

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

Present: President Benjamin Rader, Vice-President Don Brothers, Ron Becker, Rico Elmore, Jodi Hemer, David Alford, Sam Piccinini, Toni Bucher, Mayor Keith Jackson, Solicitor Paul Steff, Sergeant Dawn Shane

Absent: Fire Chief Mike Mamone III, Manager John Barrett

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

Council did meet in an executive session at 5:30 p.m. before this regular meeting to discuss the police contract negotiations.

Persons in Attendance:

Tom Damen discussed the 2023 budget, the proposed tax increase, stimulus money and the upcoming county-wide property reassessment.

Action Items:

Mrs. Hemer motioned to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2022 regular Council meeting and the December 5, 2022 special meeting as presented. Mr. Elmore seconded and the motion carried.

Mr. Becker motioned to pay all approved bills as submitted. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried. Mr. Piccinini abstained from voting.

BILLS:

Gen. Fund – Ck# 11631–11689 – totaling \$106,078.12.

Payroll (11/25, 12/9) – Ck# 5481-5504 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$121,031.49.

Council received for their review and consideration, Ordinance 03-2022 removing the north side of Reno Street from Virginia Avenue to the entrance to the Rochester Area School District parking lot from the “Parking prohibited at all times” section to allow for parking in this area. Mr. Elmore motioned to approve and adopt Ordinance 03-2022 as presented. Mr. Alford seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, Resolution 2022-07 adopting PA Act 57 of 2022 implementing the Effect of Failure to Receive Tax Notice. Solicitor Steff explained the purpose and requirement for adopting this resolution. Mr. Elmore motioned to approve and adopt Resolution 2022-07 as presented. Mrs. Hemer seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, a tentative 2023 Budget. The budget reflects a 1 mill tax increase for general purposes, going from 29 mills to 30 mills; a .5 mill tax reduction in the debt service tax, going from 5.5 mills to 5 mills; a new 2 mill tax for fire protection

services; a \$50,000 expenditure of ARPA funds towards fire service protection; and a transfer from the capital reserves of \$272,243 to cover the projected deficit. The budget includes the hiring of 2 additional police officers. After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to approve and adopt the 2023 budget as presented. Mr. Piccinini seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 6-2 in favor with Mrs. Bucher and Mr. Alford voting no.

Council received for their review and consideration, Ordinance 04-2022 establishing an annual special Fire Service Protection tax of 2 mills effective January 1, 2023. Mr. Elmore motioned to approve and adopt Ordinance 04-2022 as presented. Mr. Piccinini seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, Ordinance 05-2022 establishing the 2023 property tax rate at 30 mills for general purposes, 5 mills for debt service, and 2 mills for fire protection service. Mrs. Hemer motioned to approve and adopt Ordinance 05-2022 as presented. Mr. Piccinini seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, a proposal from the Middle Department Inspection Agency to assume the Building Code Official's responsibilities as well as keeping the third-party plan review and inspection duties. Also received is a proposal from Owen Pella to assume the Zoning Officer's duties. Both proposals together would be needed to meet the requirements for Building Code Official and Zoning Officer. Council also received a proposal from KLH Engineers/HMT & Associates to provide both Building Code Official and Zoning Officer services. These proposals were received to fill the duties left vacant by the discontinuance of the New Brighton Code Department. After some discussion, this item was tabled to gather further information.

Council received for their review and consideration, a draft proposal for the 2023 regular meeting dates. Mr. Elmore motioned to accept and approve the proposed 2023 regular meeting schedule as presented and to further discuss the addition of workshop meetings at the January regular meeting. Mr. Piccinini seconded and the motion carried.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the November 10, 2022 minutes of the Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meeting.

Committee Reports:

Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

Council received for their review, the Expense & Revenue report for the period January 1, 2022 through December 13, 2022.

Public Safety – Don Brothers, Chairperson

Mr. Brothers had nothing to report.

Public Works – Jodi Hemer, Chairperson

Mrs. Hemer had nothing to report.

Recreation

Mr. Elmore noted the upcoming Rochester Area Alumni Association's holiday get together set for December 31st.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jackson had nothing to report.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Steff had nothing to report.

Code Officer's Report:

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

Police Report:

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

Sergeant Shane stated that she had received a quote for changes to the security system in the amount of \$5,300 with an additional \$64 monthly fee. She is still waiting for a quote to replace the one door which needs replaced.

Sergeant Shane stated that she and Officer Zarillo attended a grant writing course. She will work with the Manager to have access to the federal government web site to apply for various grants that may come available.

Sergeant Shane stated that the Civil Service Commission had completed the police officer's exams to develop an eligibility list. Only 2 officers passed the exams and neither officer was now interested in accepting a position as a Rochester Police officer. She asked that Council approve the Civil Service Commission to complete another exam to try and develop another eligibility list for possible applicants as full-time police officers. Council agreed.

Sergeant Shane stated that she is meeting with the Rochester Township police and their Commissioners on January 5th at their work session to discuss the possibility of creating a regional police department and stated that any Council person interested in attending is welcome to do so.

Fire Chief's Report:

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

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

Council received for their review, the November 2022 Treasurer's report for Council's review.

Old Business/New Business:

Mr. Alford asked whether the letters to Bridgewater Borough and Pulaski Township went out soliciting their interest in joining discussions regarding police services. The Manager was not available to answer.

Mr. Rader read a letter from Ron Becker resigning his position as Council Member effective immediately. Mr. Rader then read a letter from himself informing Council that he too was resigning his position as Council Member effective immediately. Mr. Becker and Mr. Rader left the meeting.

Mr. Elmore discussed the possibility of developing events to create some additional revenue stream. After some discussion, Mr. Piccinini asked that Council consider creating a Recreation Board to handle organizing events. The Solicitor will discuss with the Manager if there is a Recreation Committee that is already in place.

Mrs. Tinker stated that she had submitted an application to purchase a repository property, 470 Harmony Avenue. Council did not receive the application. The Solicitor will review the matter and suggested to Council that if all the proper paperwork is in the Borough Office that Council motion to authorize the appropriate officials to sign the paperwork. Mr. Piccinini motioned to approve the Tinker's application pending the Solicitor's review of the paperwork. Mr. Elmore seconded and the motion carried.

Mr. Alford asked about the status of the fallen sidewalk on the corner of Jackson Street and Connecticut Avenue. After some discussion, the Solicitor will review the matter and make a recommendation to Council as to the next step.

Council went into an executive session to discuss union and non-union employment agreements for 2023 at 7:58 p.m.

Council reconvened at 9:08 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett
Borough Manager