

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
August 10, 2015
6:15 pm

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

David L. Persing, Mayor
John K. Shipman, Director of Accounts & 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:

John Bakowicz, City Engineer
Michael Apfelbaum, City Solicitor
Brad Hare, Police Chief
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-three (23) visitors present.

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

Executive sessions were held on July 28th and August 3rd to discuss personnel matters.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

The minutes of 7/13/15 and 7/27/15 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 Eister. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote. Minutes will be posted at cityofsunbury.com.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Joe Bartello asked what department the executive committee discussed and Mayor Persing answered police.

CDBG

Councilman Eister moved to accept the apparent low bid from Burgess Excavating for the demolition of 1062 Miller St. in the amount of \$10,100. The other bids received were from Steinbacher Enterprise in the amount of \$14,300 and Affordable Construction at \$11,400. Second – Reichner. Unanimous vote.

SRI UPDATE

Ms. Meghan Beck reported the Albright Center roof is completed. The new tax credit application was submitted on July 31st. Business and Econ has a sponsor for the Biz Pitch competition which is Service First Credit Union. The Hill Neighborhood will have an event called Boos and Brews in October. A high school intern worked at the office this summer and he put a chalk the walk contest together for River Festival. Cemetery tours will be held October 21st. August 31st is the Blind Chitlin Kahunas at the riverfront. The promotions committee released the new discount card with 26 businesses on it. It is for sale in the SRI office. The Wine and Brew festival is September 19th. River Festival is this weekend beginning with Valley's Got Talent on Thursday at the Shikellamy high school auditorium. Aaron Kelly who appeared on American Idol will be a guest judge. The cardboard boat regatta and a boat parade will be featured on Saturday.

LABOR ATTORNEY

Mr. Apfelbaum said Ballard Spahr is a law firm the city has worked with before specializing in labor law and personnel issues. It is a routine request from Mr. Apfelbaum to turn to other counsel from time to time for expertise. Councilman Shipman moved to authorize the mayor to sign the engagement letter for Ballard Spahr. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

HARB APPROVAL

Councilman Reichner moved to approve the renovations for 119 and 125 Chestnut St. as requested by the HARB Board. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY UPDATE

Mr. Apfelbaum explained the city won court proceedings to acquire 2 more properties and 2 went back to property owners that fixed up their places. Postponed for a hearing in September is 116 S. 4th St. It is owned by JP Morgan Chase and they have not fixed up the property and the final step will be to take this before Judge Wiest.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilman Shipman moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$127,035.03 from the General Fund and \$717.73 from the Liquid Fuels Fund. Second - Henry. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

Councilman Shipman moved to pass the tax exoneration as requested by Statewide Tax Recovery. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Ms. Cora Campbell: Is there anything new about the Celotex site? Mayor Persing answered that he has not attended any county meetings so he doesn't know if there is anything new.

Ms. Laurie Johnson: Attends most of the council meetings and only hears complaints. Tonight she hasn't heard that and that is a good thing. She told audience members that if they have spare time there are a lot of volunteer positions they could do instead of complain. At National Night Out, Cheryl Delsite was cooking hotdogs with no help. The mayor offered but was needed elsewhere. Councilman Eister met with the SRI executive board today to discuss matters that are going on. She said she did not know council members are only paid \$3,200 for what they put up with. She thought they made a lot more than that. She always sees council members volunteering at functions. Councilman Shipman volunteers a lot. Terry and the mayor do as well. Ms. Johnson said SRI has to go to other towns to get fire police to direct traffic this weekend because there are only 4 of the city's fire police available. Anyone can contact SRI if they care to volunteer.

Ms. Julie Broschious: What is the purpose of a public meeting if the public cannot make statements or comments, for example the CDBG funding? The mayor said right now people are making comments. Ms. Broschious said when Ms. Shrawder was at the last meeting funding was being transferred from a fire department project to Chestnut St. The audience was asking questions and Mr. Apfelbaum had them stand down. Mr. Apfelbaum explained that was a public hearing to give public comment, which means comments can be given, but it is not a time for asking questions/interrogation. Ms. Broschious asked when that time is available and the answer was public comment will be taken at the audience comment portion of the council meeting. Council members have been flexible in answering questions but they are not required to do that under the Sunshine Act or Open Meeting Law. They do it to be nice but are only limited to receiving public comment. Question and answer is not a required process at city council meetings. Ms. Shrawder was holding a public hearing under CDBG regulations and was not an appropriate time for question and answer. There is no appropriate time for question and answer at council meetings. Audience members may give public comment but there is no requirement that the mayor or council members has to answer any questions on any issue. Ms. Broschious asked if CDBG funding is different from an NIH grant.

Mr. Apfelbaum said he has never been involved with an NIH grant. She said when you apply for an NIH grant you apply for something specific. If awarded the funding you must apply it to that. If you deviate from that the money is pulled back. That's why she was questioning that. If it was for a ladder truck why couldn't the funding go to a fire company? Mr. Apfelbaum said you must follow the terms of the CDBG grant or go through the process again. Audience members are always welcome to give public comment. Even what they (Mr. Apfelbaum and Ms. Broschious) are doing right now is not required. Ms. Broschious asked if progress reports are done and Mr. Apfelbaum said that would be a question for Ms. Shrawder.

Chief Brad Hare: Please be patient with the parking restrictions and the new traffic pattern for Friday and Saturday for River Festival. Market St. from Front St. to 4th St. will be bagged for no parking for the car show.

Ms. Carol Mazzeo: Asked where handicap parking would be for River Festival and the answer is St. Monica's parking lot.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Music in the Park for August 11th will be the Sunbury City Band, August 18th Counterfeit Dreams, August 25th the Singing Mailman.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk