

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
June 27, 2016
6:15 pm

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Council of the City of Sunbury was called to order with the Honorable Mayor David L. Persing presiding. There was a quorum with the following in attendance:

David L. Persing, Mayor
Elizabeth R. Kremer, Director of Accounts and Finance
Richard L. Reichner, Director of Public Safety
Dale L. Henry, Director of Public Works
James R. Eister, Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Kevin E. Troup, City Treasurer
Brianna Apfelbaum Kula, City Solicitor
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer
Cheryl Delsite, City Clerk

There were thirty-six (36) visitors present.

A moment of silent reflection was held after the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Persing asked for comments on agenda items and there were none.

CDBG

Mr. Dan Greene announced that submissions were requested for the 2016 CDBG entitlement. The amount to be received is \$272,958. There were 6 requests totaling almost \$400,000. After review of the requests, the following projects are recommended for funding: Chestnut St. Utility Project Phase 2 in the amount of \$211,328 and the Sunbury Fire Dept. purchase of a fire hose washer in the amount of \$12,500. Projects that were not recommended are: DPW request for parking meter equipment which is not an eligible activity, clearance and demolition, fire dept. request for emergency communication equipment and sidewalk improvement project. A final hearing will be held on August 1st and at that time a vote will be taken. The application must be submitted to DCED no later than September 23rd.

SRI

Ms. Meghan Beck said the first "Movie on the River" is scheduled for tomorrow at 8:30 pm.

RESOLUTION/ARLE GRANT

Councilman Henry moved to pass a Resolution to authorize the mayor to sign all documents regarding the ARLE grant for a new traffic light at 4th St & Arch St. Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote.

MUA/PML ELECTRIC PROCUREMENT

Councilman Henry moved to extend the Agreement with Constellation New Energy for energy procurement for 4 years ending in 2020 at a fixed rate of 0.05765. Mr. Troup said the rate has been steadily increasing over the past few months and it would be good to lock in now. He has been receiving calls for .61 to .63 adjustable rates. The rate before council is a fixed rate. It is an electric co-op that the city is in with PA Municipal League. Second- Kremer. Unanimous vote.

FLOODPLAIN ORDINANCE

Councilman Reichner explained there were changes to the flood map so the city's ordinance has to be changed to reflect those changes. Mr. Mike Rhoads said the Community Rating System determines the flood insurance rates and discounts issued to municipalities such as Sunbury based on annual reports submitted to FEMA. The FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Map) will be included and the penalties range from \$100 - \$300. The Zoning Officer is named as the Floodplain Manager and the Administrative Assistant will be the CRS (Community Rating System) Coordinator. The ordinance must be passed on 2 readings before the end of August 2016 to continue discounts that are offered in Sunbury. Passing this new ordinance also keeps the city eligible to receive federal grants. FEMA has already approved the wording in this proposed ordinance. Councilman Henry moved to pass the ordinance as submitted. Second - Eister. Unanimous vote. Mr. Joe Bartello asked if anyone has read the ordinance. Mayor Persing said he has not read the entire ordinance but Ms. Kula said she did read it and it will be available for review in the City Clerk's office.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilwoman Kremer moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$207,645.88 from the General Fund of which \$85,000 is electric bills and \$57.71 from the Liquid Fuels fund. Second - Henry. Unanimous vote.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Ms. Regina Russell, Community Activist: Mr. Bill Siegel asked that the following letter be incorporated into the minutes of the meeting (see attached). Ms. Russell said she only asked about a list that was to be provided to council. Mr. Siegel answered yes the list was public. Ms. Russell said that through a Right-to-Know request she was denied the list. She asked for a list of people from 2010-2013 who have received funds from the rehabilitation program.

Mr. Robert Wertz: Owner of 8 rental properties in Sunbury. Landlords have to provide the code office with names of those living in their properties. He has a problem with a tenant on HUD that is now in Florida and there are people now living in his apartment that are not on the lease. Something needs to be passed that landlords are protected to get people out of their places. The property owner may receive fines for having them in there. He called police to his property and there was no citation issued. He feels it is uncalled for and needs to change. This is why the town is the way it is. There are bad people and no one can get rid of them. Ms. Kula asked if he sought legal counsel to evict the tenants and Mr. Wertz answered yes. She said that is his best avenue of action. Mayor Persing said there are more tenant/landlord laws in Sunbury than anywhere else in the Susquehanna Valley. Councilman Reichner said the code office had a meeting about screening tenants for landlords. The city cannot do a lot legally. Mr. Wertz said his tenant was a good tenant until this happened. His lease said there is no sub-leasing. Ms. Kula said the state law is there to protect the landlord as well and is favorable toward them. If a squatter moves into a place, there aren't many avenues to get rid of them. Philadelphia has a squatter law on the books. Councilman Reichner said he would like to talk to Mr. Wertz after the meeting.

