

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, October 11, 2023

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business. Michael Capriotti, Deputy Mayor, called the meeting to order at 6:02 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, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock (6). Mayor Janakovic (1) was absent.

Ethan Imhoff, City Manager; Alex Ashcom, Assistant City Manager; Ronald Repak, Esq., Interim Solicitor; Sara Williams, Executive Secretary; Robert Statler, Fire Chief; Richard Pritchard, Police Chief; Jared Campagna, Director, Public Works; John Dubnansky, Economic Development Director; Dave Williams, Codes Enforcement Manager; and Eric Miller, President, International Association of Fire Fighters Local 463, were also in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 13, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mr. Britt and passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0)

PROCLAMATIONS, AWARDS, HONORS, RESOLUTIONS OF RECOGNITION-

None

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

None

REPORTS

CITY MANAGER:

Ethan Imhoff, City Manager, provided Council members with a copy of the Draft Preliminary Budget for 2024 and the Capital Improvement Plan for 2024. He noted workshops would be scheduled for review of the plans.

Mr. Imhoff noted the AFSCME union negotiations were ongoing and anticipates an agreement prior to the end of the year.

MAYOR:

No Report

DEPUTY MAYOR

Michael Capriotti had no report but noted a recent back surgery.

CITY SOLICITOR:

Ronald Repak, Esquire, Dillon, McCandless, King, Coulter and Graham, LLP, informed Council members that he would be helping the City over the next couple of months due to the withdrawal of previous Counsel. He had no report to offer but mentioned his work on codes and ordinances.

Attorney Repak announced a brief Executive Session was held prior to the commencement of the meeting with regard to potential litigation, and another Executive Session would take place afterward the meeting to continue that discussion.

CITY ENGINEER:

Members were referred to the attached report.

COUNCIL UPDATES/NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISONS:

Ms. Huchel congratulated the organizers of the Culture Crawl downtown for their success and looked forward to the symphony soon kicking off their season. She reported the Gallery on Gazebo is hosting another architectural tour, which she noted would be a "nice time to give a minimal donation to a local nonprofit, as well as get a tour to see what folks were doing to rehab and reuse downtown buildings."

Reverend King reported the library conducted a block party in September and looked forward to making it an annual event. She encouraged everyone to drive by the library to view all of the improvements.

She noted providing a report to the Vision Capture Team on the United Neighborhoods, the 15 different neighborhoods within the City, and the City is working with the residents of those neighborhoods to ensure a residents'

Council is in each and every neighborhood and also making financial contributions for neighborhood projects. Reverend King stated the next United Neighborhood Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 18 at 6:00 p.m. at the Christ Centered Community Church regarding upcoming Christmas events.

Mrs. Mock reported community gardens were finishing up in the West End. She echoed what Reverend King mentioned about the United Neighborhood group and reported that many participants were joining and on great happenings for the new year, including more people becoming involved in the Celebration Johnstown event to make it a more fulfilling event for all the neighborhoods to participate.

Mr. Arnone provided an update on the statistical information relating to the population of the public housing communities located within the City of Johnstown. He noted the total population of the Johnstown housing communities as of August 31, 2023, was 2,265, Section 8 voucher holders totaling 1,144 for a total of \$2,409. He reported currently assisting 45 percent of the people living in poverty in Johnstown, noting the Prospect relocation has affected these population statistics. He informed Council members that the Johnstown Housing Authority is partnering with the Community Help Center to host their eviction prevention program in the Johnstown housing communities. He explained that residents behind on their rent can benefit from the program aimed at keeping people in their homes.

Mr. Arnone stated Wellness Wednesdays were coming back to the community with up to seven sessions being held in different communities at the same time every Wednesdays. He mentioned that rotating educational sessions include topics such as tobacco cessation, fall prevention, food education and avoiding scams. An eviction prevention program is a result of a grant that the Women's Health Center applied for and received and is working through the JHA to continue it.

Mr. Arnone reported 113 accounts did not complete their 2022 backflow testing. He noted 62 properties received a shut off notice, and of those 62, 49 still need to pass the backflow testing but many had the work done. He reported 80 new service applications and 37 inactive accounts reactivated. He also reported 12 services were renewed for completion and 250 feet of 8-inch main was replaced on Chandler Avenue.

Mr. Arnone reported the water quality in reservoirs was good, and both Riverside and Saltlick had great testing results in the last months. He noted CSA would be shutting off the main down through Foustwell Tunnel for six to

eight weeks for repairs, and the Water Authority requested that a portion of their bill be reduced.

