

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, August 9, 2023

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business. Charles Arnone, Council member, on behalf of 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, Michael Capriotti (via telephone), Reverend King,
Mrs. Mock (5).
Absent: Mayor Frank Janakovic (1).
Laura Huchel (1) was not present at the commencement of the meeting.

Elizabeth Benjamin, Esquire, Solicitor, noted for the record that Mayor Janakovic was absent, and Deputy Mayor Capriotti was present via telephone and designated Mr. Arnone to run the meeting given the fact he was present on the telephone.

Ms. Huchel entered the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

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; and Tony Penna, Recreation, were also in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None

PROCLAMATIONS, AWARDS, HONORS, RESOLUTIONS OF RECOGNITION-

None

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Charlene Stanton, 184 Sell Street, Johnstown, was present to discuss the Commonwealth Financing Authority Grant Application for Improvements at Roxbury Park. Mrs. Stanton noted opposition to making any part of Roxbury Park into a cemetery. She noted observing a three foot by three foot area dug up in the park with bricks, stones covering the spot with a tree planted in the middle, and a graveyard memory marker with the name of somebody's deceased dated 2022, the site of a spot where lawn chairs are placed to listen to summer concerts. She stated this is not permitted per City ordinance, and

the plot needs to be removed. Mrs. Stanton inquired whether an application was necessary, can pets be buried there, the cost of a plot, who gets paid, and what areas can be dug up. She supplied photographs for Council to review. It was noted that no one is buried at Roxbury Park.

Andrea Ryan, 190 Derby Street, Johnstown, noted the state of Pennsylvania is silent about memorial markers posted along roadways where people have been killed in car accidents, and the Department of Transportation determines whether the markers are appropriate or not appropriate. She noted that it creates a small, sacred space for the families and is a reminder to other drivers driving along that this might be a dangerous location, may be a dangerous intersection or part of a highway that is probably not a good idea to go on. Ms. Ryan stated, due to the meaning and sacredness of this, she opined that Roxbury Park was not an appropriate location and suggested it be relocated. She asked Council to take action regarding the matter.

Dorothy Clark, 1058 Boyd Avenue, Johnstown, addressed Council regarding residential noise pollution in the Eight Ward. She stated neighbors on Osborne Street play music too loud for a residential neighborhood. Ms. Clark was asked to finish her public comments at the appropriate time at the end of the meeting during Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items.

REPORTS

CITY MANAGER:

Ethan Imhoff, City Manager, provided an update with regard to the RAISE Grant. He noted that this past May the first public session was held with the Main Street committee and also with Escape Architecture, the designer of the project. Mr. Imhoff noted over 100 people attending this meeting to provide input after which the Escape team went "to the drawing board" to provide three design proposals. The proposed drawings were then set up in Central Park for review by hundreds of people who attended.

Mr. Imhoff stated, at the end of August, beginning of September, the design team will return with a preliminary final design to share with the community. All drawings and meeting minutes are on the City's RAISE grant website for further review.

The City Manager noted there were clearances required to spend these federal dollars. which may be received by the end of the year. The next public meeting will be held at a downtown location to be determined. Mrs. Mock commented that the design chosen has to be feasible for the City and for

Public Works, and Council members should have the final say. Mr. Imhoff noted that he and Mr. Ashcom had the opportunity to do two walking tours of neighborhood, one with Ms. Huchel and another with the Roxbury Park community group. He noted the goal was to do a walking tour through every neighborhood.

The AFSCME union contract will be up at the end of this year. Mr. Imhoff has been in contact with their rep to begin negotiations.

MAYOR:

No Report

CITY SOLICITOR:

No Report

CITY ENGINEER:

No Report

COUNCIL UPDATES/NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISONS:

Ms. Huchel reported a great AAABA week and music fest. She is looking forward to the Van Gough event which will be held this Sunday.

Reverend King noted her continued attendance at the community meetings throughout the City. Another meeting will be held by the end of September. She noted a small turnout at the Hornerstown meeting and the residents expressed good ideas, including a light-up night for the end of the year something which she and Mrs. Mock are working on to insure that all neighborhoods have a light-up night. Reverend King reported that on Tuesday, August 16, 2023, 3:00 p.m., the County Planning Commission will conduct a meeting with the residents of Prospect regarding the William Penn Avenue Corridor.

