Rochester Borough Council

Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building

December 21, 2020, 6:30 p.m.

Present: President Benjamin Rader, Vice-President Marjorie White, Ron Becker, Don Brothers, Brandy Dietrich, Marlin Robinson, Wes Hill, Donna Short (arrived 6:32pm), Mayor Keith Jackson, Solicitor Bernie Rabik, Police Chief Frank Mercier, Code Officer Peggy Griffith, Fire Chief Mike Mamone III, Manager John Barrett

Absent: None

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

Mr. Rader stated that Council would be going into an executive session at this time for a personnel matter and asked the audience to step out until the regular meeting is reconvened. Council went into an executive session at 6:32 p.m.

Mayor Jackson left the executive session at 6:33 p.m.

Council reconvened at 6:57 p.m.

Persons in Attendance:

There were no public comments.

Action Items:

Mr. Robinson motioned to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2020 regular 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# 10219–10294 – totaling $134,981.55.

Payroll (11/27, 12/11) – Ck# 4846-4868 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling $97,629.79.

Tentative 2021 Budget – The budget has been advertised for public inspection and is ready for Council’s consideration. After some discussion, Mr. Hill motioned to approve the budget as presented. Mr. Robinson seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 8-0, all voted yes.

Resolution 2020-03 – Fixing the property tax rate for the year 2021 at 29 mills for general purposes and 5.5 mills for debt service. After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to approve and adopt Resolution 2020-3 as presented. Mr. Hill seconded and the motion carried.

The Manager presented a proposed 2021 Council meeting schedule for regular monthly meetings and quarterly stormwater meetings for Council’s consideration. There was discussion regarding work sessions. Council decided they would advertise at a later date for those meetings if they were needed. Mr. Becker motioned to approve and advertise the proposed 2021 meeting schedule as presented. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

Reappointments: The following persons are currently serving on their respective boards and their terms are set to expire on December 31, 2020.

Ken Michalik Planning Commission 4-year term

Pauline Gaffney Zoning Hearing Board 3-year term

Jessica Howe Civil Service Commission 6-year term

Chuck Mignanelli Sewer & Maintenance Authority 5-year term

After some discussion, Mr. Robinson motioned to reappoint all the members for the term presented. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Council received a proposed Investment Policy Statement drafted by C.S. McKee along with other recommendations regarding investments for the police pension plan. There was discussion about setting up a committee to oversee and review these kinds of matters for the police pension plan. After further discussion, it was decided to move forward with the policy and recommendations but also establish a committee to review and make recommendations for changes if needed. Mrs. White motioned to approve the Investment Policy Statement and recommendations as presented. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 7-1 with Mr. Hill voting no.

Code Officer Griffith presented a fee schedule change for MDIA, the Borough’s third-party inspection agency for matters pertaining to the building code. They are raising their fees 15% across the board for all their inspections and reviews. There was discussion regarding the Borough’s fees and the overall cost to a person for building and zoning related projects. Code Officer Griffith stated that she would put together a fee comparison for the same project being proposed in Rochester and 2 or 3 other municipalities so Council could have a better understanding of how the Borough’s fees compare with other municipalities and determine if a review of the current fees is warranted. Mrs. White motioned to accept and approve the revised fee schedule submitted by MDIA. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the minutes of the November 12, 2020 Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meeting.

Committee Reports:

Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

The Expense & Revenue report covering January 1, 2020 through December 11, 2020 was presented for Council’s review.

Public Safety – Don Brothers, Chairperson

Mr. Brothers asked about the status of 313 Deer Lane. Code Officer Griffith explained the situation to Council. The Solicitor and Code Officer will continue to try and resolve this matter.

Public Works – , Chairperson

There was nothing to report.

Mr. Rader stated that there currently is no chairperson for this committee and asked Mr. Robinson and Mr. Hill if either of them would be interested in being the chairperson. Mr. Robinson stated that he would.

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

Mrs. Dietrich had nothing to report.

Mayor’s Report:

There was nothing to report in Mayor Jackson’s absence.

Solicitor’s Report:

Solicitor Rabik had nothing to report.

Code Officer’s Report:

Code Officer Griffith presented the November 2020 Code Officer’s report for Council’s review.

Police Chief’s Report:

Chief Mercier presented the November 2020 Police Department report and Code Officer’s report for Council’s review. Chief Mercier reviewed several items from the reports.

Fire Chief’s Report:

Chief Mamone presented the November 2020 Fire Department Report for Council’s review.

Chief Mamone discussed the need for the 3 Rochester’s to adopt the proposed ordinance regulating false fire alarms. He asked that the 3 Solicitors make this a priority because there are several nuisance properties in the Borough that need to begin paying for the fire services because they refuse to repair or upgrade their existing fire alarm systems and implement appropriate policies to modify their tenant’s behavior.

Manager’s/Treasurer’s Report:

Manager Barrett presented the November 2020 Treasurer’s report for Council’s review.

Old Business/New Business:

Mrs. White brought up for discussion, the possibility of having remote meetings due to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases. Manager Barrett stated that he did not have the technical expertise to set up a virtual Council meeting because of the requirement to make the meeting available to the public and also for them to be able to participate. After further discussion, it was decided, if needed, Council meetings could be held in the auditorium to accommodate better social distancing.

Mr. Hill brought up for discussion, the possibility of having regular meetings with the Rochester Township Commissioners and the East Rochester Council to allow for open discussion on how we can better help each other and our residents. Council was generally agreeable if meetings were set up.

Council went into executive session to discuss the negotiations with the 2 unions at 7:59 p.m.

Council reconvened at 8:23 p.m. and the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett

Borough Manager