

Rochester Borough Council  
 Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building  
 February 22, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Present: President Benjamin Rader, Vice-President Don Brothers, Marjorie White, Brandy Dietrich, David Alford, Mayor Keith Jackson, Solicitor Bernie Rabik, Police Chief Frank Mercier, Manager John Barrett

Absent: Ron Becker, Rico Elmore, Jodi Hemer, Code Officer Peggy Griffith, Fire Chief Mike Mamone III

Mayor Jackson swore in the newly elected officials; Mrs. White, Mr. Alford and signed their oath of office and affidavit of residency forms then presented them to Manager Barrett.

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

Persons in Attendance:

Mike Brdar, 90 Dewey Avenue, presented a letter to Council asking for some relief regarding a letter he received from the Code Enforcement Officer. Solicitor Rabik stated that at this point Council had no jurisdiction in this matter. The Solicitor informed Council that he has scheduled a meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup> with himself, Mr. Brdar, the Code Enforcement Officer and the Manager to discuss this matter further.

Action Items:

Mrs. Dietrich motioned to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2022 regular Council meeting as presented. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

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

**BILLS:**

Gen. Fund – Ck# 11081–11152 – totaling \$204,633.70.

Payroll (1/21, 2/4, 2/18) – Ck# 5179-5210 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$138,396.66.

Council received for their review and consideration, a request for consent from Penny Snyder, 445 Jackson Street, to purchase 447 Jackson Street off of the Beaver County Repository. Ms. Snyder stated that this was an empty lot and she was purchasing it for more yard space for their adjacent property. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to approve the consent and exonerate the Borough's delinquent taxes from 2016 to present. Mrs. Dietrich seconded and the motion carried.

Manager Barrett presented Resolution 2022-02 – entering into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Beaver County District Attorney's Office and member municipalities under the Beaver County Highway Safety Task Force. Being a member municipality will authorize our Police Officers to participate in this Task Force which will provide special details from time to time to the member municipalities to promote highway safety. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to approve and adopt Resolution 2022-02 and to authorize the President of Council and the Police Chief to sign the agreement. Mrs. Dietrich seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 5-0, all members voted yes.

Manager Barrett informed Council that he had received an email from New Sewickley Township's Manager informing Council and Rochester Township that the New Sewickley Township Supervisors approved the creation of a Steering Committee to continue discussions regarding a regionalized police

department and are asking Rochester Borough and Township to do the same. After some discussion, Mrs. Dietrich motioned to approve creating a Steering Committee to work with the other Steering Committees to further discuss the creation of a regionalize police department. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried. Manager Barrett stated that a meeting was held earlier in the day with the Managers, Secretary and Police Chiefs to identify what might be viewed as a negative and what might represent a positive should a regional police department be created. After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that the first hurdle to overcome was how to address the pension benefit the police officers would receive. The three police unions all have a pension benefit(s) unique to their respective bargaining agreements. It was felt the best way to identify possible options was to have the three pension actuaries work together because of their familiarity of their respective pension plans and funding status. We would ask them to provide options and any associated costs which we can then review to see if there is an option which would be satisfactory to the three police unions. Manager Barrett stated that he spoke with the Borough's actuary about this and was told his cost for this review should be between \$600 and \$1,000 depending on the amount of time needed. After some discussion, Mr. Alford motioned to authorize the Borough's actuary to proceed with developing options for pension benefits associated with the creation of a regionalized police department. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review and consideration, an email from Lt. Rick Cowan, Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT), asking Council to sign on to a letter they are submitting to our State Legislators asking them to oppose any legislation that would raise truck weights on our roads and bridges. After some discussion, Mrs. White motioned to approve signing on to the letter opposing any legislation that would raise truck weights on our roads and bridges. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

#### Review Items:

Council received for their review, the minutes of the January 13, 2022 and the January 14, 2022 Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meetings.

Council received for their review, the meeting notes of the January 19, 2022 Rochester Borough Development Corporation meeting.

Council received for their review, a letter and drawing from the Sewer & Maintenance Authority's Engineer informing the Borough of a proposed rain garden installation at the end of East Washington Street.

