

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, November 8, 2023

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business. Mayor Frank Janakovic called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Britt offered the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The following members of Council were present for roll call:

Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Ms. Huchel, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King,
Mrs. Mock (6).
Michael Capriotti (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 Tony Penna were also in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 11, 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,
Ms. Huchel (6)
Nays: None (0)

PROCLAMATIONS, AWARDS, HONORS, RESOLUTIONS OF RECOGNITION-

None

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

None

REPORTS

CITY MANAGER:

- a. Ethan Imhoff, City Manager, introduced Lisa Rager who had discussion regarding implementation of the Branding Strategy produced to give a "fresh face" to the City and how others view Johnstown.

Ms. Rager, Executive Director, Visit Johnstown, the designated tourist promotion agency for Cambria County, addressed Council regarding the Branding Initiative and the need to remarket the City as a recreational and tourism destination as well as a desirable place to live, raise a family and do business.

Ms. Rager explained the Brand is a "feeling that someone has about our City" and what sets Johnstown apart from all others through visual cues and first impressions. She noted some of the City's amenities and complimentary activities, which can draw those to the City.

She stated the process begins by increasing the population of Johnstown by putting it on the map as a desirable place and differentiating it from the other 1100-plus communities in Pennsylvania.

The Brand development team was formed from representatives from tourism, economic development, planning, the Chamber, business, arts, recreation. Outside facilitator, Roger Brooks, was engaged to guide the City in the process. In March of 2022 Mr. Brooks provided a public presentation, launched an online questionnaire about what should Johnstown be noted for and received 1617 responses from the community. Stakeholder interviews were also conducted. Ms. Rager indicated all ideas were filtered down through, and the final Brand direction was determined to be recreation. The water and land trails connect to downtown Johnstown and connect history to the modern artisans.

Rebuilding a better tomorrow and pushing limits and achieving more, lowering the barrier of entry to recreational activities, stewardship of the environment, and mixing art and recreation were crafted as the grand mission. She had discussion regarding the easy accessibility of the biking trails and some of the best whitewater on the Stonycreek River.

Ms. Rager commented that consistent downtown spending including shopping, dining and entertainment and a reimagined Central Park and vehicular wayfinding are major components to the plan. She provided a handout, which shows what Branding hopes to portray. An action plan with specific recommendations, estimated costs, potential funding sources, and a rationale of why it all makes sense was developed. She hopes to be working more on product development and marketing by 2025 with a goal to have everyone on the same page speaking with one voice about our community. A copy of the entire plan is available at visitjohnstownpa.com, Roger Brooks. There were questions and comments regarding progress made thus far, the survey that was circulated and the diversity in the community.

Stated Meeting, continued

Ms. Rager added this is the very beginning of the Branding Initiative, thus far following the recommendations of the consultant, but the plan will change as there is more community participation. She was requested to provide additional information on the website.

Mrs. Mock commented "there are people making decisions for the City who don't live in the City", and "decisions affecting the City have to have City resident representation."

Reverend King commented that the Main Street Project design is an example of giving the citizens an opportunity to feel as if they counted by allowing them to provide feedback.

Ms. Huchel commended Ms. Rager and her organization for "taking solid steps forward."

Ms. Rager noted the City is the key place to start but that surrounding communities are a part of Johnstown as well and should also be involved.

- b. Mr. Imhoff introduced the 2024 Budget Draft, which was submitted to Council on November 1, 2023. A Budget Workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 5:00 p.m., and an opportunity for public comment would be provided as well at the workshop. Mr. Imhoff noted this is the first year that the budget would be adopted under the updated rules, adoption and amendment by resolution and not ordinance, approved by the voters in 2021.

The City Manager commented it is a balanced budget and does not include a tax increase nor does it require any increased borrowing. He noted the loss of the LST tax or approximately \$100,000 to the budget.

He explained that a little over \$1 million in community development block grant funds had been used in the past to recruit businesses and jobs in the City but that now those funds will have to be repurposed for some capital expenses.

Mr. Imhoff indicated there would be a change proposed for the City's healthcare provider, and additional information would be provided at the December meeting.

The City Manager indicated the Mill Rats have come under a new ownership group, and a new contract is currently being negotiated.

Renovation work continues at the CamTran Transit Center but one lane has been opened for traffic.

The RFP for solicitor services was released two weeks ago, and the deadline for response is November 29, 2023.

MAYOR:

Mayor Janakovic reported that the Christmas tree lighting downtown will be held on Friday, November 17, 2023 in Central Park.

The Veteran's Day Parade will be held November 11, 2023.

The Mayor noted his attendance at an event at the State Theater on Main Street. He wished them well moving forward.

INTERIM CITY SOLICITOR:

Ronald Repak, Esquire, Dillon, McCandless, King, Coulter and Graham, LLP, reported an Executive Session will be held after this meeting regarding three pending litigation matters.

CITY ENGINEER:

Members were referred to the attached report.

COUNCIL UPDATES/NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISONS:

Mrs. Mock reported the West End Improvement Group held a basket party on Sunday with proceeds going towards the gardens, camera repairs in the West End.

