

CITY COUNCIL  
225 Market St.  
Sunbury PA 17801  
June 9, 2008  
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 Finance  
Mark W. Walberg, Director of Public Safety  
Kevin E. Troup, Director of Public Works  
James R. Eister, Director of Parks/Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Mr. Ben Apfelbaum, City Solicitor  
Beth Kremer, City Treasurer  
John Bakowicz, City Engineer  
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police  
Mike Bordner, Public Works Supervisor  
Michael Rhoads, Property Maintenance Officer  
Chad Betts, Fire Chief  
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-five (25) visitors present.

Mayor Woodring congratulated Ms. Lauren Redington, a Shikellamy High School student who won a bronze medal at AAA State Games for the long jump – 18'1".

### **MINUTES AND REPORTS**

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 Woodring, Second-Eister – unanimous vote.

### **GRIEVANCE**

Mr. Brad Hare provided council with copies of a grievance which is moving to the 3<sup>rd</sup> step, to be heard before council. The grievances are: 1. Testing not done in a timely manner for corporal's promotion. 2. Health insurance benefits for part-time officers. These issues will be heard at the next regularly scheduled council meeting by agreement with Officer Hare and city council members. Councilman Walberg asked what constitutes a regular part-time employee. Officer Hare did not know. Chief Mazzeo explained that a full-time employee is scheduled for 80 hours per pay period. Part-time is working less than 80 hours in a pay period and they are not eligible for benefits. Mr. Apfelbaum thanked Mr. Hare for providing the grievances to council.

### **STROH ALLEY DEMOLITION PROJECT BIDS**

Councilman Eister moved to give Mr. Bill Siegel permission to advertise for bids for the Stroh Alley Demolition Project. Second-Troup. Unanimous vote.

### **COLE'S 90 DAY EXTENSION**

Mr. Gregory Cole requested a 90 day extension to keep the planning and design process moving forward for proposed changes to the Cole's Hardware building located at 225 Chestnut St. Motion by Walberg. Second-Eister. Unanimous vote.

### **REJECT SHREDDER BIDS**

Councilman Troup moved to reject the shredder bid received at the last meeting. The bid was higher than the grant amount being used to pay for it. Another bid will be advertised for the basic equipment only.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS/MARKETING AGREEMENT**

Mayor Woodring moved to accept the Public Relations/Marketing Agreement as proposed by Ms. Betsy Robertson in an amount not to exceed \$2,430. Second-Shipman. Unanimous vote.

## **PROFESSIONAL FEE/MERCANTILE TAX**

Councilman Shipman completed his research regarding how to implement this addition to the mercantile tax ordinance. One suggestion was to tax the business, not individual people. That will not work because most businesses are already charged the mercantile tax and cannot be taxed twice. Councilman Shipman will be talking to Mr. Bob Sabatini to see how this was implemented in other areas. There are approximately 100 firms in the City that would qualify. The actual number of individuals that would be required to pay is not known at this time. Councilman Shipman instructed Ms. Kremer to gather this information. Mayor Woodring asked if it could be tiered to pay a percentage of gross wages? Councilman Shipman will look into this with Mr. Sabatini. Ms. Kremer stated that hair salons must pay mercantile tax on items they sell in their shops.

## **INSURANCE ITEMS-VOLUNTEER INSURANCE/RENTAL EQUIPMENT**

Councilman Shipman explained that medical payments are covered for volunteers that volunteer at the 225 Market St. premise only. It would cost \$500 to cover all volunteers at any venue in the City under a Volunteer Comprehensive Accident Program. Councilman Walberg moved to purchase this coverage. Councilman Shipman moved to adopt a policy regarding all rental equipment the City would rent/lease (see attached). Second-Walberg. Unanimous vote.

## **HIRE LIFEGUARDS/SNACK BAR/PLAYGROUND SUPERVISORS**

Councilman Eister moved to hire lifeguards, snack bar personnel and playground supervisors for the 2008 season. Second-Troup. Unanimous vote. All playground supervisors are hired through the PHEAA Work Study Program and 40% of their wages are reimbursed to the City.

## **PRIVATE SALE/NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY**

Through an initiative with CDBG and Mr. Bill Siegel from SEDA-COG, Mayor Woodring moved to petition Northumberland County to conduct a private sale to sell 3 of the condemned, tax delinquent properties to the City. Second-Eister. Unanimous vote. The addresses are:

146 South St. condemned 4-26-04 tax parcel # 48-2-3-80  
810 N. 6<sup>th</sup> St. condemned 6-14-04 tax parcel # 51-2-6-12  
1031 N. River Ave. condemned 7-11-05 tax parcel # 50-2-5-86

## **LOCAL SERVICES TAX**

Ms. Kremer stated that she has a list of businesses that collect the Local Services Tax. Everyone that works in Sunbury, with earned income, must pay this tax, unless their income is less than \$12,000. A landlord that owns property could also be required to pay this tax to bring in additional revenue. She also stated that a mercantile tax could be placed on landlords for rental units. Mayor Woodring stated that landlord's income is not earned income but rather passive income and therefore would not be subject to these taxes.

## **KEITHAN'S GARDEN RENTAL FEE**

Councilman Walberg moved to charge \$150. for 3 hours for all events at Keithan's Garden (\$100. is charged now) for any function at the garden after 30 days from this date. Eister-second Vote - unanimous.

