

Rochester Borough Council
 Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building
 August 19, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

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

Absent: Rico Elmore, President David Alford, Renee Simmons, Fire Chief Mike Mamone III

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

Persons in Attendance:

Leslie King, 567 Lacock Street, spoke to Council about a feral cat problem in her neighborhood. She has been trapping them and getting them spayed or neutered but it is becoming costly due to the volume of feral cats. Mrs. McCain stated that she has been working with the residents at 535 and 552 Jefferson Street where feral cats seem to be gathering. Mrs. King asked if Council would be willing to purchase vouchers from the Beaver County Humane Society to help pay for these procedures. Mrs. Bucher stated that she would call the Humane Society to find out what is all involved with purchasing vouchers and then discuss this matter with the Council.

Wes Hill discussed the condition of several buildings in town and asked Council to direct the Code Officer to file notices with the property owners to correct any code violations or demolish the structure. He feels some of them are unsafe and need immediate action. Mrs. Bucher stated that Council will address that issue.

Mr. Piccinini presented a copy of an email he received from the Rochester Township Secretary stating that the Commissioners were interested in opening up discussions regarding a shared full-time code officer. After some discussion, Council was generally interested and asked the Manager to send the Township Secretary a job description of our code officer for their review. There was discussion regarding an increase in high weeds and grass in residents and businesses sidewalks. Council considered mailing a letter and asked the Manager to draft a letter to the residents and businesses informing them of their responsibility to keep the sidewalks free of grass and weeds.

Action Items:

Mr. Brothers motioned to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2024 regular Council meeting as presented. Mrs. Bucher seconded and the motion carried.

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

BILLS:

Gen. Fund – Ck# 13014–13105 – totaling \$148,188.83.

Payroll (7/19, 8/2, 8/16) – Ck# 5916-5947 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$179,681.50.

Council received for their review and consideration, the Engineer's bid tabulation for the concrete work (parking area, front steps). The low bidder was Lee Michaels Industries with a bid of \$110,162. After some discussion, Mr. Piccinini motioned to award the contract to Lee Michael Industries. Mr. Rape seconded and the motion carried.

Reclaim Project – proposed locations – 420 & 422 E. Washington Street, and 551 Connecticut Avenue – discuss acquisition. Mrs. Bucher stated that this would be discussed in executive session.

Council received for their review and consideration, PennDOT Project proposal (1) – install pedestrian warning signs at the intersections of: Adams St & Vermont Ave, Adams St & New York Ave, Brighton Ave & W. Washington St; install pedestrian warning signs and install high visibility pavement markings for crossings at the intersection of Rhode Island Ave and W. Washington St. After some discussion, Mr. Piccinini motioned to approved the additional signs and markings as noted. Mr. Rape seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, PennDOT Project proposal (2) – upgrade the electronic school zone speed devices along Virginia Ave. After some discussion, Mr. Piccinini motioned to approve the upgrades as noted. Mr. Rape seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, an Actuarial Services engagement letter from The Phoenix Benefits Group. After some discussion, Mrs. Bucher motioned to accept and approve the engagement letter from The Phoenix Benefits Group for actuarial services. Mr. Piccinini seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, the 2025 Minimum Municipal Obligation prepared by Feaster Pension Consulting. The 2025 MMO is \$278,001. After some discussion, Mrs. Bucher motioned to approve the 2025 MMO as presented. Mr. Piccinini seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, the 2025 Minimum Municipal Obligation prepared by the Manager. The 2025 MMO is \$16,708. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to approve the 2025 MMO as presented. Mr. Piccinini seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, a request from Kisaan Howard to purchase 551 Connecticut Avenue from the Beaver County Repository. Council tabled this due to the applicant not being present as required.

Review Items:

Council received for their review an event notice from the Second Baptist Church for their 130 Year Anniversary.

Committee Reports:

Public Administration – Chad Rape, Chairperson

Council received for their review, the Expense and Revenue Report from January 1, 2024 through August 16, 2024.

Public Safety – Rico Elmore, Chairperson

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

Mrs. Bucher brought up the need for recruiting members for the Borough's Planning Commission. There is currently only 1 member and we need to have a functioning Commission. Mrs. Bucher also brought up a need to recruit members for the Rochester Borough Development Corporation (RBDC). The Borough designated the RBDC to act as the Borough's Local Revitalization Organization (LRO) which in turn works with the Beaver County Community Development Program to administer their streetscape and façade programs for Rochester. After some discussion, Council asked the Manager to incorporate these 2 issues in the letter/notice regarding high grass and weeds.

Police Department Report – Sergeant Shane stated that she had received a proposed resolution from the School District whereby they will be taking over all responsibilities for the School Crossing Guards and share the cost 50/50 with Rochester Township. The Sergeant asked Council to ask the School District to do the same for the Borough. After some discussion, Mr. Rape motioned to notify the School District to request the same arrangement for crossing guards in the Borough. Mr. Piccinini seconded and the motion carried.

Public Works – Toni Bucher, Chairperson

Mrs. Bucher asked the Manager to thank the Public Works employees for their efforts in getting the yellow curbs painted.

Recreation – Renee Simmons, Chairperson

There was nothing to report in Ms. Simmons' absence. Mrs. Bucher did note that she would be organizing a Santa picture event in December.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jackson agreed with getting a letter out to the residents and businesses about the high grass and weeds. The Mayor thanked the Police Department for their efforts in supporting the Secret Service during the Vice-President's stop in Rochester.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Steff had a brief discussion on the Borough's liability exposure regarding dilapidated buildings.

Code Officer's Report:

Council received for their review, the July 2024 report from the Code Officer.

Fire Chief's Report:

Council received for their review, the July 2024 Fire Department report.

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

Council received for their review, the July 2024 Treasurer's Report.

Old Business/New Business:

Manager Barrett noted several issues arising with the phone system and internet connection. Representatives from Comcast are recommending the Borough switch to fiber optic service versus the coax cable we currently use. The coax cable provides a shared service so there is always competition for band width where as the fiber optic service would be a dedicated service to the Borough. After some discussion, Council asked the Manager to look into Go Net Speed to see what they could offer.

Council went into an executive session to discuss the acquisition of real estate and personnel matters at 7:55 p.m.

Council reconvened at 8:12 p.m.

Mr. Piccinini motioned to authorize the Manager to proceed with the property acquisition as discussed in executive session. Mr. Rape seconded and the motion carried.

Mr. Brothers motioned to approve the Manager's contract for the year 2024 as discussed in executive session. Mr. Rape seconded and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett
Borough Manager