

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, August 13, 2025

The Greater Johnstown 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.

The following members of Council were present for roll call:

Mayor Frank Janakovic, Reverend Sylvia King, Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mr. Clark, Ms. Huchel, Mrs. Mock (7).

Arturo Martynuska, City Manager; Aimee Willett, Solicitor; Jennifer Burkhart, Executive Secretary; Brooke Chambers, Aspire Grant; Lavona Smith, HR Manager; Melissa Millard, Finance Director; and John Rutledge, Economic Development Director, were also present.

Mayor Janakovic noted, for the record, the Board would enter into an Executive Session regarding litigation prior to the commencement of the August 13, 2025 meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Janakovic requested a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of July 9, 2025.

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

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

Nays: None (0).

PROCLAMATIONS, AWARDS, HONORS, RESOLUTIONS OF RECOGNITION

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Dustin Greene, 316 Chestnut Street, expressed his concern over the proposed redesign of Central Park in Johnstown, citing a loss of community heritage, mature trees, and meaningful public input. Mr. Greene played a childhood audio, depicting the park during what he described as a golden era, following the City's flood centennial and downtown renovations. He nostalgically recalled visiting the park's holiday village setup with the Discover Downtown Partnership. He criticized the City's decision-making process, stating the original community-approved design was discarded, millions of dollars were

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wasted, and public input was ignored in favor of a plan not shaped by residents. Mr. Greene highlighted the emotional and environmental loss associated with the destruction of 50- to 75-year-old trees, noting the visible difference from the incline plane and the disappearance of shaded spaces. Mr. Greene concluded his statement by urging the Council to vote against the Park's design.

Trish Fyock, 548 West Howard Street, stated she had lived in Johnstown for 22 years and expressed her appreciation for both the City and Central Park, which she described as historically significant and central to the City's nostalgic identity. She emphasized that Johnstown is not a modern City, but one known for its history, which draws visitors from around the world. She criticized City officials for failing to listen to residents and argued that decisions regarding the park redesign should have included further public interaction. Ms. Fyock questioned the logic of spending millions on the park while blighted properties across neighborhoods like Old Conemaugh Borough, Hornerstown, and Moxham remain neglected. She described these areas as having taxpaying residents living beside deteriorating buildings, which reduces property values and creates unfair conditions. Ms. Fyock urged Council to prioritize small but meaningful improvements, such as painting and sidewalk repairs, and warned if the park project goes over budget or fails, the financial burden will fall on citizens, especially those on fixed incomes—who had no say in the decision. She concluded by asking Council to reconsider and make the right choice.

Pedro Guzman, 525 Pine Street, voiced criticism of the City's decision to invest approximately \$6 million into Central Park without holding a public referendum. Mr. Guzman owns 24 properties in Johnstown, with 20 currently rented, and earned \$228,000 last year, all of which he reinvested into affordable housing without using Section 8 assistance. He criticized the City for failing to enforce code violations on neglected properties. He condemned the decision to prioritize a park redesign over addressing widespread blight, describing the current park as already attractive, especially with its mature trees visible from the incline. Mr. Guzman urged Council to redirect funds toward repairing dilapidated housing, estimating that \$600,000 could improve approximately 600 homes, offering far more benefit than the park project. He concluded by calling the plan poorly thought out, offensive to residents' needs, and a missed opportunity for meaningful investment in the City's broader infrastructure.

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, urged Council to vote against awarding a contract to Lavery Law for federal litigation representation, citing three years of what he called problematic behavior from the firm, and recommended using the City solicitor instead.

Mr. DeBartola addressed the Central Park plans, warning that Council's decision would affect residents for the next 50 years. He questioned the legality and transparency of the

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bidding process, noting inconsistencies with public notice and a lack of detail in the \$6.973 million bid, which he noted was presented in a single paragraph with no cost breakdown. He cited prior Council statements raising concerns about future change orders and whether reducing the bid without rebidding would be legal or ethical.

Mr. DeBartola criticized the project's impact on the City's existing assets, including the removal of trees, the fountain, and the gazebo, and warned of broader economic consequences. He argued that prolonged construction would hurt local businesses and worsen the City's already visible decline, pointing to a Vision Together 2025 report listing 19 empty storefronts, which he believed underestimated the real total.

Mr. DeBartola stated, if elected, he would introduce a resolution on his first day in office to stop the project. He concluded by asking Council to vote no or table the decision until January, arguing that a new council, with at least four members guaranteed to change, should decide. He insisted that no residents outside City leadership supported the redesign.

