

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES
Monday October 27, 2025

City Council met in a stated session for the general transaction of business. Mayor Frank Janakovic called the Workshop to order at 5:02 p.m.

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

The following members of Council were present for roll call:

Mayor Janakovic, Reverend Sylvia King, Mr. Britt, Mr. Clark, Ms. Huchel, Mrs. Mock (6)

Arturo Martynuska, City Manager; Michael Capriotti, Assistant City Manager; Jenn Burkhart, Executive Secretary; Mark Britton, Chief of Police; and Melissa Millard, Finance Director; were also present.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

WORKSHOP ITEMS:

Discussion of General Fund

Arturo Martynuska, City Manager, expressed appreciation for Ms. Millard's work on preparing the budget report and working with all of the staff and department heads. He noted he would be presenting his budget message at the next City Council meeting. He also noted the budget presented would reflect year-to-year comparisons from 2024 and 2025 along with the budget for 2026.

Melissa Millard, Finance Director, stated she would review general fund revenues and expenditures as well as highlighted areas.

Regarding real estate taxes, Ms. Millard noted another decrease to \$100,000 for 2026 due to tax assessments. She also noted past due tax collection was raised \$200,000 compared to the previous year. Earned income tax is also increased slightly over the previous year.

Mrs. Mock asked, related to earned income tax, if it was possible to know how many people are employed within the city. Ms. Millard replied Berkheimer collects earned income tax, but the numbers would reflect residents, not necessarily people who work in the city. Mr. Martynuska commented census statistics could be useful which show the daytime city population increases between

3,000 and 7,000. Mr. Capriotti added the only way to get a true number would be to look at each individual employer.

Ms. Millard returned to the report and noted the state aid pension was increased. She also noted an increase to the Housing Authority. She added the Housing Authority still needed to pay for 2025, which was due to there not being a contract in place.

Mr. Martynuska noted a new three-year contract had been authored and would be up for a vote at the next regular City Council meeting. He added, when the contract is signed, the Housing Authority would pay the amount due for 2025.

Mr. Capriotti stated one of the large deficits the City currently has is due to the Housing Authority not making payments in 2025, largely due to the previous year's contract expiring in December 2024. It was noted that Mr. Martynuska began work on a new contract as soon as he was aware of the expired one. The Council and City Staff discussed the non-payments and continued services provided by the City. Mr. Capriotti mentioned the importance of noting the Housing Authority pays their full payments on time when there is a contract in place. He added HUD would not permit payments without the signed contract.

Mrs. Mock expressed concern that the 2026 Housing Authority budget line was not reflective of actual numbers due to the past due amount being added in. Ms. Millard stated the number must reflect money being collected regardless of what the money is for. She stated she would be willing to explain the information presented any time there were questions.

Reverend King suggested exploring the possibility of the Housing Authority having a separate 24-hour police force to free up City officers to make more rounds in the City. Mr. Capriotti responded the Housing Authority essentially helps to pay for police officer positions. He added, even if there was a separate police force, the City would still need to respond to calls. Mrs. Mock expressed concern over the potential quality of applicants to a Housing Authority police force. It was noted, if the Housing Authority had a separate force, positions would be eliminated within the city's police force.

Mrs. Mock asked if there were any collections being made on the real estate tax liens. Ms. Millard responded there is a delinquent real estate lien line item, which has increased as older past due taxes from 2021 are collected. It was noted the outside collection contract was not renewed as Pam's would be able to collect the money at a 95% retention rate without additional fees being paid to the outside vendor.

Ms. Millard pointed out the recovery act interest income was cut in half compared to the previous year, which would be going away soon. The following line item for liquid fuels showed a transfer from liquid fuels to cover some of the winter highway salaries. Ms. Millard reported total grant revenue was up roughly 4.8 percent compared to the previous year.

Mr. Martynuska noted there will be revenue increases in 2026 as City Hall increases chasing delinquent items as well as there being a new fee schedule. He also noted a difference in the MMO for the pension funds as voted on by the City Council when compared to a new actuarial valuation released by the state. Ms. Millard stated her confidence in the City not needing to pay out of pocket for the MMO due to state aid.

Ms. Millard explained that the 2020 bond debt payment will be increasing in 2026 by a million dollars, unless it is restructured at some point. Mrs. Mock questioned what the rates were for the debt. It was noted the rates were excellent at 1.2, and there were plans to keep the rates as they were.