Ms. Jan Dockey: All the good things happening in the city are wonderful. She read in the paper about the softball tournaments and she heard a figure of approximately 50 teams at \$300 each for \$15,000. There are 3 tournaments a year which is \$45,000. How much of that money comes back to the city? Mayor Persing said if she would attend a Park & Recreation Board meeting he would explain the entire budget. He said most of the money goes to the umpires. The Rec Board meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7 pm. With all the money coming in, she is concerned about the police force. There should be more officers. There has to be some way to get more police. She lost a dear friend last week of a heroin overdose that is running rampant. A long time ago there were people that handled the drugs, there were detectives and how can that be allowed to be let go? Mayor Persing said they had 15 officers then too. Ms. Dockey asked why they can't have that many now and Mayor Persing answered their budget would have to double. The money coming in should go to fund the police to help get drugs out. No one does anything about people selling drugs. There is a county task force. An unidentified person said the city would get money back from enforcing it through restitution. Mayor Persing said the city has not gotten any money back it goes to the county.

Ms. Regina Russell: Ms. Connie Beegle, a great volunteer for the City of Sunbury, is very ill and needs Ensure, a protein drink. She is asking if anyone on council could help her. Mayor Persing said some of them have already done that and some police officers have as well.

Mr. Bob Snyder: Asked for a parking committee to be put together to review parking on Market St. There is a new bakery and a new restaurant that will increase downtown parking. The Edison Plaza needs more signage to direct out-of-town people to park there and also the public needs to know they can park there after 5:00 pm for free. 4 spaces for police vehicles parked on Market St. should be reviewed. There are rarely more than 2 officers on shift. Mayor Persing said there shouldn't be more than 2 police vehicles on Market St. Councilman Henry said he has pictures showing 3 spaces for police vehicle parking. Mr. Snyder also said there are no walking tours or guides for the city. He asked council to find a brochure that could be provided for businesses to hand out. Councilwoman Kremer said the Historical Society has provided them in the past.

An unidentified person asked why the city can't give incentives to fix up a property to young police officers to live in the city. Mayor Persing said there are procedures to go through. Ms. Kula said they have to be sold at a public auction. The city cannot purchase them back. A private owner can do that if they want to.

Ms. Julie Broschious: Where do the police contract negotiations stand? Mayor Persing stated it would be addressed under "Discussion."

DISCUSSION

Mayor Persing said the "no loitering" signs have been replaced in the beds near the Edison Plaza. The loiterers and litterers will be removed as the police see them.

At the July 11th meeting, the Mayor will present an Agreement for a new police chief. The K-9 program will be reinstated after he meets with Officer Hause. A contract has been developed showing what will be expected of the K-9 handler and if Officer Hause agrees to the contract the K-9 will be brought back. Ms. Russell asked if they would be using the same model as the Selinsgrove K-9 contract. Mayor Persing answered he has not seen Selinsgrove's. Councilman Eister asked if the council members would be able to see the police chief contract and the mayor answered yes. He also said the police force is now down another officer because of an accident and he wouldn't want to see another officer being pulled away for training a K-9. Mayor Persing said there was not enough documentation but it will now be documented so everyone knows what the K-9 program is doing. Ms. Julie Broschious asked how many officers there are and the answer is 11. She asked when the numbers will go up and Mayor Persing said they will discuss it at budget time. Mayor Persing said they will be getting a list ready for hiring but the process does not happen overnight. Ms. Regina Russell commended the mayor for bringing back the K-9 program.

Mayor Persing explained the Historical and Sports destination for Sunbury is a program the mayor would like to see come to fruition to help bring economic development to the city which helps local businesses. There are no industrial jobs coming anywhere on the east coast. History is important in Sunbury. He said he hopes to get a place where information from the early 1900's could be kept in a museum type setting. Little League is having a tournament in Sunbury in July because the facility is so nice. Hopefully it will work well for them and they will come again. Teams from all over PA will be here to play in the tournament. Many people follow the teams. Rebecca from Rebecca's Treats asked if there was any way to get informational signs for the parking lots. SPARC has been discussing that for a while. Ms. Carmen Campbell said there are a lot of people that go to the genealogy library at the Historical Society. An unidentified person asked what was happening with the old prison. Councilman Reichner said the last he heard they were bringing someone in to do an evaluation on it to see if it is feasible to do anything with it or if it needs to be torn down. She also asked how the Riverfront is being promoted and where is the Brett Michaels concert? Councilman Eister said it wasn't the city that said Brett Michaels was performing at Riverfront.

The Mayor said Norfolk Southern has been discussing railroad crossing closures for about a year. Several weeks ago 2 people from Norfolk Southern and the mayor and Councilman Eister walked the railroad track to discuss the proposed closures. Wherever there is a railroad track there is litter, dead weeds, no sidewalks, etc. They do not take care of the properties around their tracks. This is the first time the railroad actually sent someone to discuss making a difference. He asked council if they would support him in discussions with Norfolk Southern. He discussed several of the crossings and

discussion will be ongoing with Norfolk Southern. No decisions have been made on closings. This could be a huge project for the city. Ms. Julie Broschius said word on the street is that the mayor wants to purchase some railroad property to put extra parking in for the training center. Mayor Persing said he has a second parking lot now that is empty and he is not looking for other parking. Mr. Gordon Lamb asked what is in it for Norfolk Southern and the mayor answered closures because the federal government mandated funding to put closures in along the entire east coast. Mr. Lamb said the trains will be going 50 miles per hour through the city. Mayor Persing said they are not doing the closures to increase the train speeds they are doing it for safety purposes. Mayor Persing moved to allow him to pursue this further with Norfolk Southern. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht, City Clerk