Dr. Catherine-Anne McCloskey introduced herself as holding a PhD in political economy and referenced Saul Alinsky's Rules for Radicals, advocating for direct action rather than passive resistance against authority. She called on fellow residents to unite in opposition to the Central Park project; invoking Benjamin Franklin's warning that unity is essential in times of political struggle. She expressed intentions to file a lawsuit related to potential disturbances at Sandyvale Cemetery, where her grandfather is buried, and encouraged protests and persistent civic pressure to stop the project. Dr. McCloskey recounted personal ties to Johnstown. She described the ongoing decline of the City and urged residents to reclaim ownership. She concluded by pleading for a referendum or a delay until January, insisting the park project was unnecessary and should not proceed.

Samantha Shaffer, Vine Street Towers, emphasized the importance of preserving the trees in Central Park. She acknowledged that the sidewalks are in poor condition but believed they could be repaired or replaced without altering the overall design of the park. She noted the existence of a wheelchair ramp and suggested installing an elevator under a roofed structure to improve accessibility for those who struggle with steep inclines. Ms. Shaffer stressed the need to maintain the park's current character, especially for events like Christmas celebrations, and urged Council to keep the park as it is while making necessary improvements.

Ashley Craig, 162 H Street, referenced an interaction with Councilwoman Mock in regards to a recent visitation. Ms. Craig addressed an incident on Sheridan Street, where a large amount of hydraulic fluid filled the roadway. She noted a long response time and questioned the City's approach to enforcement.

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Mayor Janakovic requested clarification to the specific agenda item that Ms. Craig was addressing.

Ms. Willett informed the public of the two comment periods, the first of which regarding action items surrounding the agenda, and the second, for general comments.

Ms. Craig criticized the Central Park redesign, questioning the source of funding intended for the redevelopment. She argued that allocated funding was meant to provide relief during the COVID-19 pandemic, not to alter a public space in ways that do not directly benefit residents. She questioned Council's understanding of the term "revitalize," challenging them to consider the difference between genuine revitalization efforts and cosmetic changes that fail to address the City's core needs. She concluded by stating that true revitalization must improve residents' daily lives, not just the City's appearance.

Mayor Janakovic informed Ms. Craig that she would be permitted to provide non-agenda comments at the end of the meeting.

Brian O'Shea, 330 Oak Street, addressed the Central Park project, emphasizing that regardless of which direction one enters Johnstown—via Bedford Street, Route 56, Cambria City, or Westmont—the City is surrounded by visible blight, including abandoned buildings, trash, weeds, and broken windows. He argued that visitors would form negative impressions of the City long before reaching Central Park. Mr. O'Shea called for the project to be delayed until January and placed on a public referendum for the incoming City council to handle. He criticized the current park plan for removing existing greenery and creating what he described as a prolonged construction mess that could last years. He recommended instead making modest improvements to the park, such as repairing sidewalks, trimming trees, adding trash cans and sod, and installing electrical outlets for holiday events—all of which, he argued, could be done for a fraction of the \$6 million proposed budget.

Joe Taranto, 426 Park Avenue, expressed opposition to the Central Park project. He criticized the planned \$7 million expenditure, accusing Council of destroying a valuable asset to the City by removing trees and adding more cement. Mr. Taranto contrasted the park investment with widespread urban decay, citing crumbling buildings, departing families, closed businesses, and increases in crime, violence, and weeds. He argued that Central Park did not need such a costly overhaul and that the City's true needs were functioning infrastructure, public safety, clean neighborhoods, and economic development.

Mr. Taranto opposed Council's plan, noting the funding for the park could be reallocated to a more beneficial asset. He held long-standing council members and their allies accountable for Johnstown's decline over the past two decades, pointing to shrinking

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population, rising poverty, and disappearing investment. He argued that leadership must shift from short-term beautification to long-term sustainability that benefits all residents, not just downtown visitors. Mr. Taranto concluded by challenging Council to consider their legacy and urged a redirection of resources toward meaningful improvements.

REPORTS:

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Art Martynuska, City Manager, noted Johnstown's AAABA Tournament was highly successful, and a parade would occur in celebration. The parade was scheduled to begin at 6 PM on the upper end of Main Street and proceed to Central Park Point Stadium, where additional festivities would occur. A preschool press release and a tentative agenda was distributed to the media, though the agenda remained subject to change depending on the availability of guest speakers. Mr. Martynuska acknowledged the significant effort made by various contributors to organize the event quickly in recognition of the achievements of local athletes, emphasizing the unifying power of athletics across communities.

