

Rochester Borough Council
Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building
September 19, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Present: President Benjamin Rader, Vice-President Don Brothers, Marjorie White, Ron Becker, Rico Elmore, Mayor Keith Jackson, Solicitor Paul Steff, Code Officer Peggy Griffith, Manager John Barrett

Absent: Jodi Hemer, David Alford, Brandy Dietrich, Fire Chief Mike Mamone III

The regular meeting was called to order with the pledge of allegiance and roll call.

Persons in Attendance:

Emily Palmer, Engineer for the Sewer & Maintenance Authority, distributed a handout with updates on the MS4 Program. Ms. Palmer reviewed the information and discussed some changes to the MS4 Program and the permitting process. Ms. Palmer also updated Council on the status of the 2 rain gardens they were installing under their pollutant reduction plan.

Alex Andres, Center Theater Players Board of Directors, brought up to discuss with Council, the possibility of re-naming the Rochester Municipal Theater. The Center Theater Players would like to honor Sandy Reigel for her 40 years of dedicated service to the performing arts and providing quality community theater in Beaver County. They propose naming the theater the "Sandy Reigel Theater" at the Rochester Municipal Building. After some discussion, Mrs. White motioned to change the name of the theater to the Sandy Reigel Theater at the Rochester Municipal Building as proposed. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call, 4-1 in favor with Mr. Elmore voting no. The Center Theater Players are going to have a renaming ceremony on October 19, 2022 prior to their special preview of their play "1776". The Center Theater Players were also asking that the Mayor proclaim October 20, 2022 as Sandy Reigel Day in conjunction with the opening night of their play "1776". Mr. Rader asked Mayor Jackson if he would do so and he stated he would.

Maria Longo, Beaver County Controller, stated that she was available to answer any of Council questions regarding the 1.1 million dollars Beaver County was awarding to Rochester from their ARPA funding as a disproportionately impacted community. The Borough is required to follow the guidelines established by the US Treasury in determining how this money can be spent. The Borough is required to submit an application to the County with their proposed project(s) for the County to review and approve prior to any funds being expended. There are a number of qualified projects such as infrastructure for water and sewer, air quality improvements and assisting residents and businesses impact by covid-19.

John Farmer, Rochester Police Officer and resident; Sam Piccinini, former Rochester Police Officer and resident; and Greg Happ, New Sewickley Township Supervisor all addressed Council regarding the possibility of Rochester utilizing the PA State Police to cover the late shift and the need to hire additional officers. None were in favor of utilizing the State Police. Mr.

Piccinini stated that it was imperative that Council hire additional officers because, in his opinion, the current situation, given all the open shifts, is not safe for the officers.

Wes Hill, Deer Lane, thanked Chief Mercier for his many years of dedicated service and wished him well. Mr. Hill also thanked Mr. Barrett for putting on the Appreciation Day event yesterday and hopes it will continue and grow in the future.

Grace Shane, Tony Zarillo and Sam Piccinini also thanked Mr. Barrett for the Appreciation Day event. They would like to see it continue and grow as well. Ms. Shane and Mr. Piccinini offered to assist with planning the event for next year.

Carl Vereen, President of Make it Home Safe, reviewed his program and how installing an application on your smart phone, which his group created, could be used to allow an officer in a traffic stop to communicate directly with the person they just pulled over prior to the officer approaching the vehicle. The Make it Home Safe objective is to allow the driver and the officer to share exactly who they are with each other to verify who is driving and that the officer is a legitimate police officer. The hope is to de-escalate any apprehension between the driver and officer to ensure a safe traffic stop for both parties. Mr. Vereen stated that his group would like to offer this service free to the Rochester Police Department. After some discussion, Mr. Elmore motioned to accept Mr. Vereen's offer and authorize the Officers to enroll in the Make it Home Safe program. Mrs. White seconded and the motion carried.

Michael Brdar, 90 Dewey Way, again was asking Council for relief from his past due garbage fees. Mr. Brdar was hoping to come to some arrangement with Council prior to his hearing set for October 11th. Mr. Brdar stated that he felt he was entitled to a \$770 reduction based on the occupancy of his building but he was willing to accept half if Council was agreeable. After some discussion, Mr. Rader told Mr. Brdar that Council would not entertain any relief from his past due garbage fees and that he would have to plead his case before the District Magistrate for any kind of relief.

Action Items:

Mr. Brothers motioned to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2022 regular Council meeting and the September 6, 2022 special Council meeting as presented. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Mr. Brothers motioned to pay all approved bills as submitted. Mr. Elmore seconded and the motion carried.

