

Rochester Borough Council
Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building
June 20, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Present: President Benjamin Rader, Vice-President Don Brothers, Marjorie White, Ron Becker, Rico Elmore, Brandy Dietrich, Jodi Hemer (arrived at 6:36pm, left at 7:28pm), Mayor Keith Jackson, Solicitor Bernie Rabik, Police Chief Frank Mercier, Code Officer Peggy Griffith, Manager John Barrett

Absent: David Alford, Fire Chief Mike Mamone III

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

Persons in Attendance:

Jessica Howe, Rochester Civil Service Commission, stated that testing for a police officers' eligibility list has been completed. Officer Cameron Stone was the only officer to successfully pass all the required testing. The Civil Service Commission is recommending Council hire Officer Stone if or when a need arises for an additional full-time police officer.

Richard Lucas, Rochester Township, asked if there was any update regarding the fire department agreement and police regionalization. Mr. Brothers stated that a meeting has been scheduled for June 27th with Township representatives to discuss the fire department agreement. There was no update on the police regionalization.

Beth Welsh, 405 Connecticut Avenue, stated that she was aware of discussions regarding the flags/banners she has hanging on her property. Mrs. Welsh feels she has the right to hang these flags/banners under the freedom of speech of the First Amendment. Council agreed that she has the right to freedom of speech but felt there was a compelling interest to the community to ask that the flags/banners with the obscene word be taken down. After some discussion, Mrs. Welsh agreed to take down those flags/banners with the obscene word.

Action Items:

Mr. Brother motioned to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2022 regular Council meeting as presented. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

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

BILLS:

Gen. Fund – Ck# 11299–11356 – totaling \$121,851.92.

Payroll (5/27, 6/10) – Ck# 5289-5315 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$97,750.07.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the minutes of the May 12, 2022 Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meeting.

Council received for their review, the meeting notes of the May 18, 2022 Rochester Borough Development Corporation meeting.

Councilman Elmore asked that the following items be placed on the agenda for discussion:

- i. Hire a full-time police officer.
- ii. Declare an open Sargent's position to be filled and direct the Civil Service Commission to give a Sargent's exam.

After some discussion, Mr. Elmore motioned to hire Officer Cameron Stone as a full-time police officer effective July 1, 2022. Mrs. Hemer seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 7-0, all yes. There was discussion regarding adding a Sargent's position. Council tabled the matter at this time.

Council received for their review, a letter from Mrs. Gaffney asking Council to discuss any possible resolutions to address the removal of the obscene Biden signs on Connecticut Avenue. This item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

Council received for their review, the 2020 Liquid Fuels Examination Report.

Council received for their review, a letter and draft stormwater ordinance from Emily Palmer, the Sewer Authority's engineer. The PA DEP has changed some of the requirements for stormwater management program and these changes have been incorporated into the draft ordinance for Council's consideration. After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to authorize the Solicitor to advertise this ordinance for consideration at the July 18th regular meeting. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

Mr. Rader asked Mayor Jackson if he was asking Council to pay for expenses related to him taking his wife to the Mayors' Association Conference. Mayor Jackson stated that he was not asking the Borough to cover those expenses. Mrs. White stated that the B.C. Regional COG offers a scholarship program to assist with expenses related to attending conferences and training. She is currently applying for assistance for her attending the PSAB Conference and offered to help the Mayor submit one for his conference expenses.

Committee Reports:Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

Council received for their review, the Expense & Revenue report for the period January 1, 2022 through June 15, 2022.

Public Safety – Don Brothers, Chairperson

Council received for their review, a letter from the FOP Representative notifying the Borough that the Police Union is ready to commence collective bargaining for a new contract beginning January 1, 2023. After some discussion, Council agreed to hire outside counsel who specialized in labor law to represent them in the upcoming police negotiations.

Mr. Brothers noted that a meeting was scheduled for June 27th with representatives from Rochester Township to discuss the current fire services agreement.

Mr. Brothers asked for an update regarding regional/contract police services. Chief Mercier stated that police services are still under discussion.

Public Works – Jodi Hemer, Chairperson

Mrs. Hemer had nothing to report.

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

Mrs. Dietrich 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 noted a sink hole at the intersection of Pinney Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Rabik had nothing to report but did note that he would provide Council with a law firm who specializes in labor law.

Code Officer's Report:

Council received for their review, the May 2022 Code Officer's Reports.

Police Chief's Report:

Chief Mercier presented the May 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 May 2022 Fire Department report.

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

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

Old Business/New Business:

Mrs. White noted that the B.C. Regional COG meets the 4th Thursday of each month in the Borough's auditorium. She asked the Police Chief if he could have the entrance doors open for the meeting this Thursday.

Mr. Rader presented a letter of agreement from Marion Hill Associates affirming their request for an extension of their current lease utilizing a portion of the Borough's riverfront property. The extension would terminate September 30, 2022. The extension would hold them to the same conditions under the current lease agreement. After some discussion, Mrs. Dietrich motioned to approve the extension and authorize the President to sign the letter. Mr. Elmore seconded and the motion carried.

There was discussion regarding the intersection of Jackson Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. The north bound lane on Pennsylvania Avenue does not have a stop sign. Cars in the west bound lane of Jackson Street trying to cross or turn onto Pennsylvania Avenue are having difficulties because the line of sight to see on coming traffic is blocked by parked cars. The Police Chief will review this situation.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett
Borough Manager