

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Council Chambers, City Hall
September 12, 2022

Members Present: Douglas Baker, Mayor
Donna Fletcher, Deputy Mayor
James Johnson
Christian Marshall
Samuel Lyons
Todd Zahner
Ryan Rudegear

Members Excused: None

In Attendance: Tracy Jamieson, City Manager
James Wetzel, Fire Chief
Harmony Motter, Finance Director
T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary
Greg Merkel, Dale, Woodard Gent McFate Law Firm
Helen Fielding, The Derrick
Bev Hart, 1333 Elk Street
Tricia Clark and Scott Peterson, 1137 Liberty Street
Michael Pechron, 1402 Liberty Street
Tom Eshelman, Kiwanis Club of Franklin
Joanne Scrip, Daughters of the American Revolution
Virginia Haylett, Daughters of the American Revolution
Bridget Tomaszewski, 956 Liberty Street
Daniel Weiland, 1 Park Way
Hannah Gamble, 1236 Liberty Street
Ron Myers, 1256 Liberty Street
Cindy Guth, 1256 Liberty Street
Danielle Benson, 1256 Liberty Street
Louis Slautterback, 1510 Buffalo Street
Dr. Tom Wilks, Franklin Kiwanis Club
Matthew Beith, 324 16th Street
Ashley and Jake Smith, 1346 Elk Street

Mayor Baker called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA – Resolution No. 116

Mrs. Fletcher moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Rudegear. The motion passed unanimously.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Resolution No. 117

Mr. Johnson motioned and Mrs. Fletcher seconded the motion to approve the FY-2022 CDBG Preliminary Public Hearing minutes of August 1, 2022. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Marshall motioned and Mr. Lyons seconded the motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 1, 2022. The motion passed unanimously.

PAY THE BILLS – Resolution No. 118

Mr. Marshall moved to pay the bills as presented. Mr. Rudegear seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CITIZENS’ INQUIRIES – None

DISCUSSION OF PIONEER CEMETERY – FRANKLIN KIWANIS – Resolution No. 119

Tom Eshelman, Lou Slutterback and Dr. Tom Wilks of the Franklin Kiwanis Club, and Joanne Scrip and Virginia Haylett of the Venango County Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) were present at the meeting to discuss the current status of the Pioneer Cemetery. Mr. Eshelman explained that members of the Kiwanis Club have mowed the cemetery for the past several years and most recently have taken on the task of restoring old headstones. He reported that, in 1953, the City appointed the DAR as custodians of the cemetery. Since then, the Kiwanis and the DAR have partnered together to maintain the cemetery and have noticed three dead and dying trees. The Kiwanis decided to be proactive and requested estimates to remove the trees. The lowest came from Paul Bunyan Tree Service in the amount of \$1,875. After they had received the estimate for the three trees, they discovered two more that need to be removed. Mr. Eshelman met with Jeff Reed of the Street Department, who indicated that his crew could remove the two additional trees. Mr. Eshelman requested Council’s permission to remove the three large trees and any financial assistance that could be offered by the City.

Mr. Rudegear motioned to approve the removal of three trees by Paul Bunyan Tree Specialists and financial assistance in the amount of \$1,875. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS – Resolution No. 120

The following five requests came before HARB at its August 23, 2022 meeting:

1. 818 Liberty Street – Exterior painting, and paint and replace floor boards on front porch
2. 956 Liberty Street – Newly constructed garage with exterior lighting
3. 1137 Liberty Street – Replace awning
4. 1236 Liberty Street –Sign
5. 1256 Liberty Street – Paint bottom half of building, paint existing awnings, replace door, sign, exterior lighting
6. 1402 Liberty Street - Sign

Mr. Rudegeair motioned and Mr. Marshall seconded to approve all requests. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Matt Beith, newly appointed chairperson for the Historic and Architectural Review Board, addressed Council with the Board’s concerns regarding its current guidelines, in that they are outdated in comparison with the available technology, such as LED and EMC signage. He explained HARB’s mission to maintain the integrity of the City’s historic district while being cognizant of modern technologies and new ideas, and the importance of having updated guidelines in order for the Board to give residents and business owners fair and consistent recommendations for their proposed exterior building modifications.

Mayor Baker assured Mr. Beith, and other Board members present, of Council’s appreciation for HARB’s interest in maintaining the City’s historic district.

NATIONAL FUEL GAS ROW – 10TH ST. AREA TO FRENCH CREEK – Resolution No. 121

Mrs. Jamieson informed that National Fuel Gas is requesting a right-of-way from the intersection of 10th and Elk Streets, down the 10th Street extension to French Creek, where they will then need to dig a bore pit to go under French Creek and resurface on the other side of the creek. National Fuel Gas has promised to repair any ground disturbance that may be created. Mrs. Jamieson further explained that this work is part of a larger project that NFG hopes to conduct along Liberty Street, from 9th to 11th Streets, and on 10th Street from Liberty to the creek, which involves boring in areas that are already within NFG’s rights-of-way.

Mrs. Fletcher wanted confirmation that NFG will restore the dig sites to their existing condition, to which Mrs. Jamieson affirmed that a written agreement is in place.

Mr. Rudegeair motioned to grant the right-of-way request to National Fuel Gas. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

12TH & LIBERTY INTERSECTION SAFETY PROJECT UPDATE

Mrs. Jamieson reminded Council that the 12th & Liberty Street Intersection Project is the result of a traffic study undertaken a couple years ago, where different options were presented to City Council that would result in a higher degree of safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists at this intersection. This also led to a \$1 million grant being awarded to the City to carry out the project. Mrs. Jamieson reported that PennDOT has recently agreed to absorb the 12th and Liberty intersection project with their Betterment Project and cover the associated engineering costs, which will save the City approximately \$150,000 in engineering expenses.

In exchange, PennDOT is requesting the following from the City:

- a. To be project partners when a public meeting his held, as required by the funding source

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- b. To help search for other grant funds since more money will be needed to complete the project
- c. To assist with the one-way ordinance for 12th Street to accommodate the chosen intersection design and to offset parking losses by creating angled parking on 12th Street
- d. To assist with adjusting the traffic signal timing to assure that the best balance of traffic and pedestrian/bicyclists' needs are met.

Since 12th Street, between Buffalo and Liberty, would become a one-way street, Mrs. Jamieson said that she prepared a survey to send out to residents and businesses that commonly use 12th Street, to determine if they would prefer one way from Liberty to Buffalo or Buffalo to Liberty.

Mr. Rudegeair shared opinions he had received from business owners that receive deliveries on Buffalo Street, stating that they would prefer 12th Street to be one way from Liberty to Buffalo. Mr. Marshall shared concerns regarding loss of parking spaces. Mrs. Jamieson this will all be considered during the project's design phase.

SELECTION OF FY-2022 CDBG PROJECTS – Resolution No. 122

Mrs. Power recapped the City's FY-2022 CDBG fund allocation, stating that of the total \$306,969 to be received, \$55,254 (or 18%) of that will be used for administrative costs and the remaining \$251,715 will be used for project costs.

Mrs. Power explained that, after discussion with City staff, the project funds are recommended to be distributed as follows:

- \$126,065 for the milling and paving of 12th Street, from Elk to Chestnut, which would be done in coordination with the 12th & Liberty St. Intersection Project to result in a better finished project.
- \$125,650 for the replacement of light poles and luminaries on 13th Street, between Liberty and Elk. The project will involve replacing five (5) deteriorated street lights, and fitting them with new LED ballasts and bulbs, which will be more energy efficient.

Mrs. Power reminded everyone that the second and final FY-2022 CDBG public hearing will be held prior to the next Council meeting on October 3, 2022, followed by a special meeting later in the month for Council to consider approval of the FY-2022 CDBG application, which is due on October 28, 2022.

Mr. Rudegeair motioned to approve the above-described projects as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

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FAIR HOUSING RESOLUTION ADOPTION – Resolution No. 123

Mrs. Power presented the annual Fair Housing Resolution for Council’s approval. Mr. Johnson motioned to adopt the Fair Housing Resolution, seconded by Mr. Lyons. Motion passed unanimously.

DESIGNATION OF SECTION 504 OFFICER – Resolution No. 124

Mr. Rudegear moved and Mrs. Fletcher seconded a motion to re-designate City Manager, Tracy Jamieson, as the Section 504 Officer. Motion passed unanimously.

SET 2023 BUDGET WORKSHOP – Resolution No. 125

Mr. Rudegear motioned to set the 2023 budget workshop for Monday, October 17, 2022, immediately following the FY-2022 CDBG Special Meeting at 4 PM. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2023 MINIMUM MUNICIPAL OBLIGATION

Mrs. Jamieson presented the 2023 Minimum Municipal Obligation figures for the Police (\$206,729), Fire (\$106,147), and Non-uniform (\$123,475) pension accounts.

