

Rochester Borough Council
 Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building
 December 20, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Present: President Benjamin Rader, Vice-President Marjorie White, Donna Short (arrived at 6:35 p.m.), Don Brothers, Marlin Robinson, Ron Becker, Wes Hill, Solicitor Bernie Rabik, Code Officer Peggy Griffith, Police Chief Frank Mercier, Manager John Barrett

Absent: Brandy Dietrich, Mayor Keith Jackson, Fire Chief Mike Mamone III

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

Persons in Attendance:

There were no public comments.

Action Items:

Mr. Becker motioned to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2021 regular Council meeting and November 29, 2021 special budget meeting as presented. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

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

BILLS:

Gen. Fund – Ck# 10954–11020 – totaling \$85,162.17.

Payroll (11/26, 12/10) – Ck# 5130-5153 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$122,996.48.

Council received for their consideration, a proposed agreement for renewal with the Boat Clubs for the use of certain land along the Beaver River. All agreements will be the same as the one received except for the fee which is based on the specific footage each Club utilizes. The only change from the current agreement is setting the term at five years instead of three years. After some discussion, Mr. Robinson motioned to approve the renewal agreement with the Boat Clubs as presented contingent upon the Club paying any and all past due fees. Mrs. White seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 7-0, all voted yes.

Resolution 2021-08 for Council's consideration – recognizing Susan Freehauf for her 43 years of dedicated service to the Borough and Police Department. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to approve and adopt Resolution 2021-08 as presented. Mr. Robinson seconded and the motion carried.

Ordinance 01-2022 for Council's consideration (proposed draft) – establishing names for the Borough's recreation places, notably tax parcel 46-001-2106 named Howe Park in honor of Howard "Howdy" Howe. If approved or modified, would be adopted at the January 18, 2022 regular meeting. After some discussion, Mr. Robinson motioned to authorize the Solicitor to advertise the ordinance as presented for adoption at the January 18, 2022 regular meeting. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

Manager Barrett presented proposed wording for a sign at Howe Park for Council's consideration. After some discussion, Mr. Hill motioned to approve the wording as presented and authorize the purchase of a sign for Howe Park. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Manager Barrett presented the proposed 2022 Budget for Council's consideration. After some discussion, Mr. Hill motioned to approve the 2022 Budget as presented. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 7-0, all voted yes.

Manager Barrett presented Resolution 2021-09 for Council's consideration – setting the property tax rate for the year 2022 at 29 mills for general purposes and 5.5 mills for debt service obligations. These rates are the same as in the year 2021. After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to approve and adopt Resolution 2021-09 as presented. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review, the current ordinance establishing certain amusements to be regulated and the prior fee schedule. At the November 29th budget meeting it was decided to consider re-implementing fees for certain amusements. Also, the Manager is recommending the ordinance be reviewed to update certain language and definitions. After some discussion, Mr. Hill motioned to re-instate the \$300 registration fee on all amusement devices effective January 1, 2022. Mr. Robinson seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 7-0, all voted yes.

Manager Barrett stated that there was a meeting December 8th with the Borough's health insurance Broker. He identified several alternatives to reduce the health care costs. The Manager provided the Broker's handouts reviewing the alternatives for Council's consideration. The Manager is recommending Council approve the PPO \$1250 \$20/\$20 plan with the Borough covering the additional deductible above the current \$500 limit. The premium increase would go from 24.9% to 7.83%. The annual reduction would be between \$40,188.96 and \$21,454.00 depending on the amount of deductible the Borough would need to cover. The Broker provided 2 additional options through the Teamsters 261. There would be additional savings but the Teamsters have Highmark as their provider and the plans don't match the UPMC plan benefits. This would have to be negotiated with the unions. The Broker said we could still change early in 2022 if the Council and unions could reach an agreement. After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to approve the UPMC PPO \$1250/\$2500 \$20/\$20 plan as presented and engage PrimePay to administer health reimbursement account for the Borough. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 7-0, all voted yes.

Council received for their consideration, the 2022 schedule of regular Council meetings. If approved, the Manager will advertise as required. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to approve the 2022 meeting schedule as presented. Mr. Robinson seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review, the Regional Police Study completed by Peer Consultant, Joe Kirschner, involving Rochester Borough, Rochester Township and New Sewickley Township. Council needs to take action to; approve moving forward with the creation of a regional police department, continue discussions with the other municipalities, or decide not to consider it at this time. After some discussion, Mr. Hill motioned that Rochester Borough move forward with creating a regional police department with Rochester Township and New Sewickley Township. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 7-0, all voted yes.

Review Items:

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

Council received for their review, the notes of the November 9, 2021 Rochester Borough Development Corporation meeting.

Council received for their review, a letter from PennDOT informing Council of their proposed project to rehabilitate the Rochester-Monaca bridge. PennDOT anticipates beginning construction in the summer of 2023.

Committee Reports:Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

The Expense & Revenue report covering January 1, 2021 through December 13, 2021 was presented for Council's review.

Public Safety – Don Brothers, Chairperson

Mr. Brothers noted a sink hole at the intersection of Virginia Avenue and Case Street. The Manager and Police Chief will review the matter.

Public Works – Marlin Robinson, Chairperson

Mr. Robinson had nothing to report.

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

Council received for their review, the minutes of the December 1, 2021 Riverfront Committee meeting.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jackson had nothing to report.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Rabik noted that if the municipalities move forward with creating a regional police department that they advertise for a skilled Solicitor who is experienced with this type of legal work.

Code Officer's Report:

Council received for their review, the November 2021 Code Officer's report.

Police Chief's Report:

Chief Mercier presented the November 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 November 2021 Fire Department Report was presented for Council's review.

Mr. Rader noted the Fire Department's Annual Awards Banquet scheduled for January 14, 2022. All members are invited to attend.

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

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

Manager Barrett asked for an executive session to discuss non-union employee wages and benefits for 2022.

Old Business/New Business:

Mr. Hill noted that it has been some time since a code review has been done and Council may want to consider doing this sometime in the near future.

Mrs. White brought up the possibility of providing the capability of residents to make payments via a credit card. She noted that the Joint Sewer Authority does this and they could possibly provide some information on how to go about starting this service.

Mrs. Short thanked everyone for their support during her time on Council and wished everyone and the Borough well in the future.

Council went into executive session at 7:55 p.m.

Council reconvened at 8:03 p.m.

Mr. Robinson motioned to approve a 2.5% raise for the Secretary and Manager and an additional weeks vacation for the Secretary for 2022. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett
Borough Manager