

JOHNSTOWN CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 18, 2026

The Greater Johnstown City Council met in a stated session for special business.
Mayor Sylvia King called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

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

The following members of Council were present for roll call:

Mayor Sylvia King, Charles Arnone, Samuel Barber, Taylor Clark, Michael Hamacek, Nicolas Spinelli, Lorraine Brandon-Taylor

Art Martynuska, City Manager; Mike Capriotti, Assistant City Manager; and Jennifer Burkhart, Executive Secretary; were also present

PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, stated Resolution 10756 needed to be passed. He hoped Council would provide information on costs, firms, and scope of repairs. He would like to avoid filing right-to-know requests. Mr. DeBartola also mentioned he had spoken with Mr. Clark who informed him the deadline for the ARPA funding for the building had been extended from September 30, 2026 to November 30, 2026. He hoped there was enough time to fix the building properly.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 10756

A RESOLUTION AWARDED A CONTRACT FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES FOR JOHNSTOWN PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING.

Mr. Spinelli motioned to approve the resolution. Mr. Arnone seconded the motion.

Mr. Martynuska explained the RFP for the Public Safety Building had been advertised for the appropriate amount of time. Three responses were received. The responses were reviewed by City staff including Mr. Martynuska, Assistant City Manager Mike Capriotti, and Public Works Director Carm Truscillo. Legal counsel and an independent architect reviewed the proposals and created a scoring matrix. The priorities for the building were listed in the RFP, which included the elevator, HVAC, electrical, plumbing, roof, and various other things as presented to the Council.

The proposals were from Kimmel Associates at \$264,320, UpStreet at \$380,800, and EADS at \$419,000. Based on the scoring matrix and requirements of the RFP, Mr. Martynuska recommended Council adopt the UpStreet proposal. Mr. Martynuska stated the scoring matrix categories were relevant project experience with federal and state agencies, strength of the project engineering, strength of the project team, knowledge of the city, prior city project success, and proposal fees. The totals were Kimmel at 25 points, EADS at 29 points and UpStreet at 33 points.

Mr. Arnone made a motion to accept the UpStreet proposal. It was not seconded as Council Members had additional comments and questions.

Mr. Barber reviewed the scores for prior success for the City of Johnstown and noted Kimmel had a 0. He asked if Kimmel had never had a project with the City. Mr. Martynuska confirmed they had not had a project specifically with the City government. Mr. Barber had concerns with giving more money to UpStreet over Kimmel. He noted \$120,000 could do a lot of work in the building. He questioned what UpStreet had done that would make them the better offer over Kimmel.

Mr. Martynuska explained, within the parameters of the RFP, Kimmel had shortcomings compared to the UpStreet proposal. He stated the City had worked successfully with UpStreet on a number of projects, including the Central Park project. He added UpStreet had been successful with value engineering Central Park to bring the project in under budget. In addition to other factors, he noted UpStreet was a local firm.

Mr. Spinelli also questioned if prior project success was relevant. He eliminated the category from his consideration of the matrix and proposals. He noted, by taking that category out of the mix, Kimmel and EADS tied with UpStreet still having an advantage. He was sensitive to the idea that Kimmel had the lowest bid. However, he also considered comments from the independent architect who noted there were too many unknowns in Kimmel's submission that could have been more extensive and thorough. He added UpStreet presented a more detailed breakdown of fees. His opinion was to select UpStreet.

Mayor King asked if the lack of detail meant there would be excessive change orders.

Mr. Martynuska responded the change orders was one of the concerns due to the lack of depth on the proposal. He reiterated UpStreet has a proven track record with the City. He noted there had been very few changes to the Central Park contract since the project started. He added UpStreet made efforts to minimize any changes related to the Park.

Mr. Barber stated there was a breakdown of proposed project fees in the bid from Kimmel. He added change orders only happen if something unexpected pops up, such as mold behind a wall. He had a hard time with change orders or not being local as reasons to not save money by choosing Kimmel. Mr. Barber noted a finance company out of Pittsburgh was selected at the prior Council meeting, so not being local could not be a reason.

Mr. Arnone commented the finance company was different as they were the only company who bid on the job.

Mr. Hamacek asked what other projects UpStreet had done for the City.

Mr. Martynuska stated he would have to check. Mr. Capriotti commented UpStreet had done the Fireman's Memorial Park, but anything else would have been before his time with the City.

Mr. Hamacek stated UpStreet had pretty high reviews but added Central Park was not done yet. He mentioned budget issues often come out at the end of a project. He added, if Central Park was complete, he might be able to justify the cost.

Ms. Brandon-Taylor asked what the difference was between prior project success and knowledge of the City.

Mr. Martynuska explained knowledge of the City would be projects or programs the company had completed within the City but not necessarily with the City government. Prior project success would be projects specifically done with the City government.

Mayor King clarified the question as to why prior success and knowledge of the City mattered.

Mr. Martynuska responded success and knowledge of the City was important when considering the cultural history, architecture, and infrastructure of the City. He added a number of different matters come into play with a contractor who knows about the City versus a contractor who does not.

