

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, July 12, 2023

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business at the Central Park Complex Building, Conference Room, 110 Franklin Street, Johnstown, PA. Mayor 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, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock (5).

Absent: Michael Capriotti (1).

Laura Huchel (1) was not present at the commencement of the meeting.

Ethan Imhoff, City Manager; Alex Ashcom, Assistant City Manager; Robert Ritter, Finance Director; John Dubnansky, Economic Development Director; Elizabeth Benjamin, Esquire, City Solicitor; Robert Statler, Fire Chief; Richard Pritchard, Police Chief; Dave Williams, Codes Enforcement Manager were also in attendance. Brennen Myers, Mike Lamb and Joel Valentine were present from Wessel and Company.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 14, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mr. Britt and passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King,  
Mrs. Mock (5).

Nays: None (0).

PROCLAMATIONS, AWARDS, HONORS, RESOLUTIONS OF RECOGNITION

Mayor Janakovic noted that he or a member of Council would be presenting a proclamation for Pride on Saturday, July 15, 2023, at Central Park.

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

None.

REPORTS

CITY MANAGER:

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Ethan Imhoff, City Manager, reported that there is a call out for City volunteers as currently there are three vacancies on the Planning Commission which has been advertised in the Tribune Democrat as well as social media. He noted that a volunteer interest form is also available on the City's website.

#### AUDITOR'S 2022 CITY AUDIT REPORT

Joel Valentine, Wessel and Company, was present for discussion of preliminary results of the City's 2022 audit. Documentation was present to Council members for review.

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Laura Huchel entered the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

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Mr. Valentine introduced Mike Lamb and Brennen Myers who were in charge of supervising the audit and they presented the findings of the audit concerning ARPA funds, losses on market investments. It was noted the pension was 100 percent funded with the use of sewage proceeds, and that this year with the market, the pension is back down to just over 80 percent funded and is expected to come back around. The next pension discussion would be held on August 2, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Total revenue changes were noted. A surplus in the general fund means the City continues the trend of being in the black. A graph of where the City is spending dollars was referred to and compared to prior years. Other graphs offered comparisons of real estate taxes, history of the real estate taxes, the collection percentage of real estate taxes, earned income taxes, business privilege and mercantile taxes, pension contributions.

Mayor Janakovic commended Council on the wise investment of sewage fund money.

Mr. Myers discussed a formal communication with Council from Wessel and Company.

The single audit report which is the federal compliance portion of the audit was the next topic of discussion which lists all the federal awards and federal grants received by the City, journal entries. Mr. Imhoff explained the procurement process is currently being done within each department but would need to be centralized to improve function and the new software will help the process.

There was discussion regarding subrecipient monitoring, the receipt of funds administered by a third party, that in this case, ARPA money was passed to JRA as subrecipient. Mr. Ashcom performed subrecipient monitoring without

issue. An amended agreement was suggested. Mr. Valentine answered questions from Council members.

Operational Recommendations was the next matter addressed was review of authorized check signers on accounts, which currently is Mr. Imhoff and other staff and former city managers. Mr. Arnone suggested that a signature sheet with all names of check signers be obtained from the bank.

The second recommendation was that the sewer lateral component agreement with JRA needs to be refined. It was recommended that the loss revenue calculation be done for 2022 and going forward. It was also recommended that monitoring be done for loans from the job development loan program. A formal process for subrecipient monitoring was recommended. Documentation for pre award activities was suggested. ARPA reporting was found to be timely and correct but it was recommended that contractors be listed appropriately. With regard to the City's new accounting system the auditor recommended that there be reconciliation between the old system and the new system.

Pending items which need to be finalized include the OPEB actuary report.

Mr. Valentine summarized by noting the progress that Council has made but commented that the City still has a tax base that's not growing while expenses continue to grow. Mayor Janakovic commented that also, the City's administration, union, non-union employees have all worked together to get to this point. Mr. Imhoff indicated that he is working with staff on a proper comprehensive plan which would help Council look at the financial picture, projects and priorities for the upcoming years. He stated he is working with the DCED secretary on funding priorities.

Mr. Imhoff thanked all for their flexibility in the change of venue tonight due to HVAC issues at the Public Safety Building. The RFP for the design portion of the Public Safety Building will be out before the next Council meeting. He reminded members of the \$2.5 million set aside in ARPA for fire and police and the Public Safety Building. An earmarked request is pending right now with Senator Casey in the amount of \$3 million which the City may have a "very good shot at". Senator Langerholc is also involved in the matter.

MAYOR:

Mayor Frank Janakovic congratulated the Commissioners on the work completed at the Senior Center grand reopening attended by himself and other staff.