Mr. Britt had no report.

PETITIONS:

None

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL READ AND ADOPTION

BILL NO. 8 OF 2023, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY'S BUSINESS PRIVILEGE TAX ORDINANCE NUMBER 4312 PASSED NOVEMBER 22, 1983, AS AMENDED BY ORDINANCE NUMBERS 4610, 4670, 4816, AND 5327 AND AS CODIFIED AT TITLE FOUR, SECTION 872.05 OF CHAPTER EIGHT CITY OF JOHNSTON CODIFIED ORDINANCES TO AMEND THE ANNUAL COLLECTION DATE OF THE BUSINESS PRIVILEGE TAX FROM MARCH TO MAY OF ANY APPLICABLE YEAR

Mr. Arnone 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)

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READ

BILL NO. 9 of 2023, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 4654 TITLED AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AN ADMINISTRATIVE CODE FOR THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, DESIGNATED POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL, CITY MANAGER AND OTHER MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS PASSED FINALLY ON OCTOBER 27, 1993, AND AS AMENDED BY SUBSEQUENT ORDINANCES SPECIFICALLY LISTED AND DETAILED WITHIN NOTE 1 OF SAID ORDINANCE BELOW BY AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF ARTICLE II - ELECTED OFFICIALS - COUNCIL ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES AND SPECIFICALLY, CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 210.13 TO PROVIDE UPDATED PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COUNCIL MEETINGS(TABLED).

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

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

Nays: None (0)

Mrs. Mock made a motion to withdraw Bill No. 9. The motion was seconded by Mr. Arnone and passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0)

Resolution No. 105626

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF AS-2 ANTI SKID FROM LIGONIER STONE AND LIME D/B/A DERRY STONE AND LIME FOR THE 2023-2024 CALENDAR YEAR

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

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

Nays: None (0)

Resolution No. 105627

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE PURCHASE OF ROAD SALT FROM AMERICAN ROCK SALT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES COSTARS PROGRAM FOR THE 2023-2024 CALENDAR YEAR

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

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

Nays: None (0)

Resolution No. 105628

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 F&G MONUMENT LETTERING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$29,975.28 FOR CONTRACT #2023-07 FOR THE FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL PARK GRANITE WORK

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

Eric Miller, President, International Association of Fire Fighters Local 463, stated the project started on the 30th anniversary of Richard Roberts passing away in a line of duty death on Franklin Street. He noted the Franklin Street Bridge was named with the assistance of Representative Jim Rigby to honor all of the firefighters who passed away. He mentioned that the land was provided, and UpStreet Architects have been more than helpful designing it, along with the Center for Metal Arts. He provided a copy of the design to Council members.

Mr. Miller noted that the bell currently in Central Park would be moved to the memorial as the centerpiece. He provided a summary of the actions so far, and signage, landscaping, and a fence around the front of the memorial would be taken care of next year. He informed Council members that the project is currently under budget and thanked everyone for their support.

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

Nays: None (0)

Resolution No. 105629

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 MOYER CONCRETE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$62,500 FOR CONTRACT #2023-08 FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL PARK CONCRETE WORK

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

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

Resolution No. 105630

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,  
CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING AND  
DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH  
REPCO II IN THE AMOUNT OF \$35,112 FOR CONTRACT #2023-10,  
FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL PARK LIGHTS

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

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

Resolution No 105631.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,  
CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING A MINOR  
SUBDIVISION LOT MERGE OF PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 143  
LORAIN STREET

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

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

Reverend King made a motion to remove from table. The motion was seconded by Mr. Arnone and passed by the following vote:

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

Reverend King made a motion to withdraw. The motion was seconded by Mr. Capriotti and passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mr. Britt, Mr. Capriotti, Reverend King, Mr. Arnone (4)  
Nays: Mrs. Mock, Ms. Huchel (2)

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### **Tax settlement for property at 151-161 Fairfield Avenue.**

Mr. Capriotti noted the settlement is regarding a property at 151-161 Fairfield Avenue that burned in December of 2018. He explained that the settlement is due to the owner paying taxes in 2018 and 2019 that had not been adjusted by the assessor's office to account for the loss of the building due to the fire. He noted the settlement would adjust the tax to be paid by the property owner to account for the lower assessed value due to the loss of the building. He mentioned that the settlement includes an adjustment for the 2018 taxes and a reduction for the 2019 penalty and interest that accrued due to the incorrect assessment being used. He noted no objection from the staff regarding this settlement.

