

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 14, 2024

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, Mr. Capriotti, Ms. Huchel, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock (7).

Ethan Imhoff, City Manager; Alex Ashcom, Assistant City Manager; Dennis R. Very, Esquire, Solicitor; Robert Statler, Fire Chief; Richard Pritchard, Police Chief; Jared Campagna, Director, Public Works; Sara Williams, Executive Secretary were also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2024 and the Reorganizational Meeting Minutes of January 2, 2024. The motion was seconded by Mr. Britt and passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mr. Capriotti, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock, Ms. Huchel (7).

Nays: None (0)

PROCLAMATIONS, AWARDS, HONORS, RESOLUTIONS OF RECOGNITION-

A Proclamation recognizing James "Jet" Mair was presented previously but was read into the record by Mr. Arnone as follows:

"Jet" Mair was born in Schumacher, Ontario, Canada, on May 15, 1946, the youngest of four children, developed a love and a passion for the great sport of hockey joining the Ontario Hockey League in 1963 he played for the Hamilton Red Wings and St. Jerome Alouettes. And Mr. Bair joined the Johnstown Jets in 1966 playing three seasons 192 games and earning 57 goals and 101 assists. In 1969, Mr. Mair had opportunity to join the National Hockey League by joining the Philadelphia Flyers and played with distinction and excellence for two years.

Mr. Mair continued his career until 1975 having played with the Richmond Robins, Quebec Aces, New York Islanders, the Seattle Totems, and Vancouver Canucks, He then retired and returned to Canada and became a police officer in

Timmins Ontario. He worked there until retiring in 2003 with the rank of sergeant. Mr. Mair is now retired and is enjoying time with his family and always loves a great hockey game.

Therefore, I, the Mayor of the City of Johnstown, on behalf of City Council, proclaim a hearty thanks to Mr. Mair and we congratulate his outstanding athletic career. He stands as a role model for all young people that they may always work tirelessly, passionately and sportsman-like in all respects both on and off the ice. We are grateful for your service to our City, and we honor him as one of the greatest of Johnstown's many athletes. January 26, 2024 I hereto put my stamp and by my hand cause the seal of Johnstown be affixed to this. Mayor Frank Janakovic.

Mr. Arnone noted Mr. Mair was honored before a recent Tomahawks hockey game.
(Round of Applause)

A proclamation honoring Charles Gundlach was read into the record by the Mayor as follows:

The City of Johnstown recognizes the need to preserve local history and to celebrate those who take prominence in noteworthy deeds. One person is Charles Gundlach, who is black, born in the City of New Orleans on August 28, 1861, moved to the City of Johnstown and opened a watchmaking and jewelry business. Mr. Gundlach with his expertise in the fine art of watchmaking oversaw the installation of the City of Johnstown, City Hall Clock Tower from 1900 to 1902 and became its caretaker until his death on November 4th, 1943 at 82 years of age.

Mr. Gundlach worked tirelessly to maintain that historic and iconic structure within the City of Johnstown performing meritorious service for the community and in doing so has become a noteworthy figure to be recorded and remembered among the great persons of the city of Johnstown.

Now, Therefore, I, Mayor Frank J. Janakovic, on behalf of City Council, honor Mr. Gundlach for his service to our City and thank his surviving family for his service. We commit to remembering this honorable deed for our City forever and hereby record him in the annals of Johnstown history.

I, Therefore, Mayor Frank J. Janakovic, on this 14th day of February, 2024, hereby by my hand cause the seal of the City of Johnstown be affixed on behalf of the City and City Council.

(Round of Applause)

Carol, who was present on behalf of her father, thanked the Mayor and Council for the honor.

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Mary Ann Manculich, 192 Iron Street, Johnstown, presented before Council regarding a grant received in the amount of \$151,000 to restore the Honan Avenue Playground. She thanked the City, the neighborhood, John Dubnansky, EADS, Alex Ashcom, Mrs. Mock and Reverend King who helped to create the plan. She noted the money was appreciated but just wasn't enough and requested information as to where to obtain additional funding.

Community Foundation will offer grant funding later on in the year and a proposal will be sent at that time. A meeting with United Neighborhoods is also scheduled.