Mr. Martynuska noted recently meeting with Pennsylvania Financial Management and an upcoming meeting with another bonding agent from Pittsburgh. He noted the City was in a good position debt-wise to look at a comprehensive bond issue. He added, once the comprehensive plan is completed, the City might be able to partner with 1889 to do citywide projects. He also added the current debt would be restructured into a new bond debt. Mr. Capriotti commented Wessel & Co. also attended the meeting, and they agreed the City was in a good position to consider a new bond issue, which would capture the low interest rate.

Mr. Martynuska also noted the possibility of working with 1889 to match money for housing rehab. He added there is roughly \$26 million in unused Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) in Cambria County that people have been unable to get matching funds for. A new bond issue could potentially be used as a match for the funds, doubling potential funds.

Mr. Martynuska reported on recent meetings with the Public Works Director and Representative Burns on using RCAP funds to rehab the Public Works Building. Mr. Martynuska and Mr. Capriotti explained potential funding sources from the state and federal governments, which could be used in a public safety bucket for a few buildings.

Ms. Millard directed the conversation back to the budget report. She reported on expenses for the legislative body; general government salaries, which included

an increase due to additional positions; and the financial department, which also added a new position. She explained line-item questions such as health care fees.

Mr. Martynuska noted health care fees will likely drop with buyouts when individuals and families opted out of the plans.

Ms. Millard explained the miscellaneous services line included items that do not have their own departments, such as solicitor fees.

Mrs. Mock asked what was being done with animal control. Mr. Martynuska responded he is speaking with the Humane Society to learn rules and regulations needed to put in a humane shelter at Number Six Fire Station. He noted it would be holding area as the Humane Society works on their new facility.

Ms. Huchel noted the importance of budgeting for an animal control officer and expressed pleasure at seeing money in the budget. She added a city shelter would also need a shelter manager in addition to the animal control officer. She also added that a shelter would likely need a certified veterinarian to euthanize animals if needed. Ms. Millard acknowledged the amount allocated may need to be increased to cover shelter expenses.

Ms. Huchel shared a potential lead with a person interested in being a part-time humane officer. Mr. Martynuska noted a conversation could be had regarding the necessary training. He also noted the City has the mobile kennel parts from the previous animal control vehicle which could be repurposed onto a new chassis.

Mr. Martynuska noted a recent discussion about additional police funds was not for animal control but was to be geared towards mental health services. He added, if received, additional funds would also go towards a mental health professional working directly with police for crisis situations.

Ms. Millard reported the police salary and wages decreased even with pay increases. She noted in 2025 the budget had to include the number of staff according to the union contract even if the employees were not hired. She was able to use the current contract to budget 2026, which matches closer to current employees. She noted with a full staff, the overtime will also be reduced.

Reverend King questioned a court pay line. Ms. Millard noted there had been an actual line-item error where people attending court did not record under the

correct line item. She was able to correct the situation when working on the budget.

Ms. Millard noted an increase for the fire department due to the new contract. She had been unable to reduce the overtime amount; however, Mr. Martynuska was meeting with the department to work on changes.

Mr. Martynuska reported on his discussions with Chief McCann and reported on policy changes including instituting a minimum number of shifts for part-time firefighters to reduce overtime hours. Other discussions included possibilities of increasing the number of part-time firefighters or adding full-time firefighters in place of part-timers.

Mr. Capriotti pointed out there had been an increase in the number of calls outside the City that the city firefighters have been responding to. He noted working to determine how the increase in outside call volume is affecting overtime hours.

Ms. Millard noted there is only so much that can be done with public safety as fire and police are essential. She noted nothing significant in the budget regarding Public Works.

Mrs. Mock inquired what accounting system was being used. Ms. Millard responded to Edmonds in the software program and all municipalities are required to follow standard accounting practices. Mrs. Mock commented, when the budget is adopted, the message should be conveyed regarding the City following the standard practices to show nothing underhanded is happening.

Ms. Millard reported the parking revenue shows a projected increase with the new system to be installed for 2026. She noted no major changes to the Recreation budget. She had put in a separate line item for Receptions reflecting their hospitalization. The new line item reflects what shows for other departments. Mrs. Mock noted appreciation for the fine tuning of the budget.

