakovic. Rev. King offered the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The following Council Members were present for roll call:

Rev. Sylvia King, Mr. Britt, Ms. Huchel, Mr. Capriotti, Mayor Janakovic

Absent: Mrs. Mock, Mr. Arnone

The following City staff members were present: City Manager Ethan Imhoff, Assistant City Manager Alex Ashcom, John Dubnansky, Director of Community and Economic Development, and Department of Community and Economic Development Fiscal Officer Kathy Webb.

PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

John DeBartola, of 1197 Bedford Street, raised concerns regarding the proposed change to the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan and Annual Action Plan, voicing his opposition to the plan as it would attract homeless from outside the City to take up residence within it. He stated that there are many other organizations within the City already able to address the problem, and thus no further action was necessary.

Melissa Barrett, of 899 Bedford Street, informed City Council that she was currently residing at Martha and Mary House within the City. She further relayed that she is staying in Martha and Mary House and wished to submit her opinion as someone currently without stable housing. She voiced opposition to the proposed changes to the HOME ARP plan as she had to prove her residency to the Martha and Mary House. She stated that while it was a tiresome process, it ensured that homeless individuals outside the City would not take residence within it. She informed council of her fears that if homeless individuals are allowed free entry

into shelters, it would put others who need housing at risk. She added to Mr. DeBartola's comments that Martha and Mary House currently has multiple open beds for those in need. She encouraged City Council to oppose the change.

RESOLUTIONS

Following Public Comment, John Dubnansky presented to Council the resolution amending the 2021 HOME-ARP Allocation Plan and Annual Action Plan; the plan would now allow for the establishment of a homeless shelter. He explained how City staff developed a plan of action to address the homeless issues in Johnstown and how the process will be carried out as required by HUD regulations. Mr. Dubnansky also explained that a public hearing was held at City Hall on March 7, 2023 regarding the shelter; he further relayed that all those in attendance supported the change and the proposed shelter. Mr. Dubnansky explained he needed Council's approval to submit a plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development within 30 days. Council discussed how the facility would be managed and regulated. Council members voiced opposition to a low-barrier shelter; rather, the facility should have individual rooms to maximize the security and safety of individuals. Mr. Dubnansky answered all questions and stated that more information will follow once feedback from the Department of Housing and Urban Development is received.

Rev. King motioned to approve the change. The motion was seconded by Mr. Britt and passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mr. Britt, Mr. Capriotti, Ms. Huchel, Mayor Janakovic, Rev. King.

Nays: None (0)

OLD BUSINESS

City Manager Imhoff informed City Council and the public about the City leaving Act 47 status on April 27, 2023. He asked City Council if they had specific requests regarding celebrations.

Mayor Janakovic stated that it should be a public celebration that City residents are able to attend.

Reverend King submitted that staff should be included in any celebrations to thank them for their hard work over the years to achieve the Act 47 Exit.

Mr. Britt added that previous City Employees involved in the Act 47 exit should be invited as well.

Mr. Capriotti voiced his concerns regarding a fiscally responsible celebration.

PUBLIC COMMENT – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

John DeBartola, of 1197 Bedford Street, submitted opposition to the approval of the HOME ARP allocation change. He advocated for the removal of Johnstown Housing Authority Board Members as well.

Melissa Barrett, of 899 Bedford Street, added to her comments voicing opposition to the approval of the HOME ARP allocation change.

Charlene Stanton of 184 Sell Street voiced opposition to any and all Act 47 celebrations. She informed City Council that as the City is now leaving Act 47, it should not spend taxpayer funds on celebratory functions. She also relayed issues with repayments of Department of Community and Economic Development loan programs.

Linda Yutzy of 160 Barron Avenue submitted various code complaints and issues with abandoned homes within the City.

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:30 P.M.