#### Committee Reports:

##### Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

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

##### Public Safety – Don Brothers, Chairperson

Mr. Brothers noted that some residents have been throwing snow and ice into the street when clearing their sidewalks and parking areas. The road has become slippery in these areas. The Police Chief will make the Officers aware of this and have them approach any resident or business they see engaging in this behavior. Mrs. White also added a concern regarding property owners not clearing their sidewalks after a storm event. The Police Chief stated that he would review this further but the time constraints for issuing a notice then a possible citation and then setting up a hearing does not favor the sidewalks being cleared in a reasonable amount of time following a storm event.

Public Works – , Chairperson

Mr. Rader noted the good job the Road Department has been doing in keeping the streets clear given the number of snow storms and the amount of snow falling.

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

Mrs. Dietrich informed Council that the next Riverfront Committee meeting is scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Manager Barrett stated that he attended a meeting with the Joint Sewer Authority's Engineer and the contractors working on the sewer plant project to discuss a tentative timeline for restoration work of the riverfront property. They are anticipating some road paving to begin in April or May. It will probably be July or August before the remaining paving and other restoration work would be completed. The restoration of the Borough's empty lot will be the last item addressed, which will likely be in August or September. They were agreeable to have a small committee work with them regarding restoration work to be completed.

Mr. Rader announced his Committee appointments for Council:

Public Administration – Mr. Becker - Chairperson, Mrs. White

Public Safety – Mr. Brothers – Chairperson, Mr. Alford

Public Works – Mr. Elmore – Chairperson, Mrs. Hemer

Recreation – Mrs. Dietrich – Chairperson, Mrs. Hemer

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jackson noted several code items of concern. The Police Chief will address these items. Mayor Jackson asked if Officer Lizzi was back to work. The Police Chief stated that he was. Mayor Jackson also stated that he wants a key to the police department, the personnel files of the officers, the police department budgets for 2018 to 2022, and the officer's and Chief's overtime for 2018 to 2022.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Rabik noted the excellent job Code Officer Drumm and Manager Barrett did in preparing for and testify in a recent summary appeal hearing before Judge Tesla.

Solicitor Rabik read a copy of an email he sent to Mr. Brdar confirming the meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. with himself the Code Officer and the Manager to review and discuss a recent code enforcement letter Mr. Brdar had received.

Code Officer's Report:

There was nothing to report in Code Officer Griffith's absence.

Police Chief's Report:

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

Chief Mercier stated that he has been following up on residents putting their garbage out too early. A number of the incidents involved the garbage collector not picking up the garbage from the previous week.

Chief Mercier noted that Officer Lizzi is back to work as well as several other officers who have been out with COVID-19. Mayor Jackson asked to have a schedule for the officers. Chief Mercier stated that he would get him the schedule for the year.

Fire Chief's Report:

The January 2022 Fire Department Report was presented for Council's review.

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

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

Manager Barrett informed Council that the Heart & Soul program was being terminated due to the lack of participation from the residents.

Manager Barrett informed Council that the Rochester Borough Development Corporation along with the Beaver County Leadership Group are organizing an Emergency Responders Appreciation Day for all Beaver County First Responders that will be hosted here in Rochester. The date is September 18<sup>th</sup> from 1pm to 5pm. They groups are looking for volunteers to help organize and work the event.

Old Business/New Business:

Council, the Mayor, the Solicitor, the Police Chief and the Code Officer received the State Ethics Commission Statement of Financial Interests form which is to be completed for the year 2021 and returned to the Manager's office by May 1, 2022.

Mr. Brothers asked if the mechanical device fees were implemented. The Manager stated that the Police Chief will be conducting an inspection of locations known to have these devices and provide a count to the office for billing purposes.

Mrs. White noted the PSAB Annual Conference will be held in Hershey on May 22-25 and that she would be requesting to attend. Mrs. White also noted some grant opportunities that may be available to help pay for a new comprehensive plan for the Borough.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett  
Borough Manager