

CITY COUNCIL  
225 Market St.  
Sunbury PA 17801  
December 10, 2007  
7:00 pm

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Council of the City of Sunbury was called to order with the Honorable Jesse C. Woodring, Mayor, presiding. There was a quorum with the following in attendance:

Jesse C. Woodring, Mayor  
John K. Shipman, Director of Accounts and Finances  
James R. Eister, Director of Parks/Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

John Bakowicz, City Engineer  
Tim Bremigen, Police Chief  
Ken Long, Assistant Public Works Supervisor  
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were four (4) visitors present.

### **MINUTES AND REPORTS**

Minutes of September 24, October 8 and October 22, 2007 and Reports of the Police Dept., City Treasurer, City Controller, City Engineer, Code Office, Redevelopment Authority, Health Dept., Public Works Dept., Parks and Public Buildings, Park and Recreation Board, Planning Commission and Fire Dept. were accepted on a motion by Mayor Woodring and seconded by Councilman Eister. The vote was unanimous.

Police report – Chief Bremigen reported that the prior weekend was a busy one for the police dept. They have been running speed detail.

### **MONTHLY LEGAL SEMINAR**

Mr. Apfelbaum announced that today's topic is Advertising and Bidding Requirements. He stated that all advertising and bidding requirements are so the public is aware of what is happening at the meetings. Advertising is required to 1. pass an ordinance with penalty provisions 2. zoning changes (or building maintenance ordinances) 3. public meetings (must be advertised once annually). Public bidding is required when 1. federal money is being used to fund a project 2. contracts are issued such as sale of property, equipment, etc. All of this is to make sure the public is aware of what is going on in local government. Mayor Woodring asked when ordinance advertising is completed. Mr. Apfelbaum stated that zoning issues must be advertised 10 days in advance of the meeting. All other advertising for ordinances is 7 days before the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

## **2008 BUDGET**

Councilman Shipman explained that the 2008 Budget has been approved as a balanced budget on a first reading. It does include a 2.85 mill increase in general millage as well as a 1 mill increase in debt reduction. The 2<sup>nd</sup> reading will occur at the December 24<sup>th</sup> work session at 11:00 am in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room. Councilman Shipman said there are several issues that affect the increase in taxes: 1. Declining revenue – local services tax (the state mandated that the exemption income is \$12,000. instead of \$5,000.) Also, the earned income tax is eroding as middle income people move out of Sunbury and lower income people move in. 2. Increasing costs – the City has always handled code inspections, etc. in-house, however, the state passed regulations stating that all inspectors must be certified – at this time, no one in the code office is a certified officer. The health insurance premium continues to rise annually. These areas alone account for 4 mills of tax increase. Councilman Shipman also mentioned that the City should receive a refund from 2007 from Benecon – the employee health insurance contractor. The refund should be approximately \$100,000. \$50,000. could be put in the sinking fund GASB 33 requirements – the rest could be used to reduce the real estate tax from 2.85 to 1.85. The refund would not be available until April or May, 2008. The City only has 2 years to start to fund the GASB 33 requirements, which is mandated by the state and is an accounting of health benefits for retired employees (police retirees). The cost of their health insurance for 2007 was approximately \$300,000. Corporations had to begin to account for retiree health insurance funds several years ago, as well as larger municipalities. Smaller municipalities are required to have an account set up by 2009. Councilman Shipman suspects that \$200,000. or \$300,000. per year will have to put into this account – the City does not have the funds to do this.

## **TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE**

All of the bids opened at the previous meeting were voided. Mr. Apfelbaum thought the bids were too inconsistent to fairly award one. All of those entities that sent a sealed bid were notified and given a specific format to follow for the new bid. Councilman Shipman opened the tax anticipation line of credit bids as follows:

Susquehanna Bank	3.84% fixed - no fees
North'd National Bank	4.0% fixed - no fees
Swineford Bank	4.82% fixed - \$200.00 in bank fees

Councilman Shipman moved to accept the apparent low bidder, Susquehanna Bank for the 2008 Tax Anticipation Line of Credit in the amount of \$250,000. and give the Mayor the authority to sign all documents. Mayor Woodring seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

## **MERLE PHILLIPS PARK/RIVERFRONT TREES**

Councilman Eister explained that an inspection of the flood levee system was completed by the Army Corps. of Engineers in November. Part of their inspection included a recommendation to remove 15 trees along the flood wall that are too large and the root system is in danger of interfering with the levee system. This is a mandatory requirement by the Corps. There could be a problem if a tree fell on the wall during a flood event – the damage would be massive. Councilman Eister said the Corps was told the trees would be down in 90 days.

