

Rochester Borough Council
 Regular Meeting in Council Chambers
 March 18, 2019, 6:30 p.m.

Present: Howard Howe, Ron Becker, Marjorie White, Don Brothers, Donna Short, Mayor Keith Jackson, Solicitor Bernie Rabik, Police Chief Frank Mercier, Code Officer Peggy Griffith, Manager John Barrett

Absent: President Benjamin Rader, Vice-President Brandy Dietrich, Martin Knafelc

The regular meeting was called to order with the invocation, pledge of allegiance and roll call. Mrs. White volunteered to run the meeting in the absence of the President and Vice-President.

Persons in Attendance:

Dr. Suzanne Vogel-Scibilia, Brighton First, Inc., discussed creating a Rochester Community Children's Garden and 2 other green space projects. Brighton First would like to convert tax parcel 490020830, an empty lot owned by the Borough, into a Community Children's Garden; convert tax parcel 490020913, an empty lot owned by the Borough, into a parklet with a pavilion, benches and possibly a small basketball court; and add some plantings to the small parklet the Borough owns at tax parcel 490020900. Brighton First would fund all the projects. They are asking Council to consider permitting these projects and possibly providing a yard hydrant at the Community Children's Garden site. Mrs. White thanked the group for their interest in the community and that Council would discuss their proposal later in the meeting and the Manager would contact them regarding their decision.

Rich Liller, Saxon Club, stated that he feels the Borough's building permit fees are high and thinks Council should consider lowering them. Frank Blaskowitz, Saxon Club also raised concerns about the fees for mechanical devices.

Nick Klutka, Roots, also felt the fee for mechanical devices was high.

Action Items:

Mr. Becker motioned to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2019 stormwater meeting and regular Council meeting as presented. Mr. Howe 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# 8828–8883 – totaling \$83,027.76.

Payroll (2/22, 3/8) – Ck# 4306-4327 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$82,699.27.

The Tax Collector is requesting a property tax refund for Habitat for Humanity of Beaver County in the amount of \$417.54. This is due to a change of assessment at 488 Connecticut Avenue. After some discussion, Mr. Howe motioned to approve the refund. Mrs. Short seconded and the motion carried.

The Manager is requesting Council exonerate Rochester Borough from the 2019 property tax owed on 235 Brighton Avenue, tax parcel number 49-002-0500. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to exonerate Rochester Borough from these taxes. Mr. Howe seconded and the motion carried.

The Manager presented a proposal from Zajacs Lawn and Landscaping for grass cutting in 2019 for Council's consideration. After some discussion, Mr. Howe motioned to accept and approve the proposal as presented. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

The Manager presented the Engineer's bid tabulation for the bids received for the Public Works Garage Project. After some discussion, Mr. Howe motioned to reject all bids due to the high cost. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried.

Council received a flier from the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce. They are offering advertising opportunities to purchase a banner and a placemat ad. The banner and placemats will be used at their chili cook-off, golf outing, steak fry and awards dinner. After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to approve the \$100 placemat ad for the Borough. Mr. Howe seconded and the motion carried.

Council received a letter from the Rochester Area Baseball Softball organization seeking sponsors and donors in support of their group and its efforts. After some discussion, Solicitor Rabik offered to split the \$300 cost for a team sponsor with Council. Mr. Becker motioned to approve the shared sponsorship for the \$300. Mr. Howe seconded and the motion carried.

2019 Paving Program – the Manager presented a map highlighting the proposed alleys to consider and also West Madison Street from Connecticut Avenue to Rhode Island Avenue. An estimated cost for the proposed work has not been completed. The Manager was requesting Council allocate \$150,000 to the paving program. The Engineer can determine the amount of work that could be completed with this allocation and advertise for bids accordingly. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to approve the \$150,000 for the 2019 Paving Program and authorize the advertisement for bids. Mr. Howe seconded and the motion carried.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the minutes of the February 14, 2019 Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meeting.

Council received for their review, the minutes of the February 12, 2019 Rochester Borough Sewer & Maintenance Authority meeting.