Mr. Barber questioned why EADS, the City's engineer, had a lower score than UpStreet on knowledge of the City.

Mr. Martynuska replied he did not know how the independent architect had scored the category. He added, from his personal experience, UpStreet had demonstrated more knowledge when working on projects in the City.

Mr. Spinelli pointed out, if an independent architect with no financial interest had stated UpStreet had more knowledge, Council may want to address the City engineers in the future. He stated, if an independent perspective scored both EADS and UpStreet higher than Kimmel, he would prefer to move forward with UpStreet. He added City should help create a history with Kimmel for future projects, but given the timeline and feedback from the RFP, now was not the time.

Mr. Arnone asked how many bids were sent out for Central Park.

Mr. Capriotti stated more than 20 people grabbed the RFP information for the Park. Mr. Arnone noted, out of the 20, only one submitted an actual bid to show their interest in the City.

Mr. Barber stated the Central Park project and the Public Safety building could not be compared. He commented, leaving politics out of the discussion, the public wants to see City Council spend their money in the best way possible.

Mr. Clark noted his unique perspective among the Council members. He had been in hands-on meetings with UpStreet regarding the Central Park project. He shared, during the meetings, he observed the care and knowledge base they had of the City. He noted he may not be able to justify the price difference between Kimmel and UpStreet in his head. He could justify the facts of the level of professionalism of UpStreet and they were local. He has seen the level of care they personally take with the City. Mr. Clark agreed with other Council members in that in certain situations prior projects, specifically with the City, should not matter.

Mr. Barber pointed out, in looking over Kimmel's proposal, Kimmel stated they had completed over 100 municipal projects. In addition, while industrial average for change orders range between six and 10 percent of total project costs, Kimmel projects consistently average less than one percent.

Mr. Arnone made a motion for UpStreet to be awarded the Public Safety Building Project. Mr. Spinelli seconded the motion and passed by the following vote:

Yeas: Mayor King, Mr. Arnone, Mr. Clark, Mr. Spinelli,
Ms. Brandon-Taylor (5).

Nays: Mr. Barber, Mr. Hamacek (2).

PUBLIC COMMENT: NON-AGENDA ITEM

Charlene Stanton, 184 Sell Street, presented comments on animal control in the City. She noted the City does not have an animal control officer. She stated there was a need for trained professionals to handle complaints about stray, abused and dangerous animals throughout the City. She added a professional provides for public safety by helping to prevent animal bites. She noted the current system relies on the compassion of people and non-profits to step in and do the job of animal control. She shared there was no one else to call other than the police who cannot help.

Ms. Stanton stated there were numerous ordinances related to animal control dating back to 2005 that note the position of an animal control officer. She stated the ordinances are meaningless without an animal control officer. She urged City Council to hire someone for the position.

Hannah Richards commented on animal control issues in Johnstown. She stated, to solve a problem, the problem must first be identified and then steps implemented to solve the problem. She added the biggest problem in the City was the lack of an animal control officer. She asked why there was not an officer.

Mr. Martynuska replied there was not a specific reason. Mayor King noted there had been a previous alliance with the county. Mr. Barber agreed an animal control officer was needed and noted there had been a phenomenal one in the past.

Ms. Richards noted there had been money allocated in 2025 and 2026 in the budget for animal control, but the City failed to provide animal control services for years. She shared there were daily issues with animals running free and injured animals. She implored Council to hire an animal control officer.

Mayor King responded Council was not closing their eyes to the issue. She stated the issue of animal control was more complicated than just hiring an animal control officer. She added an effective plan is needed to not just have an officer but also a place to house the animals and veterinary care.

Mr. Arnone stated there was no argument that an animal control officer was needed. He added the City tried to work with the county with no success.

Mr. Clark agreed an animal control officer was needed. He recognized animal control has been an issue for a long time. He took a moment to thank the Johnstown Animal Welfare Society and City residents for what they have done in the meantime, noting it was time for City Council to also step up.

John DeBartola, 1197 Bedford Street, expressed concerns regarding engineering contracts. He shared his belief that Kimmel had been the City engineer 15 or 20 years ago. He disagreed with the decision to hire UpStreet for the Public Safety Building. He also presented concerns regarding a lawsuit the City has with Gibson-Thomas engineering. He asked where the transparency was regarding engineering and the City. He thought Council was wasting money by not choosing Kimmel for the Public Safety Building and the money could be spent elsewhere.

Mark Smoot, 426 Decker Avenue, shared he had been an animal control officer in rural Virginia. He added he is a volunteer with Lower Yoder Fire Department. He helps where he can with animal rescue in his neighborhood, despite being a combat veteran on a fixed income. He stated Lower Yoder Fire Department had two working dogs, one of which is an experienced cadaver dog and the other in training. He volunteered to assist any agency who needs help.

RECESS/ADJOURNMENT

The next regular scheduled meeting is March 11, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 5:44 p.m. with an Executive Session following for personnel matters.