It was noted a team of City, JRA and JARI staff is working expeditiously to find another operator.

Mayor Janakovic reported his participation at Thunder and Valley, the Juneteenth event and proclamation. He encouraged all to attend the free concerts at Roxbury Park, PNG and Central Park.

He noted he would be attending the Pennsylvania Mayors' Conference in Lancaster, PA. The conference would be held in Johnstown next year.

On behalf of the City the Mayor noted he was asked to speak at a conference in Detroit sometime in August which will be an opportunity to represent the changes in Johnstown.

CITY SOLICITOR:

Elizabeth Benjamin, Esquire, had no report during this portion of the meeting but wanted to note for the record that Ms. Huchel entered the meeting during the City Manager's Report.

CITY ENGINEER:

None.

COUNCIL UPDATES/NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISONS:

Mrs. Mock inquired about the City's new website. It was noted to be up and working but suggestions are welcome.

It was noted the only vacancies currently are on the Planning Commission. There was discussion regarding possible vacancies on other commissions or boards.

She noted the flower boxes are out, gardens are planted. The \$10,000 neighborhood plan will be submitted in September. It was noted that Brownstown is now displaying flower boxes.

Reverend King thanked all for participating in and making Juneteenth a success.

She reported that the deadline for Community Foundation is the end of August.

The Coopersdale meeting will be held tomorrow, July 13, 2023 and the Hornerstown meeting will be held on July 17, 2023 at 6:00 at the new Studio 404. The Prospect group will hold its meeting at Stevens Memorial Church on July 19, 2023. The Roxbury meeting will be held on July 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. David and Donna Baxter Porcher from Pittsburgh are the owners of the new Studio 404.

Ms. Huchel noted that free concerts are held in Central Park. She encouraged all to visit the Farmers' Markets and Night Markets in the City.

She reported that the Main Street Planning Meeting which will take place on the 19th at 4:00 in the Central Park Gazebo at which time some initial design ideas would be shared.

Mr. Arnone provided an update on statistical information related to the population of public housing communities located within the City of Johnstown. He reported that as June 30, 2023, the population of the public housing communities was 2,379, Section Eight voucher holders totaled 1,141 families for a total of 3,520 families. Currently 47 percent of the people living in poverty in the City of Johnstown are being assisted. He noted the Prospect situation has affected these population statistics. Currently there is no updated plan in place for the Prospect community and more information would be provided by the end of July concerning the next steps.

Mr. Arnone reported that JHA application for HUD's Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant is being reviewed by HUD and an update is expected soon. Grant money would be used to identify opportunities to revitalize the greater neighborhoods of Oakhurst and Coopersdale.

Mr. Arnone thanked all local partners who are hosting positive events in the housing communities this summer and stated their efforts are appreciated. He noted all participating agencies are bringing in family-safe activities to the residents and providing direct access to local resources offered.

As Council's representative on the GJWA, the service line inventory is currently 61 percent with over 11,000 services identified and entered into the GIS system and that the Authority is working continually until all services are identified ahead of the November 2024 deadline.

He reported several dozen commercial accounts have not complied with the Authority's requirement for annual backflow devices which are used to keep the water in the building go back into the system.

Mr. Arnone stated, over the past year, significant time and effort has been dedicated to reducing the amount of unaccountable water. For the first time the amount of water being produced at the Riverside Treatment Plant is just above 6 millions gallons per day.

He reported that Snyder is approximately 98 percent completed with the construction of the whole project and 97 percent completed with the miscellaneous construction.

He stated, as of the end of June, the City of Johnstown is 64.3 percent pressure tested.

As representative of the American Legion Mr. Arnone thanked the City for the grant for the purchase of two lift chairs and rooms upstairs are being restored and should be in place by August. He stated Thunder in the Valley was a tremendous success for the legion. Mr. Arnone noted his participation in the informational veteran's meeting and work on Main Street at the War Memorial and another meeting is scheduled at a later date.

Mr. Britt noted nothing more to report other than some of the things already mentioned. He offered another shout out to the Porcher Family on the opening of Studio 404.

He commented that June was a busy month for the Johnstown area and commented that "it was great to see life back in the City of Johnstown". He commended the City police, firemen and residents for working together.

PETITIONS:

None.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL READ AND ADOPTION

BILL NO. 7 OF 2023, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE TRANSFER OF ANY/ALL CERTAIN REAL ESTATE INTEREST (S) EXISTING WITHIN A TRACT OF PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE 17TH WARD OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN LYING ALONG AND BETWEEN THE STONYCREEK RIVER WALL AND INCLINED PLANE TO THE CAMBRIA COUNTY TRANSIT AUTHORITY AND FURTHER AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE PROPER OFFICERS OF THE CITY TO DO ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THIS SALE AND TAKE ANY/ALL ACTIONS INCIDENTAL TO SAME.