She noted the flower boxes are being stored for the winter at Gautier Steel.

Reverend King reported receiving an email from Ms. Noll, CamTran, concerning a survey on its website regarding the Transit Center redesign project. She noted spending time with residents at the Towers and commented they have some great ideas regarding the CamTran redesign.

The next United Neighborhood Meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Christ Centered Community Church. On November 14, 2023 a projects discussion will be held at the Holiday Inn.

Reverend King asked everyone to remember Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, which was destroyed by fire recently. She reported that Christ Centered Community Church will hold a dinner on Christmas Day, December 25, 2023.

Ms. Huchel reported that the City Planning Commission recently toured this building for assessment of possible re-usability.

She reported that Melissa Komar attended the County Tax Sale today to acquire additional properties on behalf of the LandBank.

Ms. Huchel reported the sewer lateral program is still active, and anyone who needs a loan can contact JRA regarding the matter.

She commented that JRA staff is involved as well to help to find a grocery store and reusing pharmacy space to replace the loss downtown.

Mr. Britt commended the Johnstown Fire Department and those companies who assisted at the recent Pleasant Hill Baptist Church fire.

He noted attending a recent meeting at the health clinic regarding keeping that clinic in downtown. Additional information would be provided.

Regarding the GJWA, Mr. Arnone reported, as of the end of October 2023, the City was 65 percent pressure tested. In the month of October, the Customer Service Department received 95 new service applications. 33 pressure tests were completed. The monthly surcharge will increase to \$50 per month starting January 2024 for properties, which are not compliant. There may be a six-month extension for existing contracts due to contractor health issues. Mr. Arnone reported that no new contracts have been accepted since September 2023, which is what JRA hopes to extend.

Mr. Arnone reported 300 feet of main line was jetted, for a total of nearly 30,000 feet of jetting since October of 2023.

All reservoirs are full, and water quality is "in great shape."

Regarding the Johnstown Housing Authority, 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 October 31, 2023, was 2,229, Section 8 voucher holders totaled 1,170 for a total of \$3,399. He reported JRA is currently assisting 45 percent of the people living in poverty in Johnstown, noting the Prospect relocation has affected these population statistics. Drawings and specifications for repairs to the Prospect Homes are now available for contractors and sealed bids will be opened on December 7, 2023 at the Johnstown Housing Authority. Six or eight sections will be completed at a time.

Stated Meeting, continued

Mr. Arnone commented the Johnstown Housing Authority is staying involved in the community by taking part in the Scarecrow display, Trunk or Treat, and the Christmas Village in Central Park.

He stated that the Prospect Community Room is available to the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church for services.

He noted attendance at a ceremony at the Mt Sinai Baptist Church in East Conemaugh.

Mr. Arnone reported he would be attending the flag and flagpole dedication at the top of the Inclined Plane on Saturday morning, November 11, 2023.

There will be a 21-gun salute and taps at 11/11, which is the day the armistice was signed. A parade will be held on Saturday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. The American Legion on Main Street will had an open house to showcase its new meeting room upstairs, which was a result of a grant received from the City. He indicated that membership has more than doubled due to the creation of the Sons of the American Legion Auxiliary.

PETITIONS:

None

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL READ AND ADOPTION

None

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READ

BILL NO. 10 OF 2023, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE AND MAP OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, ORDINANCE NO. 4964 ADOPTED APRIL 13, 2005 AND AS AMENDED BY ORDINANCE NO. 5086 PASSED JUNE 22, 2011; ORDINANCE NO. 5119 PASSED JANUARY 23, 2013; ORDINANCE NO. 5139 PASSED NOVEMBER 27, 2013; ORDINANCE NO. 5191 PASSED DECEMBER 9, 2015; ORDINANCE NO. 5330 PASSED MARCH 9, 2022; AND ORDINANCE NO. 5352 PASSED MAY 10, 2023 BY REZONING CERTAIN PARCELS OF LAND LOCATED IN THE 11TH WARD OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to remove from table. The motion was seconded by Mr. Britt 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. 105632

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,
CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING A MINOR
SUBDIVISION LOT MERGE OF PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 147/153 M
STREET.

Mr. Britt 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)

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. Public Works

Mr. Campagna indicated that during the installation of the backflow prevention
device at the Public Safety Building a few weeks ago, significant issues were
uncovered with the main waterline coming into the building and are awaiting
an estimated cost for replacement.

He noted a meeting would be held on November 15 for discussion of the
initial design of the Minersville Playground and after adjustments to come up
with a final plan.

Christmas houses will be installed today at Central Park.

In response to a concern by Mrs. Mock, the City Manager commented that the new design for Central Park will accommodate all the houses and the Christmas Tree in the park will not be affected by construction.

Mr. Campagna indicated that three City properties have not completed the sewer work, including Sargent's Stadium, the Public Safety Building and City Hall.

The Public Works Director reported a pothole had been fixed in Oakhurst.

Mrs. Mock commented that the Roxbury rink "looks great." She asked if the ramp could be installed so handicapped kids can access the rink.

