

Rochester Borough Council
Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building
June 15, 2020, 6:30 p.m.

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

Absent: Donna Short, Don Brothers, Howard Howe

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

Persons in Attendance:

Derrick Ross wanted to inform Council that he had filed a complaint with the Manager regarding a Borough Employee using his cell phone while driving a piece of heavy equipment. This was on June 3rd. He also stated that he had an altercation with this employee to the extent the police needed to be called to the scene. He further stated that he had received a citation in the mail for disorderly conduct and felt this was unwarranted. He pled not guilty and sent the citation back to the Magistrate's office. Chief Mercier explained what happened once the police arrived. After some discussion, Mr. Ross was advised to ask for a hearing and explain his position to the Magistrate. The Magistrate would then rule on the case based on all the information he receives.

James Law and Eugenia Priest addressed Council regarding the condition of 2 properties on Oregon Avenue which have been an ongoing problem for some time. Code Officer Griffith, Chief Mercier and Solicitor Rabik explained what the Borough has done to date. The Borough is dealing with these properties to the extent the law allows. The Borough will continue to pursue a resolution regarding the condition of these abandoned properties. Manager Barrett stated that he has approached a contractor to clear the overgrown vegetation from 515 Oregon Avenue but has not yet received a response. He will look for another contractor if this one is unable to do the job.

Tre'Shawnda Law informed Council that she had submitted 2 requests for consent to purchase 411 Jackson Street and 323 Lloyd Street from the Beaver County Repository. Mr. Rader noted that these requests were on the agenda for Council's consideration and would discuss them at that time. Ms. Law also noted that vegetation is overgrown in the alley behind her house. There was some discussion that this area may be in East Rochester. Chief Mercier will review the matter.

Mr. Ross wanted to add a concern regarding the Saxon Club on Pinney Street. On street parking is difficult to find when the Club is open, mainly Friday through Sunday evenings. The members are noisy well into the evening when people are trying to go to sleep. They also leave beer cans and bottle laying around outside. He would like to see permit parking established so the residents would be able to have parking available for their needs. Chief Mercier stated that the Police Department is aware of and have responded to several disorderly conduct calls at the Saxon Club. He will address this with the Club. Council took no action regarding permit parking.

Action Items:

Mr. Becker motioned to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2020 regular meeting as presented. Mrs. Dietrich seconded and the motion carried.

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

BILLS:

Gen. Fund – Ck# 9856–9912 – totaling \$68,465.01.

Payroll (5/29, 6/12) – Ck# 4695-4723 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling \$91,953.11.

Tre’Shawnda Law is requesting Council’s consent to purchase 411 Jackson Street and 323 Lloyd Street from the Beaver County Repository. Past due garbage fees are: \$1,581.10 on 411 Jackson Street and \$2,326.28 on 323 Lloyd Street. After some discussion, Mrs. White motioned to approve consent for both properties. Mrs. Dietrich seconded and the motion carried.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the minutes of the May 14, 2020 Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meeting.

Council received for their review, the meeting notes of the May 12, 2020 Rochester Borough Development Corporation meeting.

Council received for their review, the May 2020 Fire Department report.

Council received for their review, the Sewer & Maintenance Authority’s 2019 Audit Report.

Council received for their review, a draft lease agreement from the Sewer & Maintenance Authority to lease the old Public Works garage. After some discussion, Council would consider this at the July regular meeting.

Council received for their review, a draft ordinance amending the Registration and Licensing of Residential Rental Property ordinance adding that garbage fees and liability insurance be current with no past due balance. After some discussion, Mr. Becker motioned to authorize the Solicitor to advertise the ordinance for adoption at the July regular meeting. Mrs. White seconded and the motion carried.

Council received for their review, a letter from Lincoln Learning Solutions, Inc. informing Council that they would be permanently closing their facility in Rochester Borough effective June 30, 2020.

Committee Reports:

Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

The Expense & Revenue report covering January 1, 2020 through June 10, 2020 was presented for Council's review.

Heart & Soul Program – the Team is holding an in-person meeting on June 22nd at 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium. Jeff Siegler, the coach assigned to Rochester will discuss the Heart & Soul Program and the process the Team will undertake to implement the Heart & Soul Program. Council members are asked to make every effort to attend this meeting.

Public Safety – Don Brothers, Chairperson

Mrs. Dietrich stated that residents on Deer Lane from Harmony Avenue to Oregon Avenue have talked to her about making this block a one-way street heading east. Since the road was paved, they have seen an increase in speeders. The residents are concerned for the safety of their children and others as well as their vehicles parked on the street. After some discussion, Mrs. Dietrich was advised to have all the residents on that block sign a petition requesting Council to consider making this block a one-way street.

Public Works – Howard Howe, Chairperson

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

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

Mrs. Dietrich had nothing to report.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Jackson stated that he was not happy with what has been going on. The Mayor stated that he has given Council papers from the State legislature and that you guys would be getting a letter soon. He stated that he wants the minutes, who requested and who was involved with the emergency declaration and why he was not notified. Mr. Rader stated that he tried to call the Mayor twice but no one answered. Mr. Rader stated that there were no minutes. Mayor Jackson stated that he wanted something in writing as to why there are no minutes. Mr. Rader began to explain what happened and to discuss the issues the Mayor raised. The Mayor stopped him to move on and told Mr. Rader to make an appointment with him if he had anything to say and would not discuss this in public.

Solicitor's Report:

Solicitor Rabik asked for an executive session to discuss the Police union's contract and the status of a Sewer Authority employee.

Code Officer's Report:

Code Officer Griffith presented the May 2020 Code Officer's Report for Council's review. Mrs. Griffith noted that there was a new business at 161 Brighton Avenue, Gringo's 2020.

Council was informed that there is a Zoning Hearing scheduled for June 22nd to hear Majors Project, Inc.'s variance request for the installation of two business signs at 218 W. Washington Street that do not meet the current zoning requirements.

Mrs. White asked about the status of the building that was damaged at the corner of Brighton Avenue and Connecticut Avenue. Code Officer Griffith stated that she has been working with the owner to get this building secured and repaired. Now that the Governor has move Beaver County into the green phase the owner will be able to secure a contractor to begin the work.

Police Chief's Report:

Chief Mercier presented the May 2020 Police Department report and code enforcement report for Council's review. Chief Mercier reviewed several items from the reports.

Manager's/Treasurer's Report:

Manager Barrett presented the May 2020 Treasurer's report for Council's review.

Old Business/New Business:

Grant Farmer, member of the Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority wanted to thank the Solicitor and Manager for their cooperative efforts in working with the Authority to keep their 50-million-dollar treatment plant upgrade project moving forward addressing several unforeseen changes.

Council went into executive session at 8:19 p.m. Mayor Jackson did not stay for the executive session.

Council reconvened at 8:47 p.m.

Mr. Becker motioned to tentatively approve the conditions of the proposed police contract as discussed. Mrs. Dietrich seconded and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned 8:48 p.m.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett
Borough Manager