Mr. Martynuska acknowledged intern, Dalton Lynch, a student at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, for his contributions to the City of Johnstown. His primary responsibility was advancing the solidification of the City's administrative policies.

Mr. Martynuska introduced Ms. Brooke Chambers to provide an update in regard to the Aspire grant.

Ms. Brooke Chambers, Aspire, noted her ongoing collaboration with City staff and provided a summary of Aspire's work with the City since their partnership began in November of 2024. She reported the successful drawdown of three Department of Justice grants totaling \$102,889 and the closure of a \$250,000 COPS Hiring Program grant. She highlighted a \$50,000 Appalachian Regional Commission award for staff training and technology upgrades. Multiple pending grants were delayed due to the unpassed state budget. Current active grants include another Department of Justice grant worth approximately \$20,000, two Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grants, and the ongoing ARC program. Pending applications covered various projects, including a feasibility study for Moxham neighborhood park upgrades, tennis court rehabilitation, a USDA farmer's market expansion, FEMA funding for the fire department, and a multimodal transportation fund grant for repairs to the Dellwood Street Bridge. Ms. Chambers also mentioned additional upcoming opportunities and affirmed stormwater improvements remained a priority despite limited program openings.

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Ms. Chambers clarified the distinction between active and pending grants in response to a question from the Board. Ms. Chambers explained that active grants had already been awarded and remained in process until formally closed, while pending grants had been submitted but were still awaiting decisions.

Mrs. Mock asked for details regarding the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program, to which, it was noted that the program was through the Pennsylvania Office of the Budget and funding was tied to major infrastructure projects such as the Main Street project and the City of Johnstown Public Safety Building. Mr. Martynuska confirmed that approximately \$8 million in funding had been secured for the public safety building through a combination of \$2.5 million from the state and \$3 million in federal funds, with plans to match those sources strategically.

Ms. Huchel raised concerns about stormwater infrastructure. Ms. Chambers acknowledged that stormwater funding had not yet opened but was integrated into the current Greenways grant application for the tennis court project. She confirmed that stormwater remained on their radar. Ms. Huchel emphasized the need for regional cooperation, and Ms. Chambers expressed her willingness to support those efforts.

Mrs. Mock followed up with questions about the Roxbury Park tennis court grants, referencing a pending grant submitted on May 31, 2025, and an upcoming proposal for additional resurfacing work. Ms. Chambers stated a letter of intent had been submitted.

Mr. Martynuska reported receiving an email requesting additional information and photos for the proposal, noting the potential grant value could reach up to \$60,000. Ms. Chambers stated the total could be closer to \$200,000. It was noted the recent improvements to the park, such as the Miracle League field, would strengthen the grant application by demonstrating multi-use development.

Mr. Martynuska referenced an accessibility exercise conducted with Ms. Barb Zablotney and Councilwoman Huchel, which involved navigating Central Park and Main Street in a wheelchair. He described the experience as eye opening and emphasized the importance of increasing accessibility. He noted the desire to continue discussions with Ms. Zablotney and include representation from the disability community to make the City more accessible.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Frank Janakovic affirmed the experience of navigating the City in a wheelchair, echoing the Board's comments about the importance of accessibility. Mayor Janakovic thanked the committee responsible for reviving the AAABA banquet after a six-year hiatus and

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acknowledged the efforts of George Arkirio, the Old Timers Association, and Mr. Clark. He noted this year's AAABA Tournament marked the first time in its 80-year history that two Johnstown teams competed for the championship, congratulating Mainline Pharmacy on their win and Martelli's as the runner-up. He also recognized the West Hills Girls Little League Softball team for winning the World Series, which attracted a reported 20 million viewers.

Mayor Janakovic reported on his attendance at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Magellan's new location in the Crown Building, having relocated from the former Penelec building. He commended students from Hiram G. Andrews and the OVR program who performed community work over the summer, including building maintenance at Duman's Dam. He encouraged continuing this partnership, noting four young men contributed six weeks of labor at no cost to the City. He also attended a free concert tied to the AAABA championship weekend, emphasizing the number of low-cost or free events taking place across Johnstown.