## **ANONYMOUS LETTERS**

Mayor Woodring announced that anyone that sends letters to the Mayor should sign them and then there could be dialogue back to them regarding their concern. If there is no signature, a follow-up is impossible.

## **HARB APPROVAL**

Councilman Walberg moved to accept HARB's recommendation for:

219 Arch St./Ben Apfelbaum 8' fence Second-Eister. Unanimous Vote.

216 Market St./Woodring change windows Second-Eister. Vote: Yes – Troup, Eister, Shipman, Walberg, Abstain – Woodring. Motion Carried.

### **JUNE EXPENDITURES**

Councilman Shipman moved to pay bills in the amount of \$134,946. for June. Second-Eister. Unanimous Vote.

### **TAX EXONERATION**

Councilman Shipman moved to accept the tax exoneration as requested by Statewide Tax Recovery. Second-Troup. Unanimous Vote.

### **AUDIENCE COMMENT**

Ms. Carmen Campbell 457 Catawissa Ave. said she is concerned with only 1 police officer on duty at night. She is worried that if someone would break into her home will a policeman answer the call. Mayor Woodring has spoken to the Chief regarding scheduling. He is not aware that there has ever been 1 officer on duty by himself. Mayor Woodring said his family lives in the City and he is not about to put any of them, or any other citizen of Sunbury, in jeopardy. Many of these items concern budgetary constraints. Mayor Woodring did state that he didn't think it was a good idea for Officer Bennick to go to The Daily Item and state that there is only 1 officer on duty in the City. Items like that do put the City at risk and it should have been brought to the Chief and/or the Mayor only.

Ms. Regina Russell 300 S. 4<sup>th</sup> St. said she would like to commend the police department – anytime she had to call the department someone responded in a timely manner. She also commended council members for keeping the mission statement that was adopted and displayed on the wall. Ms. Russell stated that she is a new resident of Sunbury and asked whether there was a commuter tax in effect in Sunbury. Councilman Shipman said the only tax that would apply to commuters, as well as residents, is the \$52 local services tax paid by anyone that works in Sunbury. Ms. Russell said that in another town she lived in the electric company provided light bulbs to residents to keep their lights on all night to try to deter crime at night. Mayor Woodring said that Councilman Eister is trying to find funding to put better lighting in the parking lots and parks. Ms. Russell stated that residents should take part in being responsible for reducing crime and keeping the neighborhoods well-lit and the burden should not be on council members alone.

Mr. George Walterick said that the 6<sup>th</sup> St. Crime Watch group feels that the area is very dark and he urged residents to install motion detectors that would turn on if someone was close to the light. There is money available to reimburse police officers through the District Attorney's office dealing with the drug task force. The county pays for any overtime at time and one-half only. That does not cover the cost of all benefits associated with overtime. The City asked the DA's office to reimburse the true cost of the benefits and Mr. Rosini said he could not do that because he has budget constraints also and the money used is money confiscated from drug busts. Mr. Walterick also thanked the police department for putting their lives on the line for the citizens of Sunbury. Mayor Woodring stated that he does think the police get the respect they deserve and everyone that sits on council agreed.

Officer Hare, on behalf of the Association, addressed Mr. Bennick's comments to The Daily Item—there have been many memos regarding budget constraints and the SPOA has addressed the issue with the Chief and the Mayor. He asked Councilman Shipman if the budget was in that dire of a state that certain things are being cut from not only the police budget but also other departments. Councilman Shipman stated that through May the budget has been on-target. The budget over-all is in better shape than several years ago. A \$12,000 surplus was realized in 2007 into 2008 which isn't much but is better than a deficit. The budget is being watched very closely so the departments do not go over-budget. All departments must be vigilant. Councilman Walberg stated that council is not the police department's adversaries and the opposite is also true. Everyone is working toward the same goal and all departments should work together. Council's job is to be sure the budget is in line and the citizens are safe. He thinks the animosity on both sides should stop – everyone should sit down and discuss the problems and possible solutions. Council positions are paid a stipend and in return get nothing but complaints and rarely a thank you. The only thing against the police department is the budget, council realizes this and does what it can to help. The police budget is 43% of the overall City budget. Councilman Walberg said all items should be discussed with council and not through The Daily Item because the information is not always the same in print as was discussed. The council members all want a safe and secure City. The cost of everything is going up and will soon be higher than the tax base. Everyone has to deal with the situation as it is – arguing and bickering will not solve the problems. He further stated that items like the 2 grievances presented to council do not help because now council will have to hire attorneys, pay arbitrators, etc. Mayor Woodring explained that Officer Hare lives in the City just as he does and for Officer Hare to say the police have sat down with him is not true – he has been Mayor for 2 ½ years and no one has ever come to him to discuss any problems.

Officer Hare said Mayor Woodring has never met with the police either. Whenever Councilman Walberg visits the department they do sit down and talk. Councilman Walberg would like to see discussions held prior to problems festering as they have been. The City has a good police department and everyone concerned must work together to solve problems and work as a team.

Ms. Shirley Bostian stated that one of the reasons she attends meetings is because when she reads the account of the meeting in The Daily Item it is not the same as stated at meetings.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht  
City Clerk