BILLS:

Gen. Fund – Ck# 11468–11514 – totaling \$110,699.92.

Payroll (9/2, 9/16) – Ck# 5385-5428 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$91,895.47.

Council received for their review and consideration, the 2023 Rochester Borough Pension Plan Minimum Municipal Obligation. Total funding required is \$10,703. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to approve the 2023 MMO as presented. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, a resignation letter from Brandy Dietrich from her seat on Rochester Council, effective immediately. Due to increased commitments at work and home, she is unable to continue serving as a Rochester Council member. Mr. Elmore motioned to accept Mrs. Dietrich's resignation. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried. Council will put the word out and accept letters of interest from residents in the 2nd ward who are interested in filling this vacant seat.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the minutes of the August 11, 2022 Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meeting.

Council received for their review, the meeting notes of the August 10, 2022 Rochester Borough Development Corporation meeting.

Committee Reports:

Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

Council received for their review, the Expense & Revenue report for the period January 1, 2022 through September 16, 2022.

Public Safety – Don Brothers, Chairperson

Council received for their review, some proposed fire department budgets which were discussed at the last fire meeting.

Council received for their review, a meeting notice for a Joint Municipal Public Fire Department Workshop & Discussion session comprised of East Rochester Borough, Rochester Borough and Rochester Township to be held on October 4, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. at the Rochester VFW. All elected officials are asked to attend this meeting. All residents from the 3 Rochester's will be invited to participate in this workshop.

There was some discussion regarding the possibility of hiring additional police officers. The current eligibility list is exhausted. Mr. Elmore motioned to authorize the Civil Service Commission to create an eligibility list of certified officers for Council's consideration. Mrs. White seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call, 5-0 all in favor.

After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to have Sargent Shane be officer in charge of the police department and give her the authority to hire part-time police officers as available and needed. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

Public Works – Jodi Hemer, Chairperson

There was nothing to report in Mrs. Hemer's absence.

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

The next Riverfront Committee meeting is scheduled for September 21st at 6:00 p.m. at the riverfront.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jackson asked Sargent Shane for a copy of the officer's schedule and would like it monthly.

Mayor Jackson asked who was the Code Officer. It was noted that Peggy Griffith was the building and zoning Code Officer and Frank Mercier was the property maintenance Code Officer.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Steff had nothing to report.

Code Officer's Report:

Council received for their review, the August 2022 Code Officer's Report.

Code Officer Griffith reported that 262 Connecticut Avenue was in bad condition and that she was going to set up a walk through with the Fire Chief and Sargent to discuss the issues which need abated and to emphasize the need for regular proper upkeep with the management of the facility.

Police Report:

Council received for their review, the August 2022 Police Department report.

Fire Chief's Report:

Council received for their review, the August 2022 Fire Department report.

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

Manager Barrett presented the August 2022 Treasurer's report for Council's review.

Manager Barrett asked that Council consider approving the Solicitor to work with Code Officer Griffith to gather either the property owner's consent or get court approval to demolish abandoned structures. The cost for demolishing these structures should be eligible under the ARPA guidelines in utilizing the County's funds awarded to Rochester. Mr. Brothers motioned to approve and authorize the Solicitor to work with Code Officer Griffith on this matter. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Old Business/New Business:

Mrs. White discussed garbage collection service and the need to bid this out. She proposed possibly bidding this with 2 options: 1 - have the trash hauler start invoicing the residents directly, 2 – continue billing through the Borough but consider having the Sewer Authority include the garbage billing with their sewer billing. After some discussion, Solicitor Steff will review matter.

Council received for their review and consideration the proposed fee schedule from the Solicitor for his services. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to accept and approve the fee schedule as submitted. Mrs. White seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review, a letter from the Sewer & Maintenance Authority that they were going to be vacating the Borough's garage and terminating the lease agreement effective October 31, 2022. Mrs. White motioned to accept their notice to terminate as presented. Mr. Elmore seconded and the motion carried. Manager Barrett stated that the long-term plan for this property was to demolish the old garage. He asked if the Joint Sewer Authority was willing to demolish the building in conjunction with dispersing the dirt over the property, would Council be interested in having the building demolished. After some discussion, Mrs. White motioned to approve having the Joint Sewer Authority demolish the building at their cost if they were willing to do so. Mr. Elmore seconded and the motion carried.

Mr. Elmore requested an executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Council went into an executive session at 8:50 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett
Borough Manager