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

Attorney Benjamin explained that the county or state is definitely the one with the interest and since that cannot be determined, this is a more effective means by which to accomplish the transfer than doing a quiet title action when you know that it's one of the two entities but not able to identify which.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

#### ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READ

None

#### RESOLUTIONS

##### Resolution No.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,  
CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING A MINOR  
SUBDIVISION LOT MERGE CONSOLIDATING SEVEN PARCELS ON  
HORNER STREET IN THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN (TABLED).

Mr. Imhoff stated he did not anticipate action on this matter for a long time.

Mr. Britt made a motion to remove from table. The motion was seconded by Ms. Huchel and passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

Mr. Arnone made a motion to withdraw the resolution from the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mock.

Mr. Imhoff indicated that staff has met with the new owner of the Dollar General and that the City Engineer has submitted to the new owners a list of corrective measures that need to be taken at this property.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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Yeas: Mr. Arnone, Ms. Huchel, Mrs. Mock, Reverend King,  
Mayor Janakovic, Mr. Britt (6).  
Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 105613

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH QUAKER SALES CORPORATION AWARDING THE 2023 PAVING PROJECT (LINWOOD AVENUE, RINGLING AVENUE, WESS STREET, LEHMAN PLACE, WIDMAN STREET, WINDSOR PLACE, HAMMOND PLACE, LOUIS STREET, MILES STREET, HERRON STREET, SLAGLE STREET, ANNIE STREET, BANTEL STREET AND SANDRY PLACE).

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

There was further discussion.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock, Ms. Huchel,  
Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt (6).  
Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 105614

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH THE EADS GROUP IN THE AMOUNT OF \$34,500.00 FOR DESIGN AND ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE HONAN AVENUE PARK PROJECT.

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

Yeas: Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock, Ms. Huchel,  
Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt (6).  
Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 105615

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,  
CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING A MINOR  
SUBDIVISION ON MAPLE AVENUE IN THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN.

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

Mr. Arnone noted the St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church rectory is being separated from the church so the house could be sold.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Reverend King, Mrs. Mock, Ms. Huchel, Mr. Arnone,  
Mr. Britt, Mayor Janakovic (6).  
Nays: None (0).

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. Public Works

No Report.

2. Police Department

Chief Richard Pritchard reported a successful Thunder in the Valley and offered a shout out to the County for sending the SWAT team and State Police for their gang intelligence and horse unit.

Another recruiting drive has been started in July for those currently Act 120 certified or those who will be certified by mid-September. He noted zero applicants thus far with the next step being the test on the 27th if there is a new applicant. Once this is closed out, a recruiting drive will be held for individuals who are not Act 120 certified and will be sent to the academy. He reported three recruits are at the academy now and hopes some will join the JPD in December.

Chief Pritchard noted review of FTO software to add into DMS which puts it in a cloud to make it easier for the field trainer and training officer to complete the reports. Performance evaluations can be rated over the phone. Developments continue with the camera system and a meeting was held with Watkins regarding the plate readers.

Mrs. Mock will get all information into a proposal form and present it.

Ms. Huchel inquired about some responder statistics for a particular property. Chief noted maybe 15 calls over a 3-year period. He will forward information through the City Manager to Ms. Huchel.

Mr. Britt inquired if the Chief had any information about a stabbing in Moxham that was not responded to on Thursday, June 22nd. Chief talked about the difference between respectful vigils and loitering and he discussed two recent events with regard to the matter.

3. Fire Department

Chief Robert Statler reported that after Thunder in the Valley the firemen and Public Works started working on concrete work at the training site and pouring footers as a cost savings.

The union men are working on the Franklin Street project.

4. Finance

Robert Ritter, Finance Director, stated all departments are using the new software and sending out invoices to customers. Codes and permits are not yet set up but are working on converting data and connecting to the GIS system. A training session will be held.

Mr. Ritter referred members to page seven of the Audit Report for discussion regarding the statement of revenue expenditures and changes in fund balance. He asked members to keep in mind that the City needs \$1 million to \$1.5 million to update equipment and that expenses will go up but there is excess money that is available unless there are deficits. Mr. Ritter discussed hospitalization costs using the hybrid system and specific language in the old union contract specific to retirees.

