

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
December 12, 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 Troup, City Treasurer
Brianna Apfelbaum Kula, City Solicitor
Timothy Miller, Chief of Police
John Bakowicz, City Engineer
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer
Russell Wertz, Fire Chief
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-five (25) visitors present.

A moment of silent reflection was held prior to the beginning of the meeting.

An executive session was held at 5:30 pm prior to this meeting.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

The Minutes of 10/24/16, 11/14/16 and 11/28/16 and available departmental reports of the Police Dept., Treasurer's Office, Controller, Health Dept. (quarterly), Fire Dept., City Engineer, Code Office, Park and Recreation Department, Park and Recreation Board, Public Works Dept., Planning Commission, Redevelopment Authority and Police Pension Board (quarterly) are in the City Clerk's office for review. Motion to accept was made by Councilman Henry. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote. Minutes will be posted at cityofsunbury.com.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Joe Bartello asked if the ordinances on the agenda were changed at all or were they the same as discussed at previous council meetings. There were changes to some and some did not change.

SRI UPDATE

Ms. Meghan Beck reported the H2 Church that rents space at the Albright Center is moving to the high school auditorium so SRI is planning how to make adjustments for that. Late Night Shoppers was successful but they would like more craft vendors next year. Diane Williams will be the chairperson for the Wine & Brew Festival. The Hill Neighborhood requested funds from the crime watch/neighborhood development grant and they were declined but they were instructed how to reword their request to better meet SRI's strategic plan. This is Ms. Beck's last meeting speaking as SRI President. Mr. Jeb Stotter from North Shore Railroad will be the new SRI President in January. The new secretary will be Matthew Hamilton from M & T Bank. There will be 2 local bands playing at the New Year's Eve celebration, carnival themed children's activities in the park and the VIP tickets are on sale now for \$30 per person. Mayor and council thanked Ms. Beck for the time she has volunteered for the city with SRI.

1ST READING/ORDINANCE CHANGES (see attached)

175-70 Junkyards Prohibited – Mr. Rhoads explained the changes to this ordinance include adding the words "All inoperable" in the definition and Sub-section C(1). Also, adding "5 During active

construction or remodeling, building materials stored in the open shall be placed on elevated racks with at least 18” (eighteen inches) of clear space beneath.” Mr. Bartello asked if this includes commercial and residential. Mr. Rhoads answered yes. Discussion was held regarding how this would affect commercial and residential properties. This will be researched further before the final reading. Motion – Reichner. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

175-90. (CB District) B(d). Remove 1200 sq. ft. and replace it with 900 sq. ft. Motion – Reichner. Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote.

175-78 Minimum habitable floor area. Only change is to change square footage to 900 sq. ft. instead of 1200 sq. ft. Motion – Reichner. Second Eister. Unanimous vote.

175-49 Permitted uses. Include enclosed storage units. Motion – Reichner. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

163-26 Parking prohibited during certain hours. Mayor Persing explained the city does not have a street sweeping ordinance but rather a no parking ordinance in effect. It can be enforced year round but has not been. He would like to establish an annual “no parking schedule” at the last meeting of December for the following year and enforce the ordinance year round. This would allow the street crew to collect leaves, paint lines or do snow removal on those days the vehicles are off the street. Councilman Henry said the leaf collection followed the street sweeper schedule and leaves got cleaned up much better than other years. Motion – Persing. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote. Ms. Julie Broschious asked what period of time this would be implemented in. Mayor Persing said a second reading will be held in January and it would go into effect after that. He feels by March the word should be out. An unidentified man asked if there would be consideration for people that have to park in front of their homes in the winter that would have groceries, etc. Mayor Persing answered this winter will be over by the time this goes into effect. Ms. Deb Betz asked about handicap parking spaces and Councilman Henry said they follow the ordinance as everyone else does. Mr. Jerome Alex is concerned that during the winter months, people park in other areas that may not be maintained. He also said he hopes snow removal will follow the street sweeping schedule. In a snow emergency will people have time to dig their cars out? Councilman Henry said that is a tough question to answer because it depends on how hard it is snowing, when the public works crew comes out to clear snow and whether snow on Market St. is cleared yet. Mr. Alex thinks policy is being set that hasn’t been thoroughly thought through. Mr. Kevin Troup asked how long the current ordinance has been in effect. He said homes have more than 1 vehicle now, unlike when the ordinance was put in place and he feels it should be looked at again and change the way streets are being cleaned now.

2ND READING/2017 BUDGET ORDINANCE #1281

Councilwoman Kremer moved to accept the 2017 Budget (see attached) as provided to city council members. It will have no tax increase. She and Mr. Troup worked individually with council members to complete the budget. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

2nd READING LEVY TAX ORDINANCE 1282

Councilwoman Kremer moved to pass on a second reading the ordinance to levy taxes for 2017 (see attached). There will be no tax increase for the year. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote. In the budget there is funding to hire a full-time police officer.