Mayor Janakovic reiterated accomplishments discussed earlier in the meeting, emphasizing that City Council had not raised real estate taxes in over 12 years. He highlighted the demolition of over 700 buildings in under 10 years in partnership with the Johnstown Redevelopment Authority, acknowledging the ongoing challenge of maintaining abandoned lots. He reported, through RAISE grants and ARPA funding, the City secured \$54 million in the past five years, with \$8 million directed to park projects and \$46 million allocated to pandemic recovery efforts and support for nonprofits and homeowners. He also noted that 93 miles of roads and alleys were paved as a byproduct of sewer projects across the City.

Mayor Janakovic concluded by responding to concerns about development priorities. While acknowledging Johnstown's nostalgic history, he emphasized the need to focus on future growth rather than dwelling on past industrial eras. He called for continued progress and forward-thinking strategies, stating his firm belief that Johnstown must evolve to thrive.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Aimee Willett, Solicitor, addressed a resolution on the agenda to allow Lavery Law to continue representing the City in federal litigation. Lavery Law was originally assigned by the City's insurance company, but the defense cost cap in the insurance policy had been reached. Ms. Willett recommended continuing with Lavery Law under the previously agreed-upon fee arrangement. She noted a stipulation regarding a tax assessment appeal was expected for Council's review next pending further information. Additionally, she reported on ongoing collaboration with the City Manager and Assistant City Manager to

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develop a social media policy. This policy would support a future contract with a vendor responsible for capturing and posting City-related events on official platforms. The policy would define content guidelines and applicable City-managed sites, forming the basis for the vendor agreement, which was anticipated to soon be ready for Council's consideration.

COUNCIL UPDATES/NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISONS

Reverend Sylvia King, Deputy Mayor, noted attending the job fairs in Oakhurst, Solomon, and Coopersdale public housing communities, noting strong employer turnout and available support services like birth certificate assistance. She participated in Families First Block parties, a playground mulch event, and the inaugural West End Business Association meeting. She announced Moxham's upcoming community yard sale and highlighted a community cleanup in Somerset Street ahead of a new house build. Reverend King also promoted a block party at Johnstown High School featuring sports, entertainment, and giveaways, and he praised the success of National Night Out and the AAABA events.

Ms. Huchel announced the completion of the Shoesley demolition, which will enhance the Mayer Trail, and thanked colleagues for participating in a wheelchair accessibility tour of a City park. She emphasized the difference between ADA compliance and true accessibility. She promoted upcoming events including a royal ball and Bardstock 2025. She highlighted the success of low-cost spay-neuter clinics through the Johnstown Animal Welfare Society, the potential sponsorship of a humane officer, and efforts to establish a temporary shelter for stray animals. She clarified that neither the City nor the Humane Society supports harming stray cats.

Mrs. Mock reiterated the City is not harming stray cats and seconded Ms. Huchel's clarification. She reported on attending the AAABA banquet, a West End business meeting, and a neighborhood event. She highlighted West End Improvement Group's efforts to maintain gardens and reclaim blighted properties, as well as their beautification work on Route 56 gateway. She promoted a bike giveaway event and a celebration at the Center for Metal Arts. She also requested a JRA workshop to improve public understanding of the land bank.

Mayor Janakovic acknowledged the success of National Night Out and thanked public safety staff and vendors for their efforts. He emphasized the need for a community voice in housing-related discussions, discouraged blame between City and housing officials, and supported collective advocacy to HUD for reduced housing stock. He noted prior unsuccessful efforts with federal representatives and agreed to send a formal letter on behalf of the City.

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Mr. Arnone reported, as of July 31, 2025, Johnstown had 2,464 residents in public housing and 996 using Section 8 vouchers, totaling 3,460 families, or 46% of the City's population in poverty. He stated over 50 families currently reside in Prospect, though it is only half occupied. He explained that the Housing Authority lacks the authority to reduce housing stock and cited statewide housing needs as HUD's justification. He also reported updates from the Water Authority, including 88 new service applications, 22 account reactivations, and 64% completion of lead line replacements in Westmont. He encouraged residents to assist with property upkeep and emphasized community responsibility.

Mrs. Mock advocated renewed efforts to pressure HUD to reduce Johnstown's public housing stock, citing disproportionality compared to the City's population and the burden on local police. She recalled past advocacy efforts and emphasized the need to repeat those efforts. She requested housing ratio data from other cities for comparison.

