

Rochester Borough Council  
Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building  
August 16, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Present: President Benjamin Rader, Vice-President Marjorie White, Don Brothers, Marlin Robinson, Ron Becker, Wes Hill, Donna Short, Brandy Dietrich, Mayor Keith Jackson, Police Chief Frank Mercier, Code Officer Peggy Griffith, Manager John Barrett

Absent: Solicitor Bernie Rabik, Fire Chief Mike Mamone III

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

Persons in Attendance:

Colleen Gerace stated that her father owns a house on George Street. He passed away in February this year. He had prepaid the garbage bill for the whole year. Ms. Gerace stated that no one has been living in the house since February and she feels they should not have to pay for garbage service that they aren't utilizing. Ms. Gerace asked for a refund of the garbage fees her father prepaid. Manager Barrett explained how the ordinance addressed vacant properties. After some discussion, Mr. Hill motioned to approve the refund of \$165 attributable to the last three quarters of 2021. Mr. Robinson seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call – 7-1 yes with Mrs. White voting no.

Eugenia Priest asked about the status of 515 Oregon Avenue. Code Officer Griffith stated that she has received the signed consent form from the owner to have the house demolished. She has forwarded it to the Community Development Program to be added to their list for demolition.

Justin Egley, Baseball/Softball Organization, discussed the use of the Connecticut Avenue ballfield and the impact football has on the field condition.

Tom Riel and Andrew Graves spoke on the role of the Mayor and how Council needs to follow the Borough Code in regards to the Mayor's duties.

Andrew Dinardo, Rochester Community Heart & Soul, invited Council to attend their next meeting scheduled on August 24 at 6:00 p.m. at Hollywood Gardens. Mr. Dinardo also spoke of his interest in seeing the riverfront property utilized to its fullest potential and that he would like to be involved with any group who is working towards that goal. He would like to see some kind of "Re-opening Ceremony" planned for when the construction project is completed.

Ben Dinardo, President of the Rochester Alumni Association, introduced himself and stated that if there was anything the Association could do to help, please contact him. The Association will be setting up a table at the home football games as well.

Action Items:

Mr. Becker motioned to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2021 regular Council meeting as presented. Mr. Hill seconded and the motion carried.

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

**BILLS:**

Gen. Fund – Ck# 10721–10778 – totaling \$74,433.25.

Payroll (7/23, 8/6) – Ck# 5037-5055 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$105,102.37.

Council received a draft 2021 Act 205 Actuarial Valuation Report for the police pension plan. If the report is agreeable with Council, Council needs to approve the report and the Actuary will complete the final report for our records. After some discussion, Mr. Hill motioned to approve the report as presented. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 8-0, all members voted yes.

Manager Barrett presented a picture of the post Mr. Solomon installed along Frazier Way to protect his retaining wall. Concerns have been raised as to whether the post is in the public right-of-way for the alley. To make that determination, a survey would need to be completed. Manager Barrett received a quote from Widmer Engineering of \$750 to complete a survey. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to approve having the survey completed by Widmer Engineering for \$750. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Council received information on the PSAB Fall Conference to be held in Erie, PA. The registration is \$185 and lodging is \$179.67 per night. Mrs. White is asking to attend this conference. After some discussion, Mrs. Short motioned to approve Mrs. White's attendance. Mr. Hill seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 6-1 with Mr. Becker voting no and Mrs. White abstaining.

Mr. Rader presented draft Resolution 2021-04, Expressing disapproval of Mayor Jackson's behavior towards the Police Chief and Borough Manager and inhibiting their ability to effectively and efficiently manage their respective departments. After some discussion, the resolution would be considered at the next meeting.

Mr. Rader presented a letter from the Rochester Quarterback Club. They are seeking donation to support the Rochester Football Program. After some discussion, Mr. Robinson motioned to approve a \$100 donation to the Quarterback Club. Mrs. Short seconded and the motion carried.

Mr. Rader presented a flier for a Community Fun Day being held at the Second Baptist Church on August 22<sup>nd</sup> starting at 3:00 p.m. All of Council are invited to attend. Mr. Elmore is also requesting permission to close one block of Clay Street for this event. Council was agreeable to the road closing.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the minutes of the July 8, 2021 Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meeting.

Council received for their review, the meeting notes of the July 22, 2021 Rochester Community Heart & Soul meeting.

Committee Reports:

Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

The Expense & Revenue report covering January 1, 2021 through August 9, 2021 was presented for Council's review.

Council received for their review, the 2021 Annual Wage Rate spreadsheet showing the employees pay rates for 2021.

Public Safety – Don Brothers, Chairperson

There was discussion regarding the ongoing review of a regional police department between the Borough and Rochester Township. It was noted that Conway, Baden and Harmony Township are exploring the possibility of regionalizing as well. The thought was that a bigger group may be more viable on a regional scale and would those 3 communities be interested in participating with the 2 Rochester's. Chief Mercier stated that he had some discussions with the Conway Police Chief and he feels they would not be interested in participating with the 2 Rochester's.

Mr. Brothers stated that he had a Public Safety Committee meeting and the Committee would like to re-visit the action taken by Council at their June meeting to demote the Police Chief to Sargent effective November 1, 2021. Mr. Brothers stated that he would like to rescind that motion and motion to keep Chief Mercier on as Police Chief through March 19, 2023 and then reassign him to a Sargent effective March 20, 2023 where he would then get the same rate of pay and benefits as any other Sargent in the Department. Mr. Hill agreed to rescind his second from the June meeting and second the new motion by Mr. Brothers. After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to approve rescinding Council's action at the June meeting and approving Mr. Brothers' new motion as stated. Mr. Hill seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 8-0, all members voted yes.

Mr. Hill noted that a Public Safety Committee meeting will be set to further discuss the status of the fire equipment and develop a recommendation for moving forward.

Public Works – Marlin Robinson, Chairperson

Mr. Robinson had nothing to report.

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

Mrs. Dietrich had nothing to report.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jackson stated that there is a problem and that this may have to go to the courts to get resolved.

Solicitor's Report:

There was nothing to report in Solicitor Rabik's absence.

Code Officer's Report:

Council received for their review, the July 2021 Code Officer's Report.

Police Chief's Report:

Chief Mercier presented the July 2021 Police Department Report and Code Officer's Report for Council's review. Chief Mercier reviewed several items from the reports.

Fire Chief's Report:

The July 2021 Fire Department Report was presented for Council's review.

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

Manager Barrett presented the July 2021 Treasurer's report for Council's review.

Old Business/New Business:

Mrs. White noted the upcoming Council of Government's conference to be held in Monaca and asked any interested members to please attend. Mrs. White also asked about the possibility of refinancing the Borough's bonds. Manager Barrett stated that he would contact the company that helped refinance the last time.

Mrs. White stated that the County did not have a copy of the Borough's comprehensive plan. Mrs. White distributed drawing that were given to her by the County detailing plans for redeveloping the old Rochester Bowl building.

Mr. Rader presented a thank you note from the Martin Luther King Jr. Committee for allowing them to use the Borough's Park for their event.

Mr. Becker noted that he had recently seen kids skateboarding in the History Park and is concerned they may cause damage to the newly renovated park. Everyone was in agreement to post the park with "No Skateboarding" signs and have the Police Department enforce those signs.

Mr. Brothers asked about the status of 313 Deer Lane. Manager Barrett stated that Mr. Ellis agreed to closing costs and he was moving forward with the sale and transfer.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett  
Borough Manager