## **REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OWNED PARKING LOTS**

Mr. Apfelbaum is working on transferring the deeds to the parking lots transferred into the City's name.

## **FIRE INSURANCE ESCROW FUND**

Councilman Eister stated that he was not sure what happened but for the past year or so the City has not been receiving fire insurance money to be held in escrow until repairs are made to the property. The City did pass an ordinance requiring the funds to come to the City. Terry was instructed to contact PLCM to see how other municipalities enforce the ordinance. Councilman Shipman said that once the property owner gets the check the property may not be repaired. A discussion was held as to the best way to notify the property owner of the ordinance – perhaps the code office or fire department could have a letter to give the property owner. Ms. Specht mentioned that it is her recollection that when the ordinance was passed, the insurance companies were supposed to contact the municipality to see if an ordinance is in place. Mr. Apfelbaum explained that the state made a law available that the City opted into which said the money could be held back in the event of a fire. He thinks that because Mr. Abdill was a fireman he just handled it that way. Since Mr. Abdill no longer works here the ball has been dropped and there is no procedure in place. After general discussion, a policy and procedure will be put in place in the near future.

## **DECEMBER EXPENDITURES**

Councilman Shipman moved to expend the funds for December expenditures in the amount of \$57,466.92 in bills received and an additional \$60,000. for the health insurance premium. Councilman Eister seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

## **AUDIENCE COMMENT**

Ms. Whitney Anderson spoke on behalf of a committee of SPARC which has researched putting flower canisters around the light posts on Market St. Ms. Anderson explained that her committee would get pricing and would also seek sponsors for the baskets. They will contact the local garden clubs to see if they would be interested in helping to plant the baskets and care for them throughout the season. Mayor Woodring moved to allow Ms. Anderson to move forward with the project. Councilman Eister seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Mr. Kurt Maier, Shikellamy High School Soccer Coach, addressed council in regard to building soccer fields on the area formerly known as the “dump.” At this time, Sunbury does not have any soccer fields. He and several others are interested in starting a Sunbury soccer program which will give kids of all ages more to do and keep them off the streets. Mr. Maier is going to DEP in Williamsport with Mr. Brian Bailey, who works for DEP in Harrisburg, to view the files from the old dump. Mr. Jeff Specht, also a soccer coach for the traveling league, will be able to supply fly-ash to cover the fields. Mr. Maier will report back to council after some research has been completed for that area. Mayor Woodring did note that the bridge access to that area was closed by the county several years ago. Councilman Eister said he thinks the main structure of the bridge is ok but the decking was the cause of the closure. Usually recreation is one use DEP allows for old dumps such as Sunbury’s. Mr. Bakowicz said there should be a closure plan in a City file. Mr. Apfelbaum and Mr. Bakowicz offered to look at whatever paperwork Mr. Maier can find.

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

Mayor Woodring announced that a list of residents that would like to become involved with Boards is included in the meeting packets. Board appointments will be made at the December 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Several board members have asked for reinstatement.

## **PROFESSIONAL LICENSE FEE/MERCANTILE TAX**

Mayor Woodring explained to council that he thought of a lot of other professions that need a license to be in business – they should be added to the Ordinance being written by Mr. Apfelbaum. He asked if the wording should be “to include but not limited to...” He also asked if the City would be billing the professionals and what about professionals that are employed by other businesses? Mr. Bakowicz asked what would happen if you are licensed in more than 1 profession – and the answer is only 1 fee would be billed per professional.

## **2007 BUDGET REVIEW**

Councilman Shipman announced that through October 2007, revenues are equal to 94% of the budget and expenditures are at 81.2% of the annual budget.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The December 24<sup>th</sup> work session will be held at 11:00 am in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room – changed from 6:15 pm.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht  
City Clerk