

Rochester Borough Council
 Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building
 June 16, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

Present: President David Alford, Vice-President Toni Bucher, Sam Piccinini, Chad Rape, Don Brothers, Renee Simmons, Mayor Keith Jackson, Solicitor Paul Steff, Sergeant Dawn Shane, Manager John Barrett,

Absent: Jodi Hemer, Rico Elmore, Fire Chief Mike Mamone III

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

Persons in Attendance:

Bob Vasquez asked about an update on 422 New York Avenue. The Code Officer has condemned the property and is working to resolve the situation.

Ron Gianfrancesco, representing Rochester Little Rams, gave Council a letter requesting permission to use the upper baseball field on Connecticut Avenue for football practices. They are unable to use the high school practice field and are looking for an alternate location. After some discussion, Mr. Alford stated that Council would further discuss this and get back to the group.

Tom Munroe, musician's union, discussed a summer concert series involving several bands belonging to the union. The County Commissioners have agreed to pay half the cost of these concerts. Mr. Munroe asked if Council might be interested in scheduling any concerts this summer through this program. After some discussion, Council was interested and would be in touch with Mr. Munroe in the future.

Cathy Fennell, 410 Coolidge Way, discussed the poor condition of Utah Way which runs next to her property. After some discussion, the Manager was asked to get with the Public Works employees and see what can be done to improve Utah Way.

Lorie Hill, RBDC, stated that the RBDC would like to hold an event on September 20th or 27th this year on Brighton Avenue. Mrs. Hill reviewed several ideas for the day's activities. The event would go from 1:00pm – 8:00pm. The RBDC is requesting to close Brighton Avenue from 12:00pm – 9:00pm whichever day is chosen for the event. After some discussion, Mr. Piccinini motioned to approve the street closure for either September 20th or 27th. Mr. Alford seconded and the motion carried.

There was discussion regarding individuals riding scooters and skateboards recklessly around town. The Solicitor and Sergeant will review applicable enforcement regulations to develop an escalating penalty scale to minimize the penalty for first time offenders but increase the penalty for repeat offenders.

Action Items:

Mrs. Bucher motioned to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2025 regular Council meeting as presented. Mr. Rape seconded and the motion carried.

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

BILLS:

Gen. Fund – Ck# 13637–13692 – totaling \$114,926.92.

Payroll (5/23, 6/6) – Ck# 6123-6142 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$112,404.66.

Council received for their review and consideration, a letter from the Library regarding an incident with a raccoon getting trapped in a wall and a quote for \$1,550 to have several openings on the exterior of the building closed up and to construct a chimney cap; to prevent wildlife from getting into the building. After some discussion, Mr. Piccinini motioned to pay half the cost for a total of \$775. Mrs. Bucher seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, a letter from Alford Steff, Solicitor for the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit #27, asking the Rochester Borough Council to exonerate the 2024 property tax for 423 Adams Street (tax parcels 490010304 and 490010305) which the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit purchased on February 2, 2024. School buildings are exempt from property tax assessments. After some discussion, Mr. Rape motioned to approve the exoneration for the 2024 Borough property tax and all fees. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

Mayor Jackson requested funds to attend the Mayor's Association Conference July 17-21: registration, hotel, meals, tolls, rental car. After some discussion, Mrs. Bucher motioned to approve the necessary funds for these expense items. Ms. Simmons seconded and the motion carried.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the Revenue & Expense Report – January 1, 2025 through June 12, 2025.

Council received for their review, a letter from residents on Coolidge Way and New York Ave regarding the condition of Utah Way. This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Council received for their review, a letter of interest from Randy Simmons for the part-time code officer's position. Mr. Simmons was the only person to submit a letter of interest for the position. There was discussion regarding the hourly rate and hours to work per week. Mr. Alford motioned to hire Mr. Simmons at \$20 per hour and average 20 hours per week with a starting date of June 23rd. Mr. Rape seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 5-0 all yes with Ms. Simmons abstaining.

Council received for their review, an invitation from Town Center Associates to attend the second session of their Downtown Properties Strategies Series.

Council received for their review, a letter from S&P Global Ratings informing the Borough of their review of Rochester's rating and the subsequent change to Rochester's rating. There was some discussion regarding the impact of going from an A (stable) rating to a BBB+ (negative) rating.

Committee Reports:

Public Administration – Chad Rape, Chairperson

Mr. Rape had nothing to report.

Public Safety – Rico Elmore, Chairperson

There was nothing to report in Mr. Elmore's absence.

Police Department Report – Council received the results of the written and physical exams given by the Civil Service Commission on May 24th. The oral interviews have not yet been completed. There are three candidates and one is a veteran. Sergeant Shane asked Council to approve the hire of the veteran or highest scorer (whichever is applicable) following the oral interviews to expedite the replacement of Officer Roach. After some discussion, Mr. Rape motion to hire the veteran if he passes the oral exam. If he does not pass the exam then hire the overall high scorer. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

Public Works – Toni Bucher, Chairperson

Mrs. Bucher brought up for discussion, applying for the State's low interest loan to purchase a backhoe. There was discussion regarding the requirements of the loan. Mrs. Bucher left the meeting (8:15p.m.). Council discussed the agreement with the Sewer & Maintenance Authority regarding the use of their backhoe. Mr. Alford and Mr. Piccinini will approach the Sewer & Maintenance Authority Board and express the need for greater cooperation in sharing the use of the backhoe. There was discussion about possibly borrowing a backhoe. Mr. Alford motioned to authorize the Public Works to rent a backhoe if necessary. Mr. Piccinini seconded and the motion carried.

Recreation – Renee Simmons, Chairperson

Ms. Simmons noted the kids event scheduled for this Friday from 4:00pm-8:30pm at the riverfront.

Mr. Piccinini discussed his plans for the car cruise scheduled for August 9th. They have collected \$2,500 in sponsorship fees to date. The Heritage Society has agreed to apply for the liquor license again this year. Mr. Piccinini asked Council for funds to cover the cost for the special event insurance coverage which was \$4,500 last year. After much discussion, Mr. Rape motioned to approve up to \$4,500 to cover the insurance cost. Mr. Piccinini seconded and the motion carried. Council agreed that this \$4,500 and the \$3,125 for the kids event would come out of the BC Tourism grant Council received last year.

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, May 2025 Code Officer's report and Zoning Officer's report.

Fire Chief's Report:

Council received for their review, the May 2025 Fire Department report.

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

Council received for their review, the May 2025 Treasurer's Report.

Manager Barrett asked Council to pass a motion giving First Commonwealth Bank permission to discuss potential problems and or fraudulent transactions involving the various accounts of the Borough with the Manager and or Secretary to expedite resolution before it becomes too late to correct. After some discussion, Mr. Piccinini motioned to authorize First Commonwealth Bank to discuss any matters concerning the Borough's accounts with the Manager and or Secretary and or the Police Chief, Sergeant, Detective going forward. Mr. Rape seconded and the motion carried. After some discussion, Mr. Piccinini motioned to begin the process of closing the Borough's accounts and opening new ones since the current general fund account has been compromised. Mr. Rape seconded and the motion carried.

Old Business/New Business:

Mr. Piccinini discussed the BC Boom event and a meeting he attended with the organizers. After some discussion, Council agreed to table assessing any fee for use of the dock area to load fireworks. Mr. Brothers motioned to accept any vendor overflow the organizers would like to locate at Rochester's riverfront and assess a \$100 vendor fee for each vendor who sets up. Mr. Rape seconded and the motion carried.

Council went into executive session at 10:03 p.m. to discuss the upcoming collective bargaining sessions with the police union.

Council reconvened at 10:25 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 10:26 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett
Borough Manager