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

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

##### **Civil Service Board Vacancy**

Mr. Capriotti noted an open seat on the Civil Service Board, and Bruce Newkirk is the lone volunteer for this position and previously served on the Board. The appointment is for a three-year term that runs through August 11, 2026.

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



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

**Motion to Appoint Interim Solicitor**

Mr. Capriotti announced that the Beard Legal Group provided notice to the City last month that their firm would no longer provide legal services to the City as of October 2023. He explained the City needs immediate legal counsel and has secured the services of Dillon, McCandless, King, Coulter, & Graham through the end of 2023.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to appoint Dillon, McCandless, King, Coulter and Graham as legal counsel. The motion was seconded by Mr. Britt and passed by the following vote:

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

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Planning Commission Vacancies**

Mr. Capriotti noted two vacancies on the Planning Commission after member resignations in early 2023. He noted applications were received from Mike Grandinetti and Linda Yutzy,, and both terms expire on January 31, 2027.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to appoint Mike Grandinetti. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mock and passed by the following vote:

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

There were no motions to appoint Linda Yutzy.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

1. Public Works

Mr. Arnone commended Mr. Campagna on all of the paving jobs.

Mr. Campagna reported paving of two streets in Walnut Grove would start tomorrow to complete the 2023 paving project.

Mr. Capriotti referred to previous discussion of a sinkhole at the corner of 700 Place, Highland, and DuPont Streets. Mr. Campagna will look into the matter.

Mr. Campagna informed Council members that Public Work staff is prepping for the Halloween Parade scheduled for Tuesday, October 24.

Mr. Britt complimented Mr. Campagna for taking care of the garbage issue in the West End near the playground.

## 2. Police Department

Richard Pritchard, Police Chief, noted the new reporting system is in operation, which enables the use of the national incident-based reporting system and would allow for some federal funding which the department otherwise would not have been able to do with the previous system.

Chief Pritchard stated new radios would be installed in cars this Monday along with the new fleet-free system Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Chief reported that testing resulted in 4 qualified applicants and 11 currently undergoing background investigations. He noted 2 of those were currently in the academy and have been fairly vetted. He also noted that five would be on the street starting November 20.

He told Council members that they would continue to compile a list, exhaust the list, and then start another list of applicants. He mentioned there would be a meeting with Civil Service next month regarding lowering the age requirements.

Mrs. Mock reported meeting with Captain Parker of the 1889 Foundation for review of the proposal for the license plate reader monitors which is moving ahead.

## 3. Fire Department

Robert Statler, Fire Chief, reported moving ahead on the training site, but the state portion of that is being held up because of the state budget, and there is no paperwork regarding the grant. He noted there would be a radio changeover at

7:00 a.m., and the equipment would be checked today in preparation for that changeover.

4. Finance

No report.

5. Community Development

John Dubnansky, Economic Development Director, reported that discussions continue with regard to potential funders and is moving forward. Mrs. Mock noted the deadline for the grant application is October 31.

Mr. Dubnansky reported a meeting with Amtrak last week indicated that construction of its \$16 million project at the train station is being pushed back to a start date of spring 2025 due to Norfolk Southern's raising of some rails for the project.

Mr. Dubnansky noted having a slight push on the schedule to complete design plans for the Main Street project and is currently scheduled for May 2024.

Mr. Dubnansky noted a grant award to Sourcereer, an IT company in Cambria County that would be relocating to downtown by the end of the year and bringing with them a couple of dozen jobs.

Mr. Dubnansky informed Council members that Anthropologie released a video shot of people dancing at the Johnstown Train Station and is something to promote the City at Google homeward bound; friendship found.

Mrs. Mock inquired about whether the City can move on the RAISE grant or would have to wait until JAHA and CamTran were onboard. Mr. Dubnansky explained that federal paperwork is still being completed but that he is in regular communication with them with the hope of seeing some movement forward next year.

Mr. Dubnansky noted other businesses were considering coming to Johnstown, including a group looking at the Gautier Steel site property. He stated no details have been received regarding Para-Coat.

Reverend King requested information concerning the Cambria Rowe Building. Ms. Huchel explained that the Cambria Rowe Building is a JRA project, and Dr. Frem is putting a women's health center in that building.

6. Code Enforcement

Dave Williams, Codes Enforcement Manager, reported that in the month of September, 102 code violations were issued and 22 building permits. He also noted 15 to 16 charges were filed with the magistrate, and there were still 9 up and coming, along with others being added to that list through the month of October.