5. Community Development

John Dubnansky, Economic Development Director, provided an update on the HUD Home ARPA funds for which an RFP was released earlier this year. The proposal was closed in June and two proposals have been received which are currently being reviewed by staff. Staff will make formal recommendation at the next Council session in August to allocate that \$750,000 of funding to shelter development in the City.

He reminded Council of the funding in the amount of \$25,000 set aside for some demolitions. He noted receipt of recommendations from four Council members which were reviewed by staff and determined to move forward on. Mr. Dubnansky noted that for two of those, 112-114 Garfield Street and 214 Kunkle, ownership has changed on both properties and because of that the homes were re-Act-90'd and both were given 90 days to make all necessary repairs to those properties. He stated, if they fail to do so, on the 91st day those properties can be officially demolished. The City will prepare an RFP in regard to those demolitions under the anticipation that the properties probably will not be improved. A third property at 156 Hudson Street is being worked on in partnership with JRA for demolition of that property.

Mrs. Mock inquired about the need for more demo money. Mr. Dubnansky and Mr. Imhoff have a meeting scheduled for next Tuesday to review all HUD programming. He explained that every time a property is demolished from one of the programs, renovations need to be made to another property. Another property at 1100 Confer Avenue was not entertained as a demolition option as it did not fit any of the demolition practices utilized in the City.

Mr. Dubnansky commented being at that point of balance of fixing things up and doing demolition at the same time. He noted a good relationship with DCD and the new director who seems very supportive of a lot of the programs.

Mr. Arnone suggested working harder at trying to sell properties next to a neighbor to increase the side yard. Attorney Benjamin explained that there can be a disposition program that limits it to contiguous neighbors or neighbors across the street. There was further discussion.

Invitations would be sent out for the July 25 open house at Sargent's Stadium at the Point. It was recommended that fliers advertise for these types of events.

Mr. Dubnansky commended Mr. Arnone for his leadership and assistance in helping coordinate work with veterans and that a meeting at the War Memorial cleared up a lot.

He reported that on July 19, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. the Main Street Advisory Group meeting and elected officials discussion would be held in Central Park for the first look at the conceptual designs.

6. Code Enforcement

Dave Williams, Codes Enforcement Manager, reported that in the month of June there were 159 code violations issued and there are two magistrate hearings within the next two weeks and he would provide additional information at the next meeting.

He noted two properties have been vacated, one came into compliance and the other one was vacated, boarded up, secured and cleaned up and that Codes is looking to vacate five or six properties within the next two weeks due to lack of utilities. Those living in those properties would be provided guidance with regard to other housing accommodations. Landlords would be cited for securing and cleaning up the property. Attorney Benjamin explained that the question is whether the City can adopt rules and regulations with regard to rental property registration or permits, then that is the consequence. The matter would need to be examined more closely and there may need to be amendments to regulations.

Mr. Williams noted approximately 50 building permits were issued for the month of June.

PUBLIC COMMENT - NONAGENDA ITEMS

Lexia Zungali, 550 Woodland Avenue, Johnstown, had concerns regarding ongoing shootings of M80s in her neighborhood early in the morning and after 5:00 p.m. and all night long. She provided photographs of furnishings inside of her home destroyed by her dog when he is terrorized by the noise and that he cannot be left alone any more. She stated the police can hear the noise but cannot find where it is coming from. Ms. Zungali commented the noise is coming from lower Woodland next to Ohio Street.

Chief Pritchard stated he could get a car in the area during those times. There was discussion regarding state fireworks regulations which prohibits fireworks anywhere in the City.

Carl Seel, 700 Park Avenue, Johnstown, a retired constable from Arizona who visits his neighborhood. He noted that many elderly Moxham residents have made similar complaints as Ms. Zungali.

Mr. Seel discussed plans to install more cameras on his building and asked if the County could help him with a weatherization grant. He stated the Johnstown Police Department is welcome to put a substation in his building. He commended the City for its accomplishments and that "people are making money living here in Johnstown".

Mr. Seel talked about the shootings happening in Moxham and that his cameras were instrumental in helping law enforcement apprehend the person involved in the murder in front of St. Patrick's Church, a shooting across the street and another shooting at Bond and Coleman. He plans on installing transponders on the top of his building.

Mr. Seel commented that he politely asked the drug dealers to leave the park across the street from his property and "pretty much they have" and "the kids are now using the park". He commended Mr. Ashcom for being a "good public servant" and stated he plans to put together some proposals to turn properties into rent to own.

#### RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 8:12 p.m.

The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for August 9, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION WAS HELD FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH  
REGARD TO POTENTIAL LITIGATION AND REAL ESTATE.**