REPORTS

CITY MANAGER:

Ethan Imhoff, City Manager, reported the Mill Rats would like to make improvements to Sargent's Stadium and would be using private dollars to do that which would require additional time to work through contract language. Mr. Imhoff indicated the goal is to have a contract ready for approval on the March agenda.

Mr., Imhoff reported that he and the Mayor presented to the Gunther Leadership Group recently for discussion of City-related issues and healthcare.

Mr. Imhoff and the Community Development Department have been working on extending the contract of the Small Business development Center at Central Park on Gazebo Place. The contract will be up and renewed funding, and a new home for the facility may need to be found. Suitable locations are being reviewed.

Regarding the Greater Johnstown Water Authority appointment tabled at the last meeting, it was noted that Mr. Follansbee had been approved by Westmont and Southmont and will move on to fill that position.

Mr. Imhoff announced that this was the last meeting and last day for Jack Ashcom, Assistant City Manager. He thanked Mr. Ashcom and wished him well in his new position with the County.

Reverend King had questions for the City Manager regarding the Intuit project. Mr. Imhoff explained the building has new owners, and he has been having discussion with them regarding the building. He explained the business is regarding those interested in developing businesses in Johnstown. There was further discussion regarding Council's role in the matter.

Mr. Capriotti had concerns that a lot of money was put into the project, and now there's a chance "that we basically shined up a penny for somebody to turn around and sell." Mr. Imhoff noted the new owners will honor the agreement through June 2024 but are under no obligation after that.

Mayor Janakovic indicated that Penn Highland's culinary project in partnership with the Greater Johnstown School District is underway at a site on Gazebo Place.

MAYOR:

Mayor Janakovic noted his attendance at the recent Reverse Raffle for the Roxbury Bandshell. He commended Mrs. Borkow for raising the money to keep the bandshell operational with summer concerts.

He noted attendance at the Chamber's Economic Summit at the Pasquerilla Conference Center where an animated tour of the future Central Park was provided.

The Mayor met with the President of Conemaugh Hospital regarding his commitment to relocate staff from the Westwood area to the Locust Street site, which did not happen. The hospital president did note that additional beds were being added, and other issues were being worked out.

Mayor Janakovic reported on his attendance at the YMCA for Governor's Shapiro announcement on rental and tax rebates.

He attended a ribbon cutting for ColourLuxe Salon on Walnut Street, which would be operated by two sisters. He commended the young pair and noted that "to have young people opening a business is a real positive for our City."

CITY SOLICITOR:

Dennis Very, Esquire, Solicitor, introduced himself to Council. He provided a brief summary of his educational background. Mr. Very noted being excited to work with the Council and staff to move the City forward.

Mr. Very reported on his participation in many meetings with the City Manager to review recent issues, noted he had drafted a corporate designee document for certain litigation, read the funding agreement with Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, analyzed the mechanical amusement device tax issue with the City Manager regarding enforcement and next steps, generally reviewed the City Charter, and did research regarding oaths of office and who may administer those. Mr. Very also researched information regarding 12-demolition notice of lien letters which were sent out.

Mayor Janakovic commented, in the northern part of the County, owners of machines can also be taxed or levied a cost of operation. Mr. Arnone commented that in his dealings with the American Legion, vending companies give money to accounts to pay the tax so they would not be burdened. He noted some businesses have not paid for last year and stated the person hired for that position only sent out letters to bars and restaurants and not other places such as smoke shops. Mr. Arnone commented there is currently a bill in the Governor's budget that this matter "may come out of our hands altogether." He suggested that businesses with machines be identified, so if the matter is taken over by the state, the City would receive a portion of the funds.

Mr. Imhoff clarified there was a list of approximately 80 businesses to which letters were sent. Those businesses which complied sent in an inventory sheet along with a check. He stated the Sargent's employee visited the businesses to verify what was reported was accurate and delivered them stickers. He noted 28 businesses have not paid and that staff is visiting them to inventory how many machines they have and how much tax is owed.

There was further discussion regarding the mechanical amusement device tax and how the matter was handled.

CITY ENGINEER:

Members were referred to the attached report.