Mr. Arnone responded that HUD rejected the past advocacy, which views Johnstown's housing as part of statewide needs. It stressed limitations at the local level and noted conflicting data among school, housing, and labor entities.

Reverend King suggested a unified, in-person meeting among all relevant parties, including community members, to coordinate efforts and possibly shift outcomes.

Mr. Britt celebrated the AAABA events, praising improvements made to the tournament facilities and community engagement. He recognized the Police and Fire Chiefs, public works, and community volunteers for their contributions. He also congratulated Keegan Bassett, a U17 world-wrestling champion, and acknowledged strong local performances in softball.

Mr. Clark reported on the downtown business center's upcoming meeting and praised collaboration at the West End business meeting. He commended the AAABA Hall of Fame banquet and the tournament's high attendance, estimating 6,500 people on opening night. He recognized outstanding public safety and facilities support. He announced a back-to-school block party on August 23, 2025, and previewed an upcoming parade involving emergency services, urging public attendance for what he promised would be a major City event.

PETITIONS

None.

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ORDINANCES FOR FINAL READ AND ADOPTION

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 5371 ADOPTED JULY 9, 2025
AMENDING THE SALARIES AND WAGES TO BE PAID TO CERTAIN
EMPLOYEES OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2025.

Mrs. Mock made a motion to approve the ordinance. Mr. Arnone seconded the motion.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 10698

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA, TO ACCEPT THE BID OF \$6,978,000.00 TO STRAW
CONSTRUCTION, INC. FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING CONSTRUCTION
SERVICE FOR THE JOHNSTOWN CENTRAL PARK IMPROVEMENT ("PARK")
PROJECT.

Mrs. Mock made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Arnone seconded the motion.

Ms. Huchel emphasized her personal connection to Central Park and acknowledged the diverse opinions expressed during the meeting. She condemned the use of slurs and likewise profanities. Ms. Huchel noted her support to the redevelopment project, explaining that \$7 million in ARPA funds were allocated to the park after extensive community engagement, which revealed a strong desire for revitalization. She noted multiple plans were proposed by SCAPE Landscape Architecture, and the public overwhelmingly supported a radical redesign. Ms. Huchel expressed frustration that the final design lacked key features from the original plan, including a large sloping lawn and community-driven placements for the Christmas tree and water features. She criticized the deviation from the professionally produced, construction-ready plans and opposed changes such as increased concrete areas. She clarified misconceptions about the Pasquerilla fountain, stating it was not historically significant, and emphasized that the funding was time-sensitive and could not be reallocated, with a September deadline for

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expenditure. Ms. Huchel also criticized the value engineering process and expressed concern that local input was overriding expert planning.

Mr. Martynuska explained that 1,100 square feet of concrete had been removed from the revised park design, replaced by 351 square feet of grass and additional landscaping. He stated the central fountain would be replaced with new structures resembling the original motif. The existing fountain was unlikely to survive removal, and its relocation to Sandyvale was no longer planned. Instead, all monuments would remain in Central Park, except for the firefighter bell, which had been relocated for a separate dedication. He confirmed most trees would remain, and 57 new ones would be planted—many donated and maintained by the Western PA Conservancy. These new trees would be salt-resistant and diverse to mitigate risk of blight. He noted the original fountain was a catalog item from a now-defunct company, and a more durable marble replacement was under consideration.

Mrs. Mock reiterated her long-standing opposition to the park's water feature, citing safety, maintenance, and cost concerns. She confirmed the water element had been removed, saving approximately \$360,000 in construction costs and \$3,000 to \$4,000 monthly in maintenance. She emphasized that only a pump replacement remained. She clarified that the \$1.6 million paid to SCAPE covered extensive infrastructure design work, including underground utilities, not just surface-level features.

Mr. Clark supported removing the deteriorating limestone fountain, noting only the decorative top was donated while the rest was City-built. He refuted the belief that the fountain was historic and emphasized that Central Park was not always intended as a park. He reaffirmed that most trees would remain, and new trees would be of medium size. He expressed concern about misinformation, particularly regarding monuments, and emphasized that only the firefighter bell had been removed. He supported eliminating the splash-pad-style water feature and praised the additional green space. Mr. Clark stressed that rejecting federal funds would damage Johnstown's credibility with future grant opportunities. He highlighted critical infrastructure needs like updated water and electrical systems, noting the current use of construction drop sites for power. He cited Ligonier as a successful example of revitalizing a historic park and encouraged compromise, stating the redesign would make the park inclusive and beneficial for all.