Mr. Williams stated the trash matter at the entrance ramp to the bypass is scheduled for early November. Mr. Dubnansky reported the Glenn Street property is on the upcoming fall demo list.

Mr. Britt asked what their stance is on fire escapes as far as being metal or wooden.

Mr. Williams explained that fire escapes could be wooden or metal on residential properties. Chief Statler further explained that the steps need to meet code and be accessible, noting straight ladders would not be an approved fire escape.

Mr. Capriotti inquired about the property at Hickory and Horner Streets. Chief Statler explained that there is no access to the third floor because it has a padlock, but the ladder is still present. Mr. Williams explained to remove the ladder would require some permitting process or a letter could also be issued to have the ladder torn down, that if both fail, it would then become a magistrate matter.

Mr. Capriotti reported an alarming number of mattresses and box springs laying along alleys and streets in Moxham and Roxbury. He noted being aware that they must be bagged if going through the garbage process but because of possible bedbugs he suggested that the City buy bags. There was further discussion.

Mr. Britt reported a large amount of trash in front of a garage on Golde Street. Mr. Williams offered to look it up in the system and provide an update.

Reverend King requested information regarding rental inspections. Mr. Williams explained that the seasonal guys were still working and may be kept on a little bit longer to get to some of the worst lots but that he would start ramping up rental inspections after that. He noted that he, along with the fire chief, would inspect a registered property if there is a problem or a tenant has an issue.

Reverend King inquired how Codes would know if new properties were being registered. Mr. Williams explained that the secretary reviews residency reports and properties that have been purchased for lien verification. Mass mailings were sent to rental property owners informing them of the need to be registered, and that is how the contact information is received.

Mr. Capriotti recalled passing an ordinance more than once to help the fire department, codes department, and everybody else make sure properties were not falling into disrepair and landlords were being held accountable for their renters. He commented that it has not gone anywhere in four years, and there should be a plan in place reaching out to the rentals.

Mr. Williams noted a dropoff in service requests indicating that he could ramp up rental inspections. Mr. Capriotti commented that it helps the chief and the firemen because a lot of properties that were duplexes have been turned into a single-family dwelling which makes a big difference when making an assessment of the property.

Mr. Williams provided an update concerning the new software noting a conference call is scheduled for Thursday, October 12, 2023, to set up the training. He welcomed Council members to review the new software at a point in the future.

Mrs. Mock inquired whether Codes has the ability to take care of abandoned vehicles. Mr. Williams noted taking care of two vehicles but waiting for authorization from the State. He will be posting a 48-hour notice, documenting it, taking pictures, and then having it pulled. He will run a VIN through the police if there were any issues. He stated a tablet or Microsoft Surface would be utilized once the new software is available.

Mr. Capriotti requested an update on the Johnstown Mill Rats. Mr. Imhoff explained that the current ownership group is comprised of several different individuals and there have been negotiations regarding ownership stakes. He stated the Mill Rats are in the Prospect League, and there was a board meeting Sunday where a proposal was made from a new ownership group to the Prospect League to ensure that the Mill Rats are going to be in the league for 2024. He noted no agreement had been made yet but would provide an updates.

Mr. Imhoff stated the current agreement is with NSS out of Kansas City and could affect the contract if a new ownership group takes control of the team, and the agreement would need to be renegotiated. He noted NSS only has the stadium from May through August and has not moved out of the office space.

Mrs. Mock requested an update regarding the playground meeting. Mr. Campagna noted being in the process of coming up with a gameplan to try to align that original gameplan within the scope of the budget. He would provide an update once the matter is finalized. There was further discussion regarding use of ARPA monies for the project. Mr. Campagna commented that RFPs have already been awarded for the other playground contracts. He stated the design for the Honan Avenue playground should be completed soon.

Mr. Dubnansky further explained that the conceptual designs were under review by DCNR for a spring construction time.

Ms. Huchel neglected to mention in her report that the Planning Commission included a letter as part of the packets requesting a tour of this building and invited Council members to attend the tour to look at its structure and integrity. She noted the Planning Commission Meeting is on Wednesday, November 1, at 5:00 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT: NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION WILL BE HELD WITH REGARD TO LITIGATION  
MATTERS DIRECTLY FOLLOWING ADJOURNMENT OF THIS  
MEETING.**

**RECESS/ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6:53 p.m.

The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for November 8, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.