

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, May 8, 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.

Reverend King offered the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Janakovic announced that an Executive Session was held on April 24, 2024 with regard to personnel.

The following members of Council were present for roll call:

Mr. Arnone, Deputy Mayor Capriotti, Ms. Huchel, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock (6).

Absent: Mr. Britt (1).

Ethan Imhoff, City Manager; Dennis R. Very, Esquire, Solicitor; Sara Williams, Executive Secretary were also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 10, 2024. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mock and passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mr. Arnone, Deputy Mayor Capriotti, 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:

Ethan Imhoff, City Manager, reported the advertisement for his position went out on Friday, May 3, 2024, to six different advertising locations. Phone calls had

been received. The deadline to apply is May 31, 2024, and all applications will be sent to Mr. Newsome at DCED. He will keep Council updated.

Mr. Imhoff offered updated reports from the department heads as follows:

Chief Richard Pritchard reported the current number of officers is currently 30. 3 will be starting on June 17, 2024; 2 from the IUP Academy and 1 from another municipality. Another officer will start in September of 2024 after completion at the Laurel Highlands Academy. This Saturday, May 11, 2024, 7 candidates will be tested, and an additional 5 candidates will be tested on May 24, 2024.

Regarding Sargent's Stadium at the Point, Mr. Imhoff reported that he and Jared have been working with the Mill Rats group, including Mike McKenry, and he reported that power washing of the exterior of the stadium will soon commence, as well as other upgrades inside the stadium. The new owners are very proactive in working with the City to make recommendations and find contractors willing to do projects at a "good price."

Mr. Arnone pointed out there is a large pile of tires at the corner of Bond and Grove Avenue that need picked up. It was noted that Mr. Williams is aware of the problem and working on accommodations.

MAYOR:

Mayor Frank Janakovic noted his attendance at a recent National Mental Health Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, regarding mental health awareness across the country. He stated Michele Obama was guest speaker.

Mr. Janakovic reported that he and Mr. Imhoff spent two days in Washington, D.C. meeting face to face with Senator Casey and Senator Fetterman, Republican Representative Joyce, HUD, Army Corps and Governmental Interoffice Affairs. There was discussion regarding the needs of Johnstown, what is going on in Johnstown, and support from all three on a number of community projects. The City's request was for approximately \$3 million for the Public Safety Building. The Mayor noted all were very supportive.

CITY SOLICITOR:

Dennis Very, Esquire, Solicitor, Leventry, Haschak, & Rodkey, LLC, referred to his written report for review by Council.

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Mrs. Mock suggested Codes Department step up on code violations, and those cases be sent to the magistrate as discussed previously.

CITY ENGINEER:

Members were referred to the written report.

COUNCIL UPDATES/NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISONS:

Deputy Mayor Capriotti - No report.

As the City's representative on the GJWA, Mr. Arnone reported that as of April 2024, the City had 67 percent pressure tested. 83 new service applications were received, and 17 accounts were reactivated. Annual backflow testing notification will be sent as of April 15, 2024. He reported, during the month of March 2024, there were 20 service renewals completed, 4 mainline repairs, 4 valve repairs, and 4 service cutoffs.

He reported all reservoirs are full with great water quality.

As the City's Johnstown Housing Authority representative, Mr. Arnone updated statistical information related to the population of the public housing communities located within the City of Johnstown. He reported, as of April 30, 2024, public housing population is 2,316; Section 8 voucher holders, 1,184, which totals 3,500. Currently 47 percent of those living in poverty in the City are being assisted. Mr. Arnone indicated the Prospect relocations have affected the population statistics.

He noted construction repairs at the Prospect Homes continues. Repair work will be completed in phases. He suggested inviting residents back on a rolling basis.

The Johnstown Housing Authority is applying for a HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant this year 2024 targeting Coopersdale in the application. The chosen area would include both the public housing site and across the street, as well as consideration of the West End towards Oakhurst. The Planning Grant, if awarded, will be used for community development improvement activity chosen by the neighborhood as well as marketing studies and research for possible redevelopment.

Mr. Arnone reported on recently serving as the City's representative for the Cramer Pike dedication, which was named after the very first man killed in Vietnam in 1959, Hank G. Cramer. Mr. Arnone reported that Mr. Imhoff and

Chief were present for the recent dedication of the Fourth Avenue Bridge in Cambria City in honor of a Johnstown native killed in Vietnam.

Ms. Huchel reported on her attendance at the recent Empty Bowl event at Bottle Works hosted by the high school Key Club and commended all those students who made those hundreds of bowls to help various nonprofits.

She noted her attendance at the Westmoreland County Redevelopment Authority Blight Summit also attended by Mr. Williams.

Ms. Huchel indicated, with regard to Planning Commission updates, she reported awaiting responses for the comprehensive plan, and discussion continues with regard to a reuse plan for this Public Safety Building rather than it being demolished.

Reverend King also reported on her attendance at the Empty Bowl event. She commended the high school for teaching financial literacy since 2013 and staying ahead of the curve on that, which will be mandated in the near future.

Preparations have begun for the Juneteenth Festival, which will be held June 13 through June 19, 2024.

Reverend King noted the next Poverty Commission meeting will be held May 30, 2024. The next United Neighborhood meeting will be held Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

She indicated the next playground initiative will meet at the Hornerstown Playground at 8:00 on Saturday morning, May 11, 2024, and from there to the Prospect Playground.