FULL-TIME POLICE CHIEF

Mayor Persing moved to make Administrative Chief Timothy Miller a full-time Chief of Police effective 1/9/2017 per an employment agreement presented to council members. He will still do administrative duties but will also have patrol duty and can make arrests. The agreement is for 4 years with annual options to renew. His salary will be \$86,000 and he will not receive longevity and will pay 7% toward his health insurance which none of the police officers do. Ms. Julie Broschious asked if there were other considerations for chief and Mayor Persing answered no, Chief Miller is doing a very good job for the city. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote. Chief Miller thanked the mayor and council members for this appointment. Chief Miller said when he came to Sunbury he saw the need for a full-time chief. This is a challenge he wants to accept and he wants to serve the City of Sunbury as he has Williamsport. He wants the department to not only be proud to serve but

those they serve be proud of them. There have been some issues and the department has come a long way in a short period of time. He has felt warmly welcomed in his short time in Sunbury.

RESOLUTION/APPLY FOR MULTI-MODAL GRANT

Mayor Persing moved to adopt the Resolution (see attached) to apply for \$1,050,000 from the PA Department of Transportation to be used for the Chestnut St. Reconstruction Project Phase 2 and designate himself to execute all documents and agreements. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilwoman Kremer moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$45,064.05 from the General Fund and \$3,152.62 from Liquid Fuels. Second - Henry. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

Councilwoman Kremer moved to accept the tax exoneration as requested by Statewide Tax Collection. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Persing said there is a program in PA that you can tax blighted vacant commercial properties and he would like the Redevelopment Authority to look into it further.

Board appointments/reappointments are listed on the agenda for 2017.

HOME Program – Mayor Persing explained that Gov. Wolfe has decided that all contract work done on owner occupied housing through the HOME Program must have state prevailing wages paid. This will reduce the amount to be spent at each property from \$35,000 to \$25,000. He has written a letter to Representative Culver and Senator Gordner and is waiting for an answer to find out what the benefits of this change are.

2018 RENTAL PERMIT CHANGE

Councilman Reichner moved to accept a fee change effective 1/1/2018 as follows:

If paid between January 2 to March 31 – housing permit fee is face value
If paid between April 1 to June 30 - \$10.00 late fee per unit will be charged
If paid between July 1 to October 31 – final payment of \$25.00 late fee per unit will be charged
On November 1 – citations will be filed with restitution for each delinquent housing permit and late fee

Notices will be sent with the 2017 housing permit renewal letters letting property owners know about the change. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Meghan Beck: Would like council to consider 3 items for the fast track rental permit in the Central Business District 175-90: 1. Strike the minimum square footage requirement and revert to the standard UCC guidelines. 2. Remove parking requirements. 3. Reduce the new rental permit fee from \$1,000 to about \$135. The highest new rental permit in a 50 mile area is \$135. Ms. Beck said the luxury apartment idea did not work when these requirements were put in place. She feels encouraging more people to live in downtown where they can walk or bike most places, will result in the development of downtown. Councilman Eister asked if there is a parking requirement in a Central Business district and Mr. Rhoads answered yes for any residential use. Mr. Jerome Alex said he would support dropping the parking space requirement to bring people into the downtown area.

Joe Bartello: What was taken out of the budget to balance it? Councilwoman Kremer said the hiring of another police officer. Mr. Troup added legal expenses was inflated and there were computer costs that won't all be happening at the same time. Grants will be looked at for in-car cameras for the

police cruisers instead of using general funds to pay for them. Several other line items were also reduced.

Janet Bingaman: Has not heard anything about a meeting with the police, code office and property owner of the house she has been complaining about. Ms. Kula said she left a voice mail message for her that stated it is a civil matter and she should seek legal counsel. Ms. Bingaman said her attorney told her there is nothing she can do and that is why she is coming to the city as they have the upper hand. Ms. Kula said she would discuss this with Attorney Wiest. Mayor Persing said the city does not have the authority to throw a bad neighbor out. If laws are broken the police dept. will take care of it, same for the code office. Councilman Reichner said when the code office is called to the property they are citing both the owner and the tenants.

Bob Werline: 75.70 Junkyard – he suggested to look at the definition of abandoned vehicles because under state law if he has a 2016 untagged vehicle and it is operable and on private property it is not abandoned. Also, an off-road jeep is not tagged but it is not considered inoperable.

Mr. Gordon Lamb: How many police officers will be in Sunbury next year? Mayor Persing said he does not know that right now due to the investigations going on right now. There is one hire in the budget. Taylor returned to work today and Blasé should be coming back soon. Hawkins or Hause will be replaced. Mr. Lamb said the force is down to 6 or 7 right now.

Ms. Laurie Johnson: Thanked everyone for their service this year. The New Year's Eve celebration could use volunteers if anyone has extra time contact SRI.

Mr. Kurt Karlovich: Did the city look into legislation passed by Gov. Tom Wolf that allows municipalities to have a deduction on taxes for their volunteer firefighters. It could be up to 20% for personal and property taxes. Councilman Henry said it goes through the state and the municipality has to vote to adopt it. He also asked if the city can discuss with the county the industrial sites grant which would cover a hotel, etc. Ms. Kula said she would pass the information on to the county's solicitor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Persing wished everyone a Merry Christmas. This is the last meeting of the year.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht, City Clerk