Mayor Janakovic shared his routine visits to Central Park and recent inspections of the fountain and gazebo. He emphasized the park's deterioration and the need to move forward. He pointed out that many critics had not visited the park in years and expressed confidence that Council was voting based on thorough research and community engagement. He reminded Council that necessary tree removals were informed by safety incidents, such

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as a past case where a tree fell on a car. He also confirmed that the proposed new fountain location would still allow for the Christmas tree placement.

Ms. Willett clarified that the City had to formally accept Straw Construction's \$6.9 million bid before initiating value engineering to reduce costs. She noted this process was legal and common in municipal projects and allowed for contract modifications of post-acceptance.

Reverend King and Mrs. Mock confirmed the procedural requirement to accept the bid before making adjustments, and Ms. Willett reiterated that such revisions were standard practice throughout a project's lifecycle.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: Mr. Clark, Ms. Huchel (2).

Resolution No. 10699

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING A CONTRACT AWARD TO STRAW
CONSTRUCTION, INC. FOR THE CITY CENTRAL PARK IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the resolution. Mrs. Mock seconded the motion.

Ms. Huchel acknowledged her loss in the debate over the park redesign but urged CJL and Upstreet Architects to engage more directly with the community moving forward. She expressed disappointment at the absence of a representative from Upstreet and emphasized that SCAPE had successfully conducted community outreach by involving specialists. She encouraged outreach to residents, including Barb Zoblotney, to ensure the final design reflects public input. Ms. Huchel warned that relying solely on input from Council members and project consultants risked alienating the public. She stated her vote was not to return funds to the federal government but because she believed the current plan represented a misuse of those funds.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mr. Arnone, Mr. Britt, Mr. Clark, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King,
Mrs. Mock (6).

Nays: Ms. Huchel (1).

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Resolution No. 10700

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN,
PENNSYLVANIA, ENTERING INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH BISHOP MCCORT
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL TO PROVIDE A SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER AND
AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO
EFFECTUATE THE SAME.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Clark seconded the motion.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 10701

A RESOLUTION, OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA, HEREBY REQUESTS A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION
FUND GRANT OF \$1,008,248 FROM THE COMMONWEALTH FINANCING
AUTHORITY TO BE USED FOR THE DELLWOOD STREET BRIDGE
REPLACEMENT PROJECT.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Clark seconded the motion.

Reverend King inquired about the lane usage throughout the course of the project, to which, it
was noted that a detour would be required to minimize expenditure. It was estimated that
the project would take eight months to complete.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 10702

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA
COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN A
CONTRACT WITH AMRIZE BUILDING ENVELOPE LLC d/b/a DURO-LAST

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ROOFING SYSTEMS TO REPLACE THE ROOF ON THE FRANK J.
PASQUERILLA CONFERENCE CENTER.

Reverend King made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Arnone seconded the motion.

Mrs. Mock inquired whether the project was funded with money from Senator Langerholt.

Mr. Martynuska confirmed it was, specifying that \$750,000 was initially provided, with an additional \$300,000 later. He noted part of the current contract was being covered by remaining funds from the original \$750,000. He also commended the group managing the conference center, stating the group was doing an excellent job based on his personal experiences with events held there.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 10703

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA, TO CONTINUE REPRESENTATION BY LAVERY LAW IN THE
PENDING FEDERAL LITIGATION OF ZIPPORAH NAJAR V. CITY OF
JOHNSTOWN, 3:23-CV-27

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Britt seconded the motion.

Mr. Clark asked the City Solicitor to explain why it would be inappropriate for her or the City to take over legal representation in an ongoing litigation matter.

Ms. Willett responded that the City's insurance carrier had initially approved limited coverage for defense costs and assigned the case to Lavery Law when it was filed in 2023. She explained that Lavery Law has been involved since the beginning, is familiar with the facts, and has handled proceedings in federal court. Transferring the case to another attorney at this stage would require significant time and money for someone to review the case file and re-interview individuals. She emphasized, with insurance coverage now exhausted, the City must cover legal fees, triggering a requirement under the City charter for a legal opinion and Council resolution to retain outside counsel. Ms. Willett concluded, in her legal opinion, that continuing with Lavery Law was the most efficient and cost-effective choice.

