

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, February 19, 2025

City Council met in a stated session for the special council transaction of business.

Mayor Frank Janakovic called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Janakovic asked Council to observe a moment of silence for Peter Vizza who was a longtime City Council member.

The following members of Council were present for roll call:

Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mrs. Mock (5).

Ms. Huchel arrived at 5:25 p.m. after the commencement of the interviews.

Art Martynuska, City Manager; Sara Williams, Executive Secretary; and Michael Capriotti, Assistant City Manager, were also in attendance.

The following four candidates presented for interviews before City Council: Taylor Clark, Nicholas Graham, Mike Hamacek, and Greg Brown.

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

None.

AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Janakovic reported that City Manager Martynuska would be conducting the interviews.

City Manager Martynuska stated legal counsel assisted in developing a series of five questions for an open meeting format. He explained the interview process would be as follows: Each applicant was assigned a number, which was drawn for the starting position in the interview process. Each applicant would be permitted up to three minutes to answer each of the five questions. Council members had a scoring sheet to be collected at the end of the meeting. Each applicant would be alerted whenever there was thirty seconds remaining in their question answering session.

Each Candidate was asked the following; Question 1: "How will you handle a situation in which a citizen is unhappy with the decision made by city council?" Their responses were as follows:

Candidate Number 1, Mr. Clark, stated he had never dealt with this situation before. He added that he believed there are avenues of filing complaints to City Council. He felt the best way would be to talk with people in either a formal or town hall meeting setting. Mr. Clark stated they needed to talk with people to see where their interests are. He would simply sit and listen to the citizen and then bring the concern back to Council for further discussion.

Candidate Number 2, Mr. Hamacek, stated he would talk with the person and see their point of view to find out further information. He would then research and bring it back to Council to discuss. The candidate would double check to make sure that the decision was the right one. He would also follow up with the citizen with the outcome of the investigation.

Candidate Number 3, Mr. Graham, stated we have all felt in practice in our lives it is extremely difficult to make everyone happy. He echoed the sentiment of the previous two candidates that you have to talk to people, find out the specific issue, and letting them know there is open forums and meetings to voice grievances. He suggested working with people, fellow council members, and local government to exhaust all efforts to rectify an issue, then letting them know that majority speaks.

Candidate Number 4, Mr. Brown, stated he hoped he would have all of the information regarding the matter. He would invite the individual to meet to vet and gain a full understanding of the issue. Sometimes it is a matter of letting the individual vent. It would be a collection of information, and the response would be a collective effort to provide a response.

Each Candidate was asked the following; Question 2: "As a City Council member, you may need to make decisions regarding competing City services. Describe your decision-making process regarding matters like this." Their responses were as follows:

Candidate Number 2, Mr. Hamacek, stated he would have to check the following for each vendor offer: The length of the contract, their pricing, the track record of the business, and whether the business was used before. Sometimes the cheapest price is not the best.

Candidate Number 3, Mr. Graham, stated all Council members would collaborate as a group to plan on prioritizing cost-effective analysis service standards. All of the options should be discussed. All vendors should be fully assessed. He reiterated that City services should be a collaborative decision.

Candidate Number 4, Mr. Brown, stated, in his current role, he has had to analyze services. You must see what is tangible and intangible. He stated the questions are really compassionate. It must be a win-win no matter what. Hearing concerns and explaining decisions is important. People seem to be angered for other reasons. Always collect all information, think about it, then give a short direct, friendly answer. It is good to let people cool down.

Candidate Number 1, Mr. Clark, stated, as a local business-restaurant owner, he makes these decisions daily. He would a similar process on City Council as he does in his business. He considers at least three bids, reviews the services, the longevity of the contract, the pricing scale, the percentage of any pricing increases, and look to local companies that provide the service.

Each Candidate was asked the following; Question 3: "Johnstown is a very diverse community. How will you be inclusive of that diversity?" Their responses were as follows:

Candidate Number 3, Mr. Graham, stated it does not matter where you are from, what you do. Everyone and anyone is welcome in Johnstown. Diversity is a very key cornerstone to the history of this country. Johnstown should welcome anyone and everyone with open arms.