Mrs. Mock reported the community gardens are slow this year, but the flower boxes were doing great.

Mr. Britt noted his attendance at a recent Moxham event. He commended Quan and Ryan Durham and Mr. Harris, who provided a great time for the kids playing basketball. He gave a shout out to the AAABA Johnstown champions, players, coaches, and families.

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 July 31, 2023, the population of the public housing communities was 2,320. Section Eight voucher holders totaled 1,151 families for a total of 3,471 families. Currently, 46 percent of the people living in poverty in the City of Johnstown were being assisted. He noted the Prospect situation affected these population statistics. Those residents are expected to be notified soon of definitive plans for repairs pending final word from HUD.

Mr. Arnone reported that JHA plans to continue with the work already in progress in Prospect. He noted that contracts were signed last month for boiler system replacement at Loughner Plaza in the Eighth Ward. Bids for roof repair will soon be opened for Nanty Glo and Portage. An Annual Public Housing Plan for 2024 is available for public viewing on the website and in person or at the JHA facility.

As Council's representative on the GJWA, he noted maintenance of 1,161 feet of lines. The Riverside Plant was running 6 million gallons per day, and the leaks and defects within the system had been resolved.

PETITIONS:

None

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL READ AND ADOPTION

None

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READ

None

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 105616

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER AND/OR HIS DESIGNEE(S) TO TAKE ANY/ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$150,000.00 TO THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THEIR MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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

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

Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 105617

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AND TAKE ANY/ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE AN APPLICATION FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA COMMONWEALTH FINANCE AUTHORITY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$84,488.00 THROUGH THE GREENWAYS, TRAILS AND RECREATION PROGRAM TO BE USED TOWARDS IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN ROXBURY PARK LOCATED IN THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN.

Mrs. Mock made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Reverend King.

Mr. Arnone noted the grant monies would be used to repair Roxbury Park including servicing of the tennis courts, basketball courts and pickle ball courts.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

There was further discussion.

Resolution No.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AND TAKE ANY/ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE VICTIM SERVICES, INCORPORATED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$749,683.00 THROUGH THE CITY'S HOME AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-CONGREGATE SHELTER WITHIN THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN.

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

Yeas: Mr. Capriotti, Reverend King, Ms. Huchel, Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt (5).
Nays: Mrs. Mock (1).

Resolution No. 105618

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,
CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING A MINOR
SUBDIVISION LOT MERGER OF TWO PARCELS ON SOLOMON
STREET IN THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN.

Mrs. Mock made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Ms. Huchel.

This would create parking for the business.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

NEW BUSINESS

Reverend King made a motion to approve the appointment of Chad McClaren to the Johnstown Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mock and passed by the following vote:

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

Ms. Huchel noted two vacancies remain.

OLD BUSINESS

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. Public Works

Tony Penna congratulated and thanked Council for all of the upgrades to the park, noting a professional game environment with the new scoreboard. Prices are being sought for a covering for the left field scoreboard. Daktronics informed him that Johnstown has one of the few stadiums in the country that has three press boxes and working on having the same state of the art sound in all three. He noted approximately 6,400 were in attendance the first night of AAABA, and many more after that. Mr. Arnone noted some issues with the portable pitcher mounds. Mr. Penna noted those are replaced season by season but will inspect the matter.

Mr. Penna commended Public Works staff for making sure the stadium was ready and the crew for keeping the stadium running. Johnstown Police were great to work with, no major issues.

Mr. Penna noted microphone issues the first night that had to be resolved. He stated the games were streamed, and many people watched the tournament online. Bishop McCort will use the board as well. Mr. Arnone expressed Council's thanks to all "who made it work."

Mr. Penna discussed the DCNR vacant parks. Bids were close to being received for Peelor Street to turn that park into a sustainable orchard. Benches were being placed at the Steel Street Park in Conemaugh Borough, and a basketball court will be placed on New Street in Prospect. A Zoom call with regard to matching funds for park projects will be held in August.