Mr. Martynuska commented on weighing the numbers to determine if it would make financial sense to bring in full-time people for Public Works instead of seasonal part-time people.

Mayor Janakovic commented on the cost of street lighting. The Council discussed the cost of running a city the size of Johnstown, especially when considering the small things people generally do not consider.

Ms. Millard noted the City budget contributes a very small amount to Community Development. Mr. Capriotti commended John Rutledge on working towards

getting DCED loans back into repayment schedules, which helps various Community Development programs.

Ms. Millard reported the Codes Department salary and wages had decreased due to using Laurel Codes Management.

Mayor Janakovic inquired about the roof repairs at the Pasquerilla Conference Center.

Mr. Martynuska reported the repairs were mostly complete and done within the grant range. He noted there were leftover funds, which will allow for the ceiling tiles to be painted inside. He reported on additional items for the Center including the air conditioning system and a recent grease trap repair.

Mr. Martynuska mentioned the same roofing company is preparing quotes for the Public Safety Building and Station No. Six. He is adding the Public Safety Building quote is higher due to the level of roof damage and the need for a crane.

Mrs. Mock expressed concern regarding the weight of the paint being added to the Conference Center's ceiling tiles. It was noted the company checked the tiles and reported the tile integrity would not be affected. Mr. Martynuska added the quote included sanding damaged tiles, putting them in filler and repainting them.

Ms. Millard will send the Council quarterly investment reports if they would like to see them. She noted at the end of the general fund report there was a surplus which was transferred to the Capital Fund.

Ms. Huchel asked if there was any information regarding CamTran, the parking garage and their intermodal center. Mr. Martynuska reported there was no new information. The Council discussed potential CamTran plans.

Discussion of Capital Fund

Ms. Millard reported the Capital Fund was straightforward. She noted the Amtrak grant line was regarding the ongoing Walnut Sewer project. Mr. Martynuska reported the project was on schedule.

Mrs. Mock noted the Council had been given a wish list of purchases related to the Capital Plan. Mr. Martynuska confirmed the list was generated after meeting with the Department Heads. Ms. Millard added the breakdowns were listed as line items in the budget; however, she did have the breakdowns with her for discussion.

Reverend King and Mrs. Mock questioned the need for new vehicles.

Mr. Martynuska explained in detail the use of vehicles. He noted the extensive mileage and wear and tear put on police cruisers. He noted older vehicles are retired and passed down to other departments or offloaded. He noted the need for a rotation of two to three vehicles a year to keep the fleet up to date. He also discussed the taser program which Chief Britton provided more details on. Mr. Martynuska additionally reported on the breakdown for the police department including crisis prevention and new gear. He also reported on the need for new gear for the fire department including water rescue equipment. He also noted savings were being accounted for where possible such as not issuing pagers to firefighters who live outside of the pager range. Another potential savings he noted was the City possibly acquiring a building and lot to use for impound instead of paying storage fees to tow impound lots.

There was continued discussion regarding new vehicles. It was requested a list of all city vehicles be prepared for the Council. Mr. Martynuska reiterated the need to replace aging vehicles, some of which date back to 1990. Ms. Millard noted the liquid fuel funds can be used to help pay for vehicles.

Ms. Millard noted part of waiting to commence projects increases over original estimates. She mentioned a line item from page two showing a project for gas pumps originally budgeted at \$131,000, but since the project was not completed, the budget had increased to \$170,000. Mr. Martynuska noted the pumps were originally installed when Johnstown became distressed. Mr. Capriotti noted the project was now mandated as the pumps no longer pass inspection.

Mrs. Mock asked for information regarding an impound lot on Fairfield Avenue. It was stated Codes was looking into it, but if the owners adhere to fencing rules, the property is zoned appropriately. Mr. Capriotti noted temporary fencing along the side and back needed to be replaced with permanent fencing.

The Council discussed where vehicles are purchased from. It was noted that new vehicles have been purchased in the past from Laurel and Suppas with used vehicles being purchased from Babish. Mr. Martynuska noted they generally use places with Co-Starts contracts, but they shop around for the best prices available. He added exploring potential governmental programs to offset costs.

Mayor Janakovic asked about the sidewalk repair program. Mr. Martynuska replied the program was a DCED program. Ms. Millard noted the budget program was for city owned sidewalks.