Tony Penna talked about the setup for the camera installation at the park.

He commented that many volunteers, including Derek Partsch from the Johnstown Tomahawks, and Juvenile Probation, helped to install the hockey rink. He stated discussion has started regarding hockey leagues at the park as well as other plans. Mr. Penna noted the bigger score boards would take about a year to arrive.

Mr. Penna reported an overall maintenance plan for all playgrounds was emailed to all Council members. He noted that neighborhoods as well as Juvenile Probation would assist with the upkeep at each playground.

Mr. Penna noted that he and Mr. Imhoff would be doing a walk-through at the stadium with the Mill Rats for discussion of some of the new ownership's ideas. He reported there is also a punch list of tasks that need to be completed.

2. Police Department

Richard Pritchard, Police Chief, reported the Johnstown PD participated in raising \$420 for the Gary Sinise Foundation.

He reported three new police officers will start on November 21, 2023 and two more starting the first two weeks of December. The testing of one applicant will be held on the 17th.

A new special operations vehicle, a Mobile Crime Unit, Mobile Crash Investigation Unit, Field Command Post Unit, will arrive shortly. DUI checkpoints will be held early this summer.

The Chief reported that he and John Dubnansky had a meeting regarding grant funding.

He indicated the Axon Fleet 3 systems have arrived enabling car cameras to read plates and set up a "hot" list.

3. Fire Department

Robert Statler, Fire Chief, reported having assistance of the Johnstown PD, the Greater Johnstown Water Authority and Public works at the recent church fire in Prospect. He commented that the water supply in that area is good for residential use but that a house fire would draw more water. Reverend King commented there may be an issue of water pressure on that side of William Penn. The Chief indicated there are still some old lines in that neighborhood.

Chief Statler noted a switch to the new 800 radio system, which has been working better than the old system after a few issues were resolved.

4. Finance

Robert Ritter, Finance Director, provided an update on the new software. He reported that invoices and parking tickets can now be paid on the City of Johnstown's website. Codes and Permits is not yet functional due to technical issues that are being worked through but should be in service within the new few weeks.

Tablets for data entry are being ordered by Mr. Williams for use in the field.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Huchel regarding amusement tax collection Mr. Ritter reported that approximately 30 people have paid, which resulted in about \$40,000 in income, but 40 have not responded. Codes officers may get involved in certain areas. There was further discussion.

5. Community Development

John Dubnansky, Economic Development Director, attended a meeting involving Highlands Health, which is in pursuit of becoming a federally qualified health center. A proposal will be submitted by Highlands in December to get that designation.

Mr. Dubnansky commented that the Main Street Project would not be a successful project without successful public input, which resulted in over 1,000 comments from the community. He stated Cumberland, Maryland, is

currently engaging in a large-scale streetscape project and provided information in that regard.

Mr. Dubnansky noted being invited to the Moxham Renaissance Group meeting for discussion of the Main Street Project.

He indicated that on October 26, 2023, that he, Mr. Imhoff, JAHA and CamTran teams participated in a two-hour Zoom call to discuss details of the Main Street project with the Escape team. He noted many trees are portrayed up and down Main Street, which may not be feasible and the team is working on alternatives.

An application will be submitted to the Local Share Accounts Grant Program for upgrades to the West End Fire Station and the purchase of two police vehicles.

There was further discussion regarding the positive feedback received as a result of the the recent Moxham Renaissance meeting and when the second round of demolitions would occur.

6. Code Enforcement

Dave Williams, Codes Enforcement Manager, reported that 27 permits were issued and there were 92 violations. He will provide a report of what was issued per code officer at the end of the meeting.

He noted there were 115 rental registration forms sent in the year 2022, and so far in 2023, 278 were sent, which will be entered into the new software and rental inspections are being scheduled.

Mr. Williams indicated that Shawn covers West End, Coopersdale, Cambria City and Minersville. Reggie covers Moxham, Hornerstown, Roxbury and Walnut Grove. And James covers Woodvale, OCB, Central Business District and Prospect.

Mrs. Mock commented that neither Council nor residents should be the ones turning in code violations, that staff should be more proactive in logging code violations.

Mr. Williams indicated there were 882 service requests generated in 2020; 1282 in 2021; this year thus far 1,038. There was further discussion regarding code violations and keeping anonymous the names of those who make the reports and code violations that have gone to the magistrate.

He noted adhering to the ordinance regarding the two ten-day notices and then following through and over the last few months 2,024 charges have been taken to the magistrate.

Reverend King commented that the City has to figure out who the landlords are renting properties and have not registered. Chief Statler commented that the City Fire, while going out on medical calls, smoke detector installations, is asking renters who they're renting from and some renters do not know the answer. Reverend King suggested obtaining a printout of renters and owners from the Greater Johnstown Water Authority.

Mayor Janakovic commended Public Works on picking up the leaves promptly.

There was discussion regarding the two street-sweepers and there being only one operator for both. Mr. Campagna indicated

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 7:58 p.m.

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