

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MINUTES
Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Mayor Frank Janakovic called the Workshop to order at 5:10 p.m.

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

The following members of Council were present for roll call in chambers: Mr. Arnone, Mr. Capriotti, Mayor Janakovic, Reverend King, Mrs. Mock

Absent: Mr. Britt, Mr. Vitovich

Daniel Penatzer, Interim City Manager; Elizabeth Benjamin, City Solicitor; John Dubnansky, Economic Development Director; Bruce Graham, Engineer; Robert Statler, Fire Chief; Richard Pritchard, Police Chief; Robert Ritter, Finance Director were also present.

Proposed Charter Amendments

Ms. Benjamin explained the process that had been followed and how the list of proposed amendments had been prioritized. The proposed Ordinance is scheduled for second read at the July meeting and, if adopted, will be forwarded to the county for a November referendum. Members discussed ideas for how to present the proposed residency change to the public. It was consensus that the referendum should be promoted through social media and the newspaper, and that business and community leaders would be called upon to promote the effort. The Solicitor agreed to draft language for the Ordinance that would emphasize the transfer of the residency requirement from the Charter to the Administrative Code, where future Councils could then decide from time to time if a residency requirement should be imposed. Improved flexibility, time savings and cost savings will be promoted.

Parking in Yards

Staff had been asked to prepare an Ordinance prohibiting the parking of vehicles in yards. A draft Zoning Ordinance amendment was presented and discussed. It was the consensus to prohibit parking in any area of a yard.

Livestock/Chickens

A draft Ordinance prohibiting the raising of livestock and/or chickens was discussed.

Cats and Dogs

Council had earlier expressed interest in an Ordinance limiting the number of cats/dogs. Such provisions have been held unenforceable. A problem with feral cats was discussed.

CARES Funding

Regulations have not yet been finalized relative to eligible expenses for the CARES funding received. We know that the City can reimburse itself for certain revenue lost during the pandemic period, and a calculation is being performed for that amount. In addition, stormwater projects are known to be eligible, so it is hoped that the pending remediation work at Stackhouse

Park will be eligible. Tourism is an eligible expense possibly allowing the HVAC upgrades at the conference center to be paid for. The possibility of establishing a grant program for residents and businesses should be examined immediately.

Homelessness

Community Development will be developing a response plan for homelessness. Mr. Dubnansky noted that \$881,000 in HUD funding is available.

Business Fee Ordinance

Mr. Penatzer informed Council of an ordinance from 1914 that continues to assess an annual fee on certain types of businesses. The purpose of the fee has since been served by the business privilege tax. Staff and the Act 47 team are meeting tomorrow to discuss and expect to recommend that the old ordinance be repealed.

Post-Sewer Street Paving

Staff discussed earlier plans for milling and resurfacing all downtown streets following the sewer project. As it turns out, most sewer work is being performed trenchless and will not require resurfacing. This will also save expensive repairs to ADA ramps. What was expected to cost \$1.7 million will now likely cost \$300,000. This reduced scope is scheduled in 2022 following the sewer project.

Property Acquisitions

Mayor Janakovic expressed concern with the manner in which dilapidated properties were being acquired at tax sales and then not improved. Community Development will continue discussions with Johnstown Redevelopment Authority.

Police Vacancies

Chief Pritchard informed Council of successful attempts to recruit candidates from IUP's Act 120 class. Those applicants are continuing through the civil service process. A long term plan to begin hiring non-certified applicants full-time and then sending them for training was discussed.

Act 47 Exit

Mr. Penatzer sought Council's intent concerning timing for the exit from Act 47. Council's primary concern continues to be the loss of approximately \$900,000 in LST. The issue will be discussed further during budget preparation.

Administrative Software

Council was informed of staff's unanimous opinion that the administrative software needs to be changed. This is a \$200,000+ project. Staff is issuing an RFP, and a proposal will be submitted to Council soon.

Council iPads

Mr. Arnone suggested that iPads be obtained for Council and staff for communication purposes and to eliminate the need for so much paper.

Dump Site

While all current issues with the dump site have been resolved for now, staff asked Council to consider selling or otherwise disposing of the site following the sewer project. The site is not needed by the city long term, and there is no positive outcome to maintaining the site.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Workshop was concluded at 7:45 p.m.