COUNCIL UPDATES/NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISONS:

Ms. Huchel encouraged all to attend the Gallery on Gazebo exhibits, which explores African-American art and culture by artist Ashley Jones who will be speaking there in two weeks. Artist Ron Donoughe, popular for Pittsburgh streetscape artwork will present this Friday.

She reported Band of Brothers will have a performance at the former St. Columba Church at the end of February, beginning of March.

Reverend King noted her attendance at the recent Vision roundtable for discussion of neighborhood projects. She reported many people want to purchase homes in the City, but they first must qualify, which is a problem. She stated, as a result, a Commission on Poverty which will hold its first meeting on Monday, February 26, 2024 at 2:30 at Christ Centered Community Church. All were invited to attend. She thanked Mr. Imhoff for his assistance.

Mrs. Mock reported the West End Improvement Group is obtaining grant information and getting clearances on some properties. Funding has been received from the Community Foundation. Application will be made to Lee Initiatives for the community gardens, which falls under their criteria.

She and Mr. Imhoff met with several Intuit staff regarding ideas for the park.

Mayor Janakovic indicated that he and Mr. Imhoff have had discussions regarding the use of the waterworks and determined there needs to be further review of the matter. He suggested that all view the animation that was presented at the Summit, which Mr. Imhoff will email to all members and will also place it on the website.

Mayor Janakovic complimented Reverend King and Vision for hosting a group event at the church a few weeks ago, which provided an opportunity for residents to voice complaints and positives.

Chief Richard Pritchard entered the meeting along with three new recruits and provided business cards as requested. Council members welcomed Officer Adam Miller, Officer Johnson, and Officer Rickabaugh, who provided a brief summary of their personal backgrounds.

Mr. Capriotti had no report.

Mr. Britt had no report.

Mr. Arnone, the City's Johnstown Housing Authority representative, updated statistical information related to the population of the public housing communities located within the City of Johnstown. He reported that as of December 31, 2023, public housing population is 2,232; Section 8 voucher holders, 1,180, which amounts to a total of 3,412. Currently 45 percent of those living in poverty in the City are being assisted.

Mr. Arnone indicated the Prospect relocations has affected the population statistics. He noted the Housing Authority is proceeding with repairs in the

Prospect Homes and sealed bids for electric and plumbing will open on January 16, 2024. He reported that the work has started on ten units at a time.

He reported that Section Eight Program is now assisting over 100 more families than this time last year. 862 families are currently participating in this program, and residents are able to rent a quality home from a private landlord with Section Eight rental assistance. Section Eight leased out 862 of 960 or 90 percent. The City has 504, County 310, and 48 outside the County. Mr. Arnone reported that eight individuals within the system have been hired to work part time, and people are being educated on debt and banking issues.

As the City's representative on the GJWA, Mr. Arnone reported that as of the end of January 2024, the City was 70 percent pressure tested, and the surcharge has been increased for noncompliance. He reported that one-third of the number of properties left have been abandoned and were capped. He noted currently there are 31 properties that have not completed the 2023 backflow testing, and those will be fined.

All reservoirs are full, and water quality is in "great shape.". Plans for the Kernville pumping station are moving forward.

Renovation plans for the North Fork Dam are progressing with two years to complete the project.

Mayor Janakovic noted the War Memorial gave away 75 to 100 lounge area tickets to needy families and children and provided pizza and popcorn.

PETITIONS:

None

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL READ AND ADOPTION

None

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READ

BILL NO. 1 OF 2024, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,
CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO.
5354 PASSED MAY 31, 2023 UPDATING THE FEE SCHEDULE OF THE
CITY OF JOHNSTOWN.

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

Mrs. Mock suggested a resident should be fined if the fire department has to return a second time for an open fire complaint. Mr. Imhoff indicated that would be added to the second read.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mr. Capriotti, Mayor Janakovic,
Reverend King, Mrs. Mock, Ms. Huchel (7).

Nays: None (0).