A Woodvale residents' meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at CamTran. A downtown residents' meeting will be held May 30, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

Mrs. Mock reported the West End Improvement Group will hold its Trash to Treasure Sale Friday and Saturday, May 11 and 12, 2024.

Mrs. Mock spoke about the 1 percent transfer tax, which was budgeted at \$120,000 in 2023, and was now \$148,000, a \$28,000 increase indicative of transfers of property.

She inquired as to the status of the amusement tax. Mr. Imhoff indicated that Mr. Very provided a "very nice letter" to those who had not paid the amusement tax, which will be going out soon. Mr. Arnone again suggested that the staff involved with writing parking tickets spend one day a week on the amusement tax project. Mr. Imhoff will have further discussion with Ms. Millard regarding the matter.

PETITIONS

None.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL READ AND ADOPTION

None.

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READ:

None.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE JOHNSTOWN HOUSING AUTHORITY TO APPLY FOR FUNDING FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM

PRESENTATION

Michael Alberts, Executive Director, Johnstown Housing Authority presented before Council regarding the resolution on the agenda involving the City's support as co-applicant for its Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant Program. He noted applying for and not receiving this grant in 2023. He suggested the City's participation to enhance the competitiveness of the application and thus increase the likelihood of its approval. He noted the grant is in the total amount of \$500,000, \$350,000 for a planning/study, \$150,000 for an immediate community improvement project. The Coopersdale neighborhood is the area being targeted and includes more than just land owned by the JHA. He offered further explanation of the request.

Mrs. Mock commented there are too many public housing units in the City of Johnstown, but the suggested idea would be good if there was a larger population in the City, that the ratio is "too close" and public support is lacking. She opined, "This isn't the right thing to do."

Ms. Huchel made a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mock. Mr. Very explained, if there was more information that needed to be learned, it can be obtained in a different session. Mr. Imhoff noted being very knowledgeable on the matter and could answer any questions.

Reverend King inquired as to the amount of money the City would have to put up front. Mr. Imhoff indicated there was no financial obligation.

There was additional discussion regarding the infrastructure aspect of the planning, how much input the City would have in the planning process, and how much it would involve public input.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mr. Arnone, Reverend King, Ms. Huchel (3)

Nays: Mr. Capriotti, Mayor Janakovic, Mrs. Mock (3)

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### **DCED Letter of Intent**

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve a letter of intent with the DCED Center for Local Government Services acknowledging and accepting services to provide the City administrative support with its search for a new city manager. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Mock.

Mayor Janakovic noted there had been a verbal approval to move forward with the letter.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0)

#### OLD BUSINESS

None.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Sharon Weaver, 168 Delaware Avenue, Johnstown, presented before Council regarding her need to purchase a handicapped parking space near the home she and her husband had recently purchased. Mr. Imhoff will follow up and contact her regarding the matter.

Daniel Zakraysek, Bantel Street, Upper Yoder Township, President of Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 86, presented before Council for discussion regarding the condition of the Public Safety Building. He noted at least two officers required surgery on sinus cavities, one having at least two surgeries. He provided photographs indicating the deplorable conditions in the building.

Mr. Zakraysek indicated, during the recent storms, there had been as much as two feet of water in the basement, and there is a concern for the health and safety of the officers. He noted officers "deal on a regular basis with the safety on the streets and should not have to deal with the deplorable conditions in the building." Both the officers and fire personnel stationed in the building are having health issues that they never had before, and new equipment as well has to be covered with plastic due to the water coming down through the ceilings. He asked Council to review the photographs and act on the matter.

Mr. Imhoff noted there was discussion with the FOP regarding the matter. Air testing will be conducted and air vents cleaned out. The matter will be addressed.

Mr. Capriotti noted, as a former fireman, he was stationed in this building for eight years, and the deplorable conditions being noted "are far more than what ServPro is going to be able to take care of." He encouraged members to stop by the room on the other side of the building to view the damage.

Mr. Huchel suggested it would be better to rehab the building, and more attention should be given to this course of action. Jim Carthew, Chairman of the Planning Commission, estimated interior general construction renovations for the first, fourth and fifth floors to be \$4.5 million; basement, second and third floors, \$1.5 million; mechanical and electrical renovations for all floors, \$2 million; ADA elevator that stops at all floors, \$750,000; roof replacement and facade improvements, \$250,000; for a total of \$9 million.

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It was noted the matter was assigned to a Department of Labor and Industry regional review committee for testing. Mr. Capriotti suggested Eric Miller or Art be contacted regarding the matter.

Mr. Imhoff clarified that the funding for the Central Park Project cannot be used for this purpose as that the RAISE grant is a transportation-based grant and can only fund certain items, such as sidewalks, curbing, stormwater management, and cannot fund the fountain, pavilion or artwork. The funding from that is from the \$8 million that Council allocated out of ARPA. He indicated ARPA funding can also go towards the Central Park and Main Street Projects, including the parklets and green spaces.

Mrs. Mock indicated that monies for a splash pad could be allocated for the Public Safety Building. There is no staff to maintain a splash pad.

Mr. Imhoff indicated, once final details are worked out, the plans will be presented to the public. He noted that Council controls the ARPA monies and has until December of 2024 to make any changes.

Mr. Arnone suggested a workshop to discuss this project specifically before the next meeting.

#### RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 7:12 p.m.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.