

Rochester Borough Council
Regular Meeting in Council Chambers
September 16, 2019, 6:30 p.m.

Present: President Benjamin Rader, Vice-President Brandy Dietrich, Howard Howe, Marjorie White, Don Brothers, Ron Becker, Martin Knafelc, Mayor Keith Jackson, Solicitor Bernie Rabik, Police Chief Frank Mercier, Code Officer Peggy Griffith, Manager John Barrett

Absent: Donna Short

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

Persons in Attendance:

Doug Lockard, Ed Hancock, Jennifer Sheesley, representatives for Enterprise Bank, owner of 262-264 Connecticut Avenue, are requesting several variances from the requirements of the stormwater management ordinance. The representatives reviewed the project. They are intending to expand the existing parking lot utilizing 2 adjacent properties that Enterprise Bank also owns. They showed that the improvement would meet most of the stormwater requirements and improve stormwater management in the areas where they can't meet the requirements. Given the elevation of the stormwater collection facility on Adams Street and the lack of a stormwater collection facility on Brighton Avenue it was not feasible to meet all the requirements. The apartment building on the property has been there for many years but did not meet all the zoning requirements. The additional parking is needed to more closely comply with the zoning regulations. Code Officer Griffith stated that the Borough's Planning Commission held a meeting to review the project and are recommending to Council that the variances be granted. After some discussion, Mr. Howe motioned to approve the requested variances contingent upon the Borough Engineer's review and to be recorded on the property deed, a covenant on the land which requires the property owner to make the necessary improvements to comply with the stormwater ordinance if there are upgrades to the stormwater system on Brighton Avenue at some point in the future. Mr. Knafelc seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call – 7-0, all members voted yes.

William Starkley stated that he was interested in purchasing 411 Jackson Street from the Beaver County Repository. Solicitor Rabik explained the process and stated that Council would act on his request when they receive the required information.

Sandie Egley, Beaver County Commissioner, stated that she was at the meeting to make herself available for any questions or concerns the Council may have with any of the County services or operations.

Rico Elmer stated that there was a meeting set for September 23rd at the Beaver County Community College to help individuals understand and work through the process of expunging

certain criminal records they may have. The program is intended to help individuals clear their record to provide them with a better opportunity for gaining employment and securing credit.

Action Items:

Mr. Knafelc motioned to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2019 stormwater and regular Council meetings 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# 9219–9286 – totaling \$70,548.34.

Payroll (8/23, 9/6) – Ck# 4461-4484 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$83,085.85.

Manager Barrett presented the 2020 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for the Non-Uniform pension plan totaling \$11,482. After some discussion, Mr. Howe motioned to approve the MMO as presented. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Manager Barrett presented the 2020 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for the Police pension plan totaling \$201,212. After some discussion, Mr. Howe motioned to approve the MMO as presented. Mrs. Dietrich seconded and the motion carried.

Manager Barrett presented a quote of \$890 from Arndt Roofing to repair and repaint the metal areas on the Library roof. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to accept and approve the quote as presented. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the minutes of the August 22, 2019 Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meeting and a letter from the Authority indemnifying Rochester Borough from and against all claims for liability of any nature arising out of the temporary storage of regulated fill on the Borough's property.

Council received for their review, the meeting notes of the August 12, 2019 Rochester Borough Development Corporation meeting.

Council received for their review, the August 2019 Fire Department report.

Council received for their review, a letter from Mrs. Priest regarding the condition of 515 Oregon Avenue and the adjacent alley. It was noted that Chief Mercier and Manager Barrett met with Mrs. Priest on September 10th to discuss the issues.

Committee Reports:Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

The Expense & Revenue report covering January 1, 2019 through September 9, 2019 was presented for Council's review.

Public Safety – Martin Knafelc, Chairperson

Mr. Knafelc had nothing to report.

Public Works – Howard Howe, Chairperson

Mr. Howe had nothing to report.

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

Mrs. Dietrich had nothing to report.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jackson asked if anyone knew who owned the property at the corner of New York Avenue and Clay Street. Mrs. White stated that the church next door owned the property.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Rabik stated that he had received a letter from Attorney Torrence, representing Calico Inc. Calico Inc. owns a number of parcels along the Ohio River in Rochester and given the recent event that took place at the adjacent property, Calico Inc. is requesting that Council reconsider their position regarding the proposed zoning amendment they previously requested. After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to reject Calico Inc. request to reconsider their proposed zoning amendment. Mr. Howe seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call – 7-0, all members voted yes.

Code Officer's Report:

Code Officer Griffith presented the August 2019 Code Report for Council's review. She noted that she has been reviewing the buildings on Brighton Avenue to identify any code violations.

Police Chief's Report:

Chief Mercier presented the August 2019 Police Department report and code report for Council's review. Chief Mercier reviewed several items from the report.

Chief Mercier noted that the round-a-bout would be closing this week from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. each night for milling and resurfacing work by PennDOT.

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

Manager Barrett presented the August 2019 Treasurer's report for Council's review.

Manager Barrett discuss the need for additional funding for the police pension fund. Each year the Borough's minimum municipal obligation goes up. Manager Barrett noted the level of funds available, the annual obligations and the future obligations all contribute to the funds inability to grow thus causing the Borough to increase their annual contribution. Four police officers will be eligible to retire in the next 4 to 5 years which will cause a greater need for additional funding. Manager Barrett stated that the law permits Municipalities to consider a special tax to fund pension plans either through property tax or earned income tax. Given that the Borough's accumulative property tax (Borough, School, County) is one of the highest in Beaver County, he would like Council to consider increasing the earned income tax by ½ %. These additional tax dollars must go towards a qualified pension plan which meets certain criteria. The Borough must continue making the minimum municipal obligation contributions in conjunction with this additional funding. After some discussion, the Manager will set up a meeting for Council with the Borough's pension consultant, actuary and investment firm to discuss the financial position of the plan and any need for additional funding.

Old Business/New Business:

Mrs. White noted an upcoming public engagement event on September 18th regarding the Route 65 Corridor project.

Council went into executive session at 7:53 p.m. to discuss the hiring of a public works employee, negotiations with the police bargaining unit, and the purchase of real estate.

Council reconvened at 8:20 p.m.

Mr. Howe motioned to hire Michael Lucci effective his earliest availability to fill the vacancy in the Public Works Department. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett
Borough Manager