Council received for their review, the meeting notes of the February 26, 2019 Rochester Borough Development Corporation meeting.

Council received for their review, the minutes of the February 22, 2018 Beaver County Tax Collection Committee meeting. Also included is the agenda for their February 28, 2019 meeting. Manager Barrett stated that the Committee's funds have dropped to a level which require additional funding to pay the Committee's expenses. The Committee is assessing the

members for a total of \$10,000. Funding is provided by all the Beaver County Municipalities and School Districts on a weighted share based on population. Rochester's assessment will be \$81.32.

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

Committee Reports:

Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

Mr. Becker presented the Expense & Revenue report covering January 1, 2019 through March 11, 2019 for Council's review.

Public Safety – Martin Knafelc, Chairperson

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

Public Works – Howard Howe, Chairperson

Mr. Howe had nothing to report.

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

Manager Barrett stated that bids for the Parks Project have been received. Part 1 of the project was bid through the Community Development Program which covered the War Memorial Park. They received 2 bids for the general contract and 1 bid for the electrical contract. The low bid for the general contract was \$251,000. The lone bid for the electrical contract was not opened for competitive bidding purposes. The estimate for this park was approximately \$190,000. Part 2 of the project was bid by the Borough which covered the History Park and Fountain Park. One bid was received for the general contract and one for the electrical contract. The contractors permitted the Architect to review the bids for planning purposes. The Executive Committee of the Parks Project met and will now ask the Community Development Program to rebid their project and include the History Park. The Fountain Park will be removed from the project until additional funding can be secured.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jackson noted that he saw a pile of scrap metal on the Croniment property at the bottom of the New York Avenue ramp. Code Officer Griffith will review the matter.

Mayor Jackson questioned whether the Adelphio Program could be utilized to provide assistance to residents who need help maintaining their property and maintaining the vacant properties as well. Chief Mercier will contact the Adelphio Program and discuss this with their Director.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Rabik had nothing to report.

Code Officer's Report:

The February 2019 code report was presented for Council's review. Code Officer Griffith noted that she was citing a business on Brighton Avenue for outdoor storage and excessive accumulation. She also noted that she is working with the owner of the building at the corner of West Madison Street and Bedford Avenue to abate several code violations.

Police Chief's Report:

Chief Mercier distributed the February 2019 Police Department report and the Code Enforcement report for Council's review.

Chief Mercier stated that he has received a letter of resignation from part-time Police Officer Michael Biskup. He was hired full-time in Monaca. Mr. Becker motioned to accept Officer Biskup's resignation. Mr. Howe seconded and the motion carried. The Chief also discussed the growing problem all Police Departments are encountering regarding the hiring and retention of part-time police officers. The number of available officers is falling and many of the Departments are being forced to hire full-time officers to maintain a roster adequate to cover all the shifts in their schedule. Everyone was in agreement another full-time officer was needed but funding would be a challenge to secure. Council will continue to monitor the situation.

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

Manager Barrett presented the February 2019 Treasurer's report for Council's review. Manager Barrett provided a Certification of Compliance form from the Community Development Program which needs to be completed and returned to the Manager. The forms are required when submitting a Community Development Block Grant Application. This is for the application approved at the February meeting for new handicap curb ramps.

Old Business/New Business:

Mrs. White brought up for discussion the earlier request from Brighton First for several community projects they were proposing. After some discussion, Mrs. Short motioned to approve their proposal for the parklet at the intersection of Brighton Avenue and Pleasant Street and for them to use the closed portion of Kossuth Street for a Community Children's Garden if this area is suitable for their needs. Mr. Howe seconded and the motion carried. Council was cautious to consider their request to use 2 vacant lots along Pleasant Street and Hinds Street at this time.

Mrs. White noted that the Route 65 Corridor Committee would like to hold a community outreach meeting in the auditorium sometime in the near future. Everyone was in agreement to use the auditorium. The Manager asked that any dates be cleared prior to them being set to insure no conflicts in scheduling would arise. Mrs. White will work with the Manager on that.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett

Borough Manager