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Mr. Clark acknowledged that transitioning representation would likely result in considerable additional costs.

Ms. Willett confirmed this, reiterating that the time and resources required to become fully informed on the case would be substantial, and the City would be better served by maintaining the current legal counsel.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 10704

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER AND FINANCE DIRECTOR TO SIGN ALL DOCUMENTS AND TAKE OTHER ACTIONS NECESSARY IN THE PURCHASE OF TWO 2025 INTERCEPTER SUV 4 DOOR AWD POLICE VEHICLES.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the resolution. Mrs. Mock seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None (0).

Resolution No. 10705

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOHNSTOWN, CAMBRIA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO THE FY 2019, FY 2023, AND FY 2024 CDBG AND CDBG-CV PROGRAM YEARS.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to approve the resolution. Reverend King seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None (0).

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NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Ms. Huchel expressed her gratitude for Mr. John Rutledge's attendance during the August 6, 2025 Johnstown Planning Commission meeting. She commended his organization and preparedness to discuss receiving two funds.

PUBLIC COMMENT: NON-AGENDA ITEM

Dustin Greene, 316 Chestnut Street, expressed frustration regarding the perceived lack of transparency and fairness in the City's bidding plans, notably for Central Park. He reflected on his experience managing the conference center, pointing out that he had also requested a new roof during his tenure and was denied. He further criticized the current management's lack of responsiveness, noting that calls to the conference center still go unanswered.

Mr. Greene addressed the bidding process for Central Park, stating changes made to the bid after submissions closed are deeply problematic and unfair, particularly for business owners like himself who may have declined to bid based on the original scope. He noted the alterations could have influenced the interest of other potential bidders. He repeatedly demanded transparency regarding the exact dollar amount of the reductions and expressed skepticism about the legality of such significant post-bid modifications.

Mr. Greene concluded his remarks by praising Ms. Huchel for providing a clear explanation of the project's details. Mr. Greene requested additional information regarding the Main Street project, specifically the project timeline.

Trish Fyock, 548 West Howard Street, emphasized her perception of a disconnect between City Council and the community. Ms. Fyock expressed gratitude for Ms. Huchel's transparency regarding the Central Park project. Ms. Fyock highlighted communication improvements and advocated an understanding between officials and residents.

Ms. Fyock commented on how citizens perceive Central Park as nostalgic. She stated the new design is unnatural and unreflective of community desires.

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Pedro Guzman, 525 Pine Street, reiterated his earlier concerns related to City services, enforcement, and development. He requested greater responsiveness and accountability from City officials.

Mr. Guzman acknowledged that Council does not control the Water Authority; however, councilmembers are in closer influence to the Water Authority compared to residents.

Mr. Guzman addressed code enforcement policies. He owns and maintains 27 properties around Johnstown, including cutting grass and trimming trees. He volunteered his labor to clear overgrown vegetation from neglected properties around Pine Street and Golde Street.

Mr. Guzman echoed previous speakers' concerns regarding a lack of transparency. He stated there is a discrepancy between the scope of the project and the City's current condition. He stressed that attention should be focused to the egresses into the City, as to aid in first impressions.

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, noted issues throughout the meeting. A lack of audio clarity hindered meaningful public participation and understanding.

Mr. DeBartola expressed frustration over the handling of the Central Park project. He stated many plans were discussed; however, the resultant product design was vastly different and included significant alterations. Mr. DeBartola advocated for an organized flow of communication to keep the public informed.

Mr. DeBartola voiced concerns about a lack of transparency in City government. He reported being denied access to reports and resolutions, including solicitor reports, and disagreed with the Solicitor's claim that such documents are not legally required to be public. He urged Council to prioritize openness.

He also opposed the apparent plan to relocate the historic public safety building, citing planning commission minutes and criticizing the lack of public input. Addressing the Johnstown Housing Authority, he noted the absence of a required board appointment and called for a complete overhaul of its leadership. He referenced a confidential settlement related to the death of an infant from black mold exposure in Housing Authority housing, criticizing the secrecy surrounding it.

Mr. DeBartola alerted Council to the proposed North Fork Dam project and a potential rate increase, questioning why this was not publicly discussed. He further raised issues

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with denied records requests tied to the nonprofit Hope for Johnstown and questioned whether Council was involved in withholding documents.

Mr. DeBartola cited unimplemented recommendations from the 2013 Crime Commission report on housing oversight and urged Council to reverse the Central Park redesign, arguing that if changes could be made mid-bid, they could also be undone.