ESTABLISH TRICK OR TREAT DATE AND TIME – Resolution No. 126

Mr. Lyons motioned to set October 31, 2022, between 6 P.M. and 8 P.M. as the City-wide Trick or Treat date and time. Mr. Rudegear seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

PARK AND PARADE ASSEMBLY REQUESTS – Resolution No. 127

Mrs. Jamieson introduced the following requests and informed that the first request, scheduled prior to this meeting, had been canceled due to inclement weather:

1. September 11, 2022 • Bandstand Park • Worship in the Park/September 11th Memorial Service • Christ United Methodist Church
2. September 28, 2022 • South Park Street to Central Elementary • Homecoming Parade • Franklin Jr./Sr. High School
3. October 11, 2022 • Fountain Park • Pink Splash for the Cure • Cheryl Carson
4. October 22, 2022 • Bandstand and Fountain Parks • 2nd Annual Tyler Carey Ruck and Ride • Shane Carey and Angel Carey

Mr. Johnson motioned to approve all requests. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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REPORTS

Manager –

- **Downtown Pedestrian Safety Project** – The remaining drilling of the pole foundations is scheduled to be completed by the end of the week, and the contractor will finish placing stamped concrete in all where possible. The contractor is expected to have everything buttoned up including filling the ten (10) open pit areas (that can't be concreted yet) with aggregate to reduce the chances someone could get hurt over Applefest. These will all be completed once the new decorative poles are delivered later this Fall.
- **General Authority's Waterline Replacement Project** – Thanked the General Authority for the extra paving on Chestnut Street, which completed the Waterline Replacement Project at the end of August.
- **Local Federal Aid Routes Program** – Noted that a grant application for \$324,283 to mill and pave five (5) street segments in Oak Hill and three (3) in Franklin Heights had been submitted to NW Planning Commission. Shared a map with Council to remind them of the proposed paving schedule for the next two years.
- **3rd Street Marina** – Received several complaints about the excessive sediment around the boat launch that needs to be removed. Doing so requires obtaining permission through several government agencies, from whom Chief Wetzel is still waiting for a response. A contractor has been selected to do the work and will cost about \$4,000, once final approval is given.
- **Fire Study** – DCED has recently engaged a consultant to begin the study involving the Franklin Fire Department, the Oil City Fire Department and the Borough of Sugar Creek's two volunteer fire departments.
- **City Survey** – Surveys to receive public feedback on recreational needs have been made available on the City's website, or can be picked up at City Hall, and will be mailed with the current water, sewer and garbage bills. Surveys returned by October 14, 2022 will be taken into consideration for the 2023 budget.
- **Washington Crossing Pedestrian Safety Committee** – Will give Council an hour-long presentation, either before or during the October 3 Council meeting.
 - **Resolution No. 128** – Mr. Rudegeair motioned and Mr. Lyons seconded to hold the presentation at 6 P.M. prior to the City Council meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

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- **Howard Street Milling and Paving** – FICDA approved a ten (10) year payback arrangement to mill and pave the City's portion of Howard Street. Hope to have the project ready to bid out early next spring, at which time we should have a better understanding of what the yearly cost to the City will be.
- **Blight Prevention Grant** – Working with DCED to revise the scope of work since some houses that were scheduled to be demolished were purchased out of the repository. Hope to have demolitions out for bid next month.
- Mrs. Power mentioned that we have received a \$5,000 grant from the McElhatten Foundation for handicapped accessible picnic tables in Bandstand Park.
- **DCNR** – Informed Council that a special round of funding that is left over from American Rescue funds for updating existing recreational areas is available. Since an assessment of some of the City's facilities has already been completed, staff is considering applying for funds to upgrade the restrooms at the bandstand to make them ADA accessible. Applications are due October 27th.
- **Police Officers** – Conditional offers of employment were made to two (2) prospective police officers; we are just waiting for final test results.

Solicitor – None

Mayor Appointments – None

COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Baker – Met with police chief and school district to discuss traffic safety concerns. Will invite fire chief and city manager for the next meeting for further discussion before any action is taken.

Mrs. Fletcher –

- Residents are glad that the JM property on Grant Street is getting cleaned up.
- Asked when we may have a new parking meter enforcer. She was informed that the City is awaiting applications for the position.

Mr. Johnson – Residents at 1212 Chestnut are having issues traversing the sidewalk in front of the building because it is in such bad shape. Mrs. Jamieson recommended they reach out to Mrs. Power for funds that are available through the McElhatten Foundation for sidewalk repairs.

Mr. Marshall – Happy for Homegrown Kitchen's success and need for expansion.

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Mr. Lyons – Concerned about property on Eagle Street. Neighbor is maintaining grass despite health issues and physical limitations.

Mr. Rudegeair – None

Mr. Zahner – None

Resolution No. 129 – Ms. Benson of Homegrown Kitchen requested permission to hang string lighting in the alley between her business location and Feldman Jewelers, assuring that she has already received permission from Mr. and Mrs. Volmrich to do so.

Mr. Lyons motioned and Mr. Marshall seconded to grant permission for Ms. Benson's request. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Resolution No. 130

Mr. Rudegeair motioned to enter into executive session at 8:02 P.M. for the purposes of property negotiations. Mr. Johnson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.


OTHER BUSINESS – Resolution No. 131

Motion was made by Mrs. Fletcher and seconded by Mr. Marshall to purchase 1203 Sassafras Street from the County Repository to add to the City's demolition list. Motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary