

Rochester Borough Council
Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building
July 18, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Present: President Benjamin Rader, Marjorie White, Ron Becker, Rico Elmore, Jodi Hemer, David Alford, Mayor Keith Jackson, Solicitor Bernie Rabik, Police Chief Frank Mercier, Code Officer Peggy Griffith, Manager John Barrett

Absent: Vice-President Don Brothers, Brandy Dietrich, Fire Chief Mike Mamone III

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

Mayor Jackson asked to go into an executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Council went into an executive session at 6:31 p.m.

Council reconvened at 6:38 p.m.

Persons in Attendance:

Mary Burton, The Father's House Church, 310 Clay Street, addressed Council regarding stormwater run-off from the alley behind the church. After some discussion, Mr. Rader stated that we would look into the matter and see what can be done.

Tom Damen reviewed a number of items of concern he has regarding the proposed stormwater ordinance Council is considering for adoption later in the meeting. Mr. Damen was told the ordinance was written in accordance with regulations adopted by the PA Department of Environmental Protection and if he feels strongly against any of these requirements that he should contact this State agency and voice his concerns. The Borough must follow these regulations because if not, the Borough could be subject to fines and penalties.

Beth Welsh, 405 Connecticut Avenue, discussed several issues she had with Mrs. Gaffney's letter concerning a banner Mrs. Welsh had hanging on her property. After some discussion, Mrs. Welsh stated that she had agreed to take down the banner in question at the last Council meeting and will stand behind her word.

Jessica Howe stated that she had spoken with Councilmen Elmore regarding the fountain park. The fountain park was a part of the multiple park renovation project several years ago but had to be cut out due to the lack of funding. Mrs. Howe stated that she was part of the committee which worked with the architect in developing the proposed renovations for the fountain park. She has spoken with several of the other committee members and they were wondering if there was a possibility of scaling down the project to at least get the fountain replaced. After some discussion, Council stated that they would be willing to consider options if the committee wanted to provide a plan for consideration. Ms. Howe had a second item concerning notification of road paving and towing charges imposed if a car had to be towed so that the road could be paved. After some discussion, the Manager and Police Chief will review the process and make changes where possible.

Carlton Vreen, founder of Make It Home Safe, has developed innovative technology that will provide real-time remote identity for traffic stops. There is an application that is downloaded to each person's smart phone which will allow the transmission of information between the person stopped and the police officer. The intention is to better ensure the safety of both parties and reduce the possibility of an adverse confrontation during what should be a routine traffic stop. Mr. Vreen just wanted to inform Council of this initiative and hopes everyone will consider using this when it becomes available.

Action Items:

Mr. Becker motioned to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2022 regular Council meeting and Stormwater meeting as presented. Mrs. Hemer seconded and the motion carried.

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

BILLS:

Gen. Fund – Ck# 11357–11405 – totaling \$100,487.91.

Payroll (6/24, 7/8) – Ck# 5316-5344 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$99,923.54.

Ordinance 02-2022 – Stormwater Management Ordinance – new ordinance to address changes to the MS4 Program requirements. Ordinance 03-2015 (current stormwater management ordinance) needs repealed in its entirety as noted by the Sewer Authority’s engineer. After some discussion, Mrs. White motioned to approve and adopt Ordinance 02-2022 as presented. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, an engagement letter from The Phoenix Benefits Group, Inc. for Actuarial Services for the 2023 valuation cycle. After some discussion, Mrs. White motioned to approve and accept the engagement letter from the Phoenix Benefits Group as presented. Mr. Alford seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, an engagement letter from Campbell, Durrant, P.C. for legal services as special labor counsel. Mr. Rabik stated that the Borough should request Attorney Palumbo as the lead attorney. After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to approve and accept the engagement letter from Campbell, Durrant P.C. as presented. Mrs. Hemer seconded and the motion carried.

Mr. Rader presented a Joint Request for Certification from the municipal employees’ union asking Council to agree to and join them in petitioning the PA Labor Relation Board for a change in representation from the SEIU Local 668 to the IUOE Local 66. After some discussion, Mr. Elmore motioned that Council agrees to the change in representation and authorizes the President of Council to sign the Joint Request for Certification as presented. Mrs. White seconded and the motion carried.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the minutes of the June 9, 2022 Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meeting.

Council received for their review, the meeting notes of the June 15, 2022 Rochester Borough Development Corporation meeting.

Council received for their review, several letters from PennDOT regarding road closures in the area.

Committee Reports:Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

Council received for their review, the Expense & Revenue report for the period January 1, 2022 through July 11, 2022.

Mr. Elmore asked if all the ARPA funds have been spent. Manager Barrett stated that all of the funds allocated in the first round have been spent. The second round of funding is expected at the end of this month or early next month. The amount is the same as the first allocation, approximately \$180,000.

Public Safety – Don Brothers, Chairperson

Mr. Becker noted that the Public Safety Committee has a meeting scheduled for July 25th with Rochester Township regarding fire services.

Public Works – Jodi Hemer, Chairperson

Mrs. Hemer had nothing to report.

There was discussion about getting the work release program to come and cut overgrown vegetation at the abandoned properties here in Rochester. The Manager and Police Chief will follow up to see if this is possible.

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

Mr. Rader noted that the next Riverfront Committee meeting is scheduled for July 20th at 6:00 p.m. at the riverfront.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jackson asked about the Chewing Playground. Was it open for public use? Manager Barrett stated that he would check with the Foreman and see if there are any outstanding issues at the playground.

Mayor Jackson stated that the alley between Clay Street and Webster Street is in bad condition. The Manager will review this alley for any needed work.

Mayor Jackson requested an executive session for personnel matters.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Rabik had nothing to report.

Code Officer's Report:

Council received for their review, the June 2022 Code Officer's Reports. Code Officer Griffith noted that Mr. Majors and his engineer are working to resolve the wall/sidewalk issue at Jackson Street and Connecticut Avenue.

Code Officer Griffith asked Council for some guidance as to how they would like her to address complaints about these portable basketball hoops. Complaints vary from the hoops blocking the sidewalk, the parking area and kids not moving for cars and or being offensive. Council feels this is a favorable activity and would like to find a way this activity can coexist with everyday use of the sidewalks and streets. Code Officer Griffith will try to notify the owners of these hoops when an issue arises and work with them to find an amicable resolution but noted that she needs to treat all the owners the same when it comes to complying with a set of standards which may be developed. Council agreed.

Police Chief's Report:

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

Fire Chief's Report:

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

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

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

Mrs. White asked when the garbage contract expired. Manager Barrett stated that it was set to expire at the end of this year. Council will need to negotiate an extension with Valley Waste or bid out the service for proposals.

Old Business/New Business:

There was no new/old business.

Council went into an executive session at 8:28 p.m.

Council reconvened at 8:42 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett
Borough Manager