Joe Taranto, 426 Park Avenue, expressed longstanding frustration with unresolved issues related to the Housing Authority. He emphasized that changes to the number of public housing units require an amendment to the City's consolidated plan, which currently calls for increasing low-income housing. Mr. Taranto cited guidance from HUD supporting this requirement. He advocated transitioning public housing units into Section 8 vouchers via programs like RAD, which would not displace residents but could reduce the local public housing footprint. He also referenced past efforts on the Housing Authority to implement a Section 8 homeownership program and encouraged exploring partnerships with developers through grant programs tied to voucher commitments. He noted these initiatives were viable over a decade ago and advocated their pursuit.

Mrs. Mock requested an update on recent Planning Commission activities.

Ms. Huchel reported the Planning Commission meeting addressed various items, including significant public turnout due to confusion over a Central Park workshop, which was not under their purview. She noted Mr. Rutledge's status update on the comprehensive plan. A key discussion item was the potential renovation of the current public safety building. She also reported the Planning Commission informally estimated renovation costs to be significantly lower than costs for new construction. Alternatives such as repurposing the conference center or the former Cadillac building were also mentioned, though none were formal action items.

Mayor Janakovic inquired about the renovation estimate, suggesting it was approximately \$10–12 million, which Ms. Huchel confirmed. He also noted that a cost estimate for constructing a new building had not yet been provided.

Catherine-Anne McCloskey, 525 Vine Street, shared her past experiences as a local business owner and expressed concern about the frequent turnover of businesses on Market Street, citing a location that has housed five businesses in five years. Dr. McCloskey proposed establishing a university-supported internship program where business students help new entrepreneurs develop business plans, addressing a key gap she observed in current small business practices. She emphasized the importance of proprietor-owned and operated businesses for revitalizing the City and expressed willingness to collaborate with City

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officials to support small business development, leveraging her background in economics.

Ashley Craig, 162 H Street, continued her earlier discussion related to visitation from a Council member. Ms. Craig criticized City leadership for focusing on personal disputes instead of addressing serious issues such as hazardous infrastructure. Ms. Craig cited a hydraulic fluid spill on Sheridan Street that remained uncleaned for 16 hours, resulting in a 24-year-old man sustaining a broken hip and femur. She urged the City to prioritize public safety by replacing unsafe facilities and improving infrastructure and advocated for greater support for domestic violence victims.

Samantha Shaffer, Vine Street Towers, reiterated her previous comments regarding an elevator by the stage. She echoed previous public comments advocating for the maintenance of Central Park, rather than a radical change in design.

Mayor Janakovic noted Mr. Taranto still had 23 seconds for his public comment.

Brian O'Shea, 330 Oak Street, expressed concern about the hazardous condition of the public safety building. He mentioned a brick building between Cedar Street and Hickory is scheduled for auction on September 8 in Ebensburg and suggested the City consider placing a bid. He reported that residents in his area are receiving tickets for not moving vehicles for street cleaning, although he claimed no street cleaning has occurred all summer. He criticized the lack of plowing during the winter, especially on weekends and in areas such as Old Conemaugh Borough, asserting that some alleys are neglected by public works.

Mr. O'Shea emphasized blight as a critical issue affecting property values. While he acknowledged some demolitions, he claimed the majority of blighted properties remain. Mr. O'Shea plans to locate and document prime areas of deterioration. He moved to the City nearly five years ago due to affordability but stated property values have declined. Mr. O'Shea discussed challenging his tax assessments, anticipating a lower appraisal, and criticized the necessity for residents to hire appraisers to reduce their tax burden. He commented that a countywide reevaluation could harm the region.

Mayor Janakovic permitted two additional public comments.

Donald Raph, 184 Chandler Avenue, opposed the Central Park project, cautioning against overemphasizing the identity of Johnstown as a City. Mr. Raph commented that pursuing growth could lead to infrastructure burdens and similar concerns to urban areas. Drawing from his experience in Pittsburgh, Mr. Raph stated a preference for maintaining a safe,

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stable environment for families rather than pushing for expansion that the area may be unable to manage.

Robin Kmetz, 125 Spring Street, expressed disapproval in regard to the Central Park project. Ms. Kmetz advocated for further communication between City officials and public members. She commended Ms. Huchel for speaking out against the Park project.

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 9:02 p.m.

The next Council Meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.