There was discussion regarding bringing back tournaments previously held before at the stadium. Mr. Penna noted two recent stadium rentals. A concert at the stadium will be reviewed by the City Manager. Mr. Penna noted no complaints regarding fee increases.

Mr. Penna indicated grants for the tennis court were being submitted. He further discussed the stadium hosting concerts and how concessions would be handled.

Mr. Penna noted the placement of concrete benches around the walking trail at Roxbury was being considered.

A meeting with all baseball personnel will be held regarding upgrades at the Dee Dee Osborne Field.

A Back-to-School event will be held Saturday, August 12, 2023 at Roxbury Park. Activities planned included a basketball tournament and other events.

Adult probation and trade union members will be helping with the installation of tiles on the roller hockey rink at the park.

2. Police Department

Chief Richard Pritchard reported the recent National Night Out event was not as well attended as it was in the past. He commended Cuddles for Kids and Mr. Penna for the sound system. Kona Ice was present and Hope for Johnstown helped cook hot dogs and drinks. He stated police were happy to get out in the community and meet the residents.

There were no applicants for this round of Act 120 hiring and non-Act 120 will open September 5, 2023, and testing will be conducted on September 23, 2023. The three recruits are in phase two of the process.

Chief Pritchard noted a \$75,000 quote for eight cameras was received. He will meet with Mr. Dubnansky regarding the \$23,000 Bureau of Justice Assistance federal grant.

3. Fire Department

Chief Robert Statler provided an update regarding the training site. He noted the lot had been cleaned twice, and fencing was being considered.

The radio changeover for Cambria County will be held in the October timeframe, and the City should be on the new system by the end of October.

4. Finance

Robert Ritter, Finance Director, noted the software is "going well." He stated Codes and Permits have all the necessary data. Training sessions will be held.

5. Community Development

John Dubnansky, Economic Development Director, provided an update on the RAISE grant discussed earlier. He stated a public meeting will be held on August 30, 2023, 4:00 p.m. in Central Park to highlight the survey results. A third veteran focus group held just prior to this meeting was held at the 1st Summit Arena, and a second meeting with the business focus group will be held on August 10, 2023. Mr. Dubnansky stated, "This is the most input that I've ever been part of in my entire career."

Mr. Dubnansky noted his attendance at an event in Pittsburgh with guest speaker Rick Siger, the new DCED Director, who gave a "shout out" to Johnstown and the great work being done in Johnstown.

He stated an RFP had been released for demolition of 12 structures, and that bids will be open this Friday, August 11, 2023. Another RFP will be released in the fall for more demolitions.

6. Code Enforcement

Dave Williams, Codes Enforcement Manager, reported that in the month of July there were 31 building permits issued, 110 service requests issued. Two properties were taken to the magistrate and 12 more will be coming up within the next month. Seven properties have been secured within the last few weeks.

Two mattresses were retrieved on 400 Place.

PUBLIC COMMENT - NONAGENDA ITEMS

Dorothy Clark, 80 Osborne Street, presented before Council regarding a noise complaint on Osborne Street, that even with windows closed the music of horns and trumpets permeates up to eight hours nonstop. She indicated that she has had to "barricade herself inside her house for peace and quiet."

Ms. Clark read into the record Section 658.04 (2) of the Loud or Unnecessary Noises Prohibited ordinance. She requested a solution to the problem.

Chief Pritchard was requested to address the matter. Ms. Clark was also asked to contact the county's non-emergency number when it happens again.

Kelly Francis, 621 Ash Street, addressed Council regarding a verbal contract for assistance to fix a property, which had not happened. She spent her own money, and the City should keep its word to provide the assistance it agreed to. She was promised a meeting with people from housing, and that did not happen. Ms. Francis asked that the City keeps its promise.

Ms. Francis met with Mr. Dubnansky, Mr. Imhoff, and Mr. Ashcom regarding the matter.

Mr. Arnone stated there could be no discussion as Ms. Francis indicated the matter would be going to litigation if necessary. Ms. Francis noted this was

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the third time appearing before Council, and nothing had been addressed. She discussed an email she received.

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7:23 p.m.

The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

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