Reverend King mentioned homeowners are responsible maintaining sidewalks on their property. Mr. Martynuska noted the City also owns several sidewalks. Reverend King asked if there was a way to make funds available to help homeowners. Mr. Martynuska noted it was part of the comprehensive plan. Mr. Capriotti noted the City is responsible for not just the sidewalks around the buildings they own but sidewalks in other areas such as the top of the inclined plane. The Council discussed the sidewalks on Main Street.

Mayor Janakovic returned to the discussion regarding the gas pumps and asked if the budgeted amount would cover excavations. He also asked if the pumps would benefit the City by making gas cheaper. It was noted the gas would be cheaper for the City plus revenue could be made by selling gas to surrounding municipalities.

Reverend King asked if installing electric charging stations had been considered. Mr. Martynuska stated he was already exploring the option.

Ms. Millard noted the budget for demolitions was increased. Mrs. Mock asked if the City would be getting any money from JRA and the Community Foundation for demolitions. Mr. Martynuska noted recently meeting with Mark Critz and reported JRA is strapped for cash at the moment. He added the City receives money through DCED; however, DCED money has several restrictions on where houses can be demolished.

Reverend King asked if a MOU had been signed with JRA. Mr. Capriotti noted there was one signed in April 2023, good until 2028. He noted after 2028 the MOU will remain in effect until someone decides to change it. Mr. Martynuska noted the MOU was a two-way street between JRA and City where they mutually assisted each other with demolition. He added JRA assists the City with demolition of five houses each year. The houses are generally ones which require specialized attention.

Discussion of Liquid Fuels

Ms. Millard asked if the Council had any questions on the liquid fuels budget report.

Mr. Martynuska noted there will likely be some argument with PennDOT regarding what they consider paved roads. He noted several streets, mostly alleys, were left off of PennDOT's report. Mr. Capriotti added, if the City must maintain the street, then PennDOT should give the City credit for the street.

Discussion of ARPA Plan

Mrs. Mock asked about the home repair funds. Discussion ensued regarding starting funds for weatherization and sewer lateral as well as revisions to the funds made through budget amendments. It was noted that the funds need to be expended by September 2026.

Mrs. Mock inquired about the plans for the Public Safety building. She asked if the funds for the building could be moved laterally.

Mr. Martynuska stated the funds could not be moved, which is why the roof quote was needed. He added another concern for the building is the police elevator. He noted the slow speed and small size make the elevator dangerous. He added he is potentially looking for quotes on putting an elevator on the outside back corner of the building for police use.

Reverend King asked if the idea of a new facility had been eliminated. Mr. Martynuska replied the money is not there for a new building and he thinks repairs can be made to the current Public Safety facility.

Mayor Janakovic asked about funds originally allocated for first time house buyers for home improvement. He noted out of the original \$2 million, only \$1.3 million was spent. He asked about the remaining \$700,000. Ms. Millard stated she could look into line item histories and pull the information for Mayor Janakovic.

Council members questioned why certain items were not shown in the report. Ms. Millard replied the budget is reflective of 2024, 2025, and 2026. Programs completed in previous years are not shown on the report. It was requested Ms. Millard put together a report dating back to the beginning of the ARPA plan. Mrs. Mock noted transaction histories for each line item would be needed as that is where confusion lies.

Ms. Millard explained she prepares quarterly ARPA reports which her predecessor also had to submit. She stated the reports show breakdowns of every dollar invoiced. She can use the reports to compile the information requested by the Council.

Mrs. Mock asked for confirmation that the ARPA funds had to be drained by September 2026. Ms. Millard confirmed she was correct.

Mrs. Mock asked about neighborhood parks. Ms. Millard stated the neighborhood park funding also needed to be used. She noted she had spoken with Tony Penna and reiterated the need for the funds to be spent. She explained if a

neighborhood was not intending to use their allocation, the funds needed to be reallocated to other parks.

Mr. Martynuska mentioned sending out messages to neighborhoods, which had not submitted plans. Ms. Millard will prepare a report showing what neighborhoods had used their funds. The Council discussed areas which may not use the funds.

Mrs. Huchel noted she would like to see eventual facade improvement funds in Cambria City.

Mrs. Mock discussed inviting Cambria City businesses to join the West End Business Association Group.

Mayor Janakovic suggested looking at parking in the downtown area again, including improvements on the lot near the Public Safety building.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 6:47 p.m.