**BILL NO. 2 OF 2024, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,
CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING PART 6,
SECTION 614 OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN CODE OF ORDINANCES
BY ADDING NEW SECTIONS 56 AND 57 PROHIBITING THE
DECLAWING AND TETHERING OF CATS; AND TO PROHIBIT
UNATTENDED DOGS AND CATS BEING LEFT OUTSIDE DURING
INCLEMENT WEATHER AND TO DESIGNATE THE ENFORCEMENT
TO THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN POLICE.**

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

Yeas: Mr. Britt, Mr. Capriotti, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King,
Mrs. Mock, Mr. Arnone (7).

Nays: Ms. Huchel (1).

Mrs. Mock suggested a workshop be held for further discussion.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 105650

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,
CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING AND
DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO FACILITATE THE TRANSFER
OF PROPERTY TO PENNDOT FOR THE GOUCHER STREET
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.**

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

Mr. Imhoff explained this is regarding transfer of 28,740 feet of City-owned property on D Street in Lower Yoder Township to PennDOT for \$2,200.

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Stated Meeting, continued

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mr. Capriotti, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock,
Ms. Huchel, Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt (7)
Nays: None (0)

Resolution No. 105651

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,
CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY
MANAGER TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED AND TAKE
ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT WITH
BERKEBILE EXCAVATING CO. INC. FOR THE HONAN AVENUE
PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJET 2023-09.

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

Mr. Imhoff explained this includes a new basketball court, pavilion, walking trail, and stormwater drainage for the park. Other additions would be added with fundraising.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock, Ms. Huchel,
Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mr. Capriotti (7)
Nays: None (0)

NEW BUSINESS

Civil Service Commission Appointment

Mr. Imhoff noted the recent death of Clyde Williams, former member of the City Service Commission, leaving an unexpired term. Susan Bopp was recommended for that appointment, which runs through December 31, 2025. There are currently no applicants for an alternate position.

Mrs. Mock made a motion to approve Susan Bopp. The motion was seconded by Ms. Huchel and passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Reverend King, Mrs. Mock, Ms. Huchel, Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt,
Mr. Capriotti, Mayor Janakovic (7)
Nays: None (0)

OLD BUSINESS

None

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. Public Works

Mr. Campagna reported demolition has started at the Village Street Playground and will continue to move forward as weather permits.

He reported that staff has been present at the Roxbury Park tennis courts repairing the cracked wall.

Mr. Imhoff explained that a grant in the amount of \$88,000 was applied for last year, and half of that amount was received. Mr. Penna will determine how to spend the grant money.

Mr. Arnone noted the need to cut down weeds along Franklin Street in the area of Murphy's Bar. Mr. Campagna explained Public Works would work in conjunction with JRA on that project.

Mayor Janakovic suggested City lawnmowing projects be placed on next month's agenda.

2. Police Department

Richard Pritchard, Police Chief, was glad to have Mr. Mair recognized with a proclamation and stated he had visited and toured the police station and patches were exchanged.

Chief noted one individual passed the sergeant test and is now eligible for promotion. A recruiting drive will start soon.

He stated a drug arrest on January 26, 2024 seized nearly two pounds of methamphetamine, \$49,000 in cash, \$3,500 in counterfeit currency, and seven guns.

Chief Pritchard reported the department will be losing one officer, which would put the department down by seven or eight.

Mrs. Mock indicated that Mr. Imhoff sent information for the LPRs to Sue Mann who was confident that money would be provided by the 1889 Foundation, which

will be added to the \$20-some thousand already allocated. Any other equipment that is needed will be phase two, after which representatives will be brought in to see how good it is working and maybe add to it.

Chief Pritchard indicated a quote was received from Watkins, which added other stations which was not requested. There would be further discussion with Mr. Imhoff regarding the matter.

Mr. Capriotti requested an update regarding the school resource officer matter. Chief noted there have been discussions, and currently, "we're in a holding pattern." None of the current officers are interested in the position. Officer Cypher continues in the position.

3. Fire Department

Robert Statler, Fire Chief, reported the fire engine ordered for the Hornerstown Station will be delivered end of April, beginning of May.

4. Finance

No Report.

5. Community Development

No Report.

6. Code Enforcement

No Report.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7:19 p.m.

The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION WAS HELD FOLLOWING ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING.