

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
November 10, 2014
6:15 pm

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Council of the City of Sunbury was called to order with the Honorable John K. Shipman, Vice-Mayor, presiding. There was a quorum with the following in attendance:

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:

Michael Apfelbaum, City Solicitor
Brad Hare, Police Chief
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer
Michael Bordner, Workforce Supervisor
John Bakowicz, City Engineer

There were twenty-four (24) visitors present.

POLICE GRIEVANCE STEP 3

Council met in executive session on Nov. 3, 2014 for a step 3 grievance presented by Patrolman Bennick. Councilman Reichner moved to deny the additional payments to Patrolman Bennick per his grievance. Second- Eister. Unanimous vote.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

The minutes of 10/13/14 and 10/27/14 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

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

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY UPDATE

Mr. Michael Apfelbaum stated they were successful in front of Judge Wiest and the RDA will now acquire some properties that will be developed for the benefit of the community. Councilman Shipman said there are a lot of good things happening through the Redevelopment Authority.

CDBG UPDATE

Ms. Jamie Shrawder explained additional engineering costs were accrued so that amount, \$9,248.90 can be paid from CDBG funds. Councilman Reichner moved to approve the additional payment. Second- Eister. Unanimous vote. Councilman Eister asked her to ask the engineer to keep the city's billing separate from the Sunbury Municipal Authority.

Ms. Shrawder said Uni-Tech has approved the utility design for the Chestnut St. Project. The bids have been advertised and the pre-bid meeting is Nov. 20th. A public meeting is scheduled for Nov. 19th at 7:00 pm for residents to hear more about the project and to ask questions. Today they found out the TAP grant was not approved as expected. DCED indicated they would like to know what the shortfall is for this project and they may be able to increase funding through the competitive CDBG grant.

Ms. Shrawder told council they would have to re-adopt the Fair Housing Resolution (see attached). It is to be included with the CDBG application. Councilman Henry moved to approve the Fair Housing Resolution. Second – Reichner. Unanimous vote.

Councilman Henry moved to pass the Resolution (see attached) to submit the application for 2014 CDBG funding to DCED and will be in by Nov. 21st and to authorize the mayor to sign all documents. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

SRI UPDATE

Ms. Meghan Beck reported the Business & Economic Development committee is continuing to search for marketing funding and is planning a Shark Tank type competition. The veteran's banners will be returned as part of the American Legion/VFW Veterans ceremonies to be held on Nov. 11th. The cemetery tours were cancelled due to inclement weather and alternate locations will be explored for next year. The Promotions committee is working on Late Shopper's Night and on a business list for the city and a window cleaning project for downtown businesses. The membership drive is now open. There are 3 vacant Board of Directors positions available. Litefest is looking for volunteers for Nov. 17th to put Christmas decorations up. Riverfront planning had a successful Wine and Brew Fest. The New Year's Eve committee is seeking sponsors. The children's theme in the park is "Frozen." SPARC is making plans for next year and is still working on the Keystone designation. The Albright council lease with the H2 Church has been signed. There was a chili cook-off held there which was very successful. Mr. Gordon Lamb asked Ms. Beck if SRI is banning the Sunbury American from member's premises and also banning their members from advertising in it. Ms. Beck said that is not true. Mr. Lamb said then SRI fully supports it and Ms. Beck answered it is not SRI's position to support or not support it.

OPEN BIDS/2015 TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE

The following bids were received for the 2015 Tax Anticipation Line of Credit:

Northumberland National Bank 1.15%
First National Bank 1.89% and general conditions but nothing financial
Swineford National Bank 2.47% with \$250. in costs

Councilman Eister moved to accept the apparent low bid from Northumberland National Bank for the 2015 \$250,000 Tax Anticipation Note and give the mayor authorization to sign all documents. Second – Reichner. Unanimous vote.

2014 COMPLIANCE AMENDMENT/POLICE PENSION

Councilman Shipman explained there is an amendment to the police pension plan (see attached) which redefines the definition of "spouse" for purposes of the Plan. Section 1.8© will read: Spouse means the person married to the participant at the time of the determination as evidenced by a marriage license valid under the laws of the place of issuance." Councilman Henry moved to pass the amendment on a first reading. Second – Reichner. Unanimous vote.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilman Shipman moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$28,344,55 from the General Fund and \$16,377.37 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 – Eister. Unanimous vote.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Mr. Terrance Bossert: said he feels Officer Bennick and others like him deserve so much more than society has given them. Like 5-10 years in state prison. But the police prefer to get more money than

to give them the true recognition they deserve for their criminal acts. According to the mayor and the chief when the police assaulted him on June 9, 2013 nothing happened. If nothing happened on that evening he wants the chief to arrest him right now for making false reports to the police. Chief Hare said he would let him slide on this one. Mr. Bossert said the chief should be more tough on crime. Councilman Shipman thanked Mr. Bossert for his comments. Mr. Bossert said it is a waste of money to keep paying officers to commit crimes and if it is ignored and let go it becomes part of the problem.

Mr. Gordon Lamb: asked when the bids for the tax anticipation loan were opened. Ms. Specht said none of them came sealed. Mr. Lamb said he thought it would be a sealed bid process and Ms. Specht said that is how it is advertised but the banks have emailed the bids for the last several years. He also asked who the chief administration officer for the pension plan is. Councilman Shipman answered there is a committee made up of 2 officers from the department, the mayor and director of accounts and finance and one citizen at large. Mr. Lamb said the chief administration officer is specified for the pension plan and that is why he wanted to know. Councilman Shipman once again explained there is a committee with oversight of the plan.

Ms. Regina Russell, Community Activist: Hoped the mayor would be in attendance. There is a situation that is on-going and hopefully council will review the ordinances with the solicitor and come to a decision of rewriting the city code book which will add names of council members that are exempt from any laws implemented by the city council. Whatever behavior of the city residents and tax payers, in her opinion, the elected officials should comply. 406 Walnut St. owned by Councilman Eister and his business partner Thomas McBryan seem to not be able to control what their tenant does. The tenant continues to violate a city ordinance that is not being enforced and should be enforced by the code office. Some council members have been drunk with power and abuse of authority forgetting the tax payers that pay into the city and have the right to expect a higher code of conduct from each council member. She continues to address some of the issues over and over with the hope that someone will hear her and help to solve the minor issues with the truth. 354 Walnut St. is still permitted to block the designated public sidewalk. If it is so important for this person to have a parking space then the part that they say is legal and it is 5' which is the curb cut – her suggestion would be to park in their curb cut and leave the public sidewalk space open so the children going to school, blind people, people with strollers and people in wheelchairs can use what is designated as a public sidewalk. It seems like the police and the code office continue to ignore that. She doesn't know why. Before the telephone call from Councilman Eister the code officers were enforcing the ordinance that she is being told is now private property. Prior to her telephone call received from Councilman Eister the code officers were doing their job and implementing and enforcing codes. They do not now. The ordinance clearly states that commercial vehicles over a certain weight should not be parked in a residential area or in an open way. That is an open way. There is a sign on the garage that says no parking so why is the man permitted to park there? She also asked Councilman Eister a couple years ago if this gentleman was running a business from the garage and the answer was no. If he is not running a business why is he permitted to park a commercial vehicle there and do repairs and have his friends helping him do repairs and nothing is being done when she calls police as she has been instructed to do. He is under the protection of some of the council members. She said Councilman Reichner is friends with Councilman Eister but she said she used to be friends with his relative Linda Danley and out of fear she has dropped Ms. Russell as her friend of 6 years because she has started coming to the meetings. It was out of fear of losing her job and that is an example showing the code office personnel are afraid of the people on the council. She said she is going to keep coming and talking about the properties. In front of Cellitti's storage facilities on Walnut St. people are parking overnight. Clearly there are no parking signs and there is not 5' left of the sidewalk. The person is parking legally because they are not in front of the yellow line but they are on the sidewalk. She also saw someone blocking the sidewalk on Lombard St. – someone has a large 4X4 that is blocking the entire sidewalk. She said council asks the citizens to help and support council on wanting to beautify the city but when someone like herself comes here they are humiliated, laughed at and scared of retaliation from anyone on council. She suggests that they are more considerate and have some integrity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There is a list of board positions for 2015 in council's packets.

Decorating Front St. and Market St. for the Christmas season beginning Nov. 17th at 9 am.

Santa Parade is Nov. 28th at 6:30 pm

Street sweeper schedule ends Nov. 14th.

Central Park - the police department is receiving many complaints concerning kids congregating at Central Park