Candidate Number 4, Mr. Brown, stated he was lucky to travel a lot for his job for several years. He learned that when areas and companies are diversified, everyone wants to be around and involved. He stated diversity is needed.

Candidate Number 1, Mr. Clark, stated, luckily throughout his life, growing up where he did and being involved in the City, he was shown diversity at a very young age. It has been a real blessing. The greatest promise this country has ever offered the entire world is immigration. There is no where else like it in the entire world. It is important to recognize that with diversity and inclusion, not only is there a map of people that look different, but there are different ideas. He discussed his experiences on the Police Advisory Board with regard to diversity and inclusion.

Candidate Number 2, Mr. Hamacek, stated, graduating from Johnstown High and being in the contracting business for 30 years, he has become pretty diverse. Everybody is equal, no matter race or gender. He discussed negativity being voiced toward new residents due to their background. He stated the cost of living in Johnstown is reasonable, which offers new residents an opportunity to make a decent living.

Each Candidate was asked the following; Question 4: " How would you build effective relationships with stated and federal officials?" Their responses were as follows:

Candidate Number 4, Mr. Brown, stated he would have to survey the population. I knows some local officials and how to reach out to them to introduce himself. He would share and exchange his information.

Candidate Number 1, Mr. Clark, stated, first, party would not matter. Through his business, he has been able to build relationships with state and federal officials. Sharing information, whether it be emails, addresses or phone numbers, to build a relationship, as well as ideas, is important. All have to work together at some point to bring money into the City. As a new Council member, he would work to get his foot in the door and make his presence known in order to build a working relationship with them.

Candidate Number 2, Mr. Hamacek, stated the key to the beginning of an effective relationship is to listen first. He would want to meet to know and understand their points of view before jeopardizing any dealings with that official.

Candidate Number 3, Mr. Graham, stated effective relationships could be summed up as an effective rapport. Building a rapport with state and federal officials would be simple by introducing yourself, letting them know what you do, and your affiliation with the City. Working together as a governing body to serve the public is important. Our constituents are their constituents. It is a benefit to everybody.

Each Candidate was asked the following; Question 5: "The City has two large upcoming projects, Central Park and Main Street. What are your views on these projects and how would you convey them to the public?" Their responses were as follows:

Candidate Number 1, Mr. Clark, stated, having a business on the 500 block of Main Street, the Main Street project is probably the most important. He was not aware of the specifics of the project. He has had thoughts of shutting down Main Street on the weekends to vehicular traffic so people can see Main Street. Main Street is the street for growth and to expand in the City. He thought the plans to update Central Park are required. This is money being spent in the downtown area of the City to bring more people in.

Candidate Number 2, Mr. Hamacek, stated he is 100% for the Main Street project. He has been working on the upper end of Main Street for the last four years.

There are many empty store fronts on Main Street that need filled. The parking and lighting need to be redesigned. He stated Central Park needs upgrades. He was not aware of the current plans for Central Park. He is very interested in any projects in the downtown area of Johnstown.

Candidate Number 3, Mr. Graham, stated he has a high overview knowledge of the both projects. They are fantastic and great ideas. It is a revitalization of the downtown community. The downtown area should be the crown jewel of the City's boroughs and areas. Once the projects are completed, merchants would not want to decline an invitation to move to downtown. He is 100% in agreement with the projects.

Candidate Number 4, Mr. Brown, stated the projects are amazing opportunities to grow business and to pull business in. These projects would also be good for the county. Projects like these make people feel confident in starting a business. He would work to help and get word of the projects out to the public. It is amazing to see people dedicating their lives and precious time for the good of the community.

City Manager Martynuska concluded the question/answer session of the candidates.

Mayor Janakovic stated the score sheets will be given to the City Manager to tally. There is only one vacancy. He thanked all candidates on behalf of Council for attending and their interest in being on Council. All candidates were encouraged to run for Council as all of shown an interest in the City and its projects to move the City forward.

A special City Council meeting will be held on March 3, 2025, to make the selection to fill the vacant position left by Mr. Capriotti's resignation until January 2026. The process of getting on Council in the future was outlined for all candidates and interested individuals. It was noted that there are two-year and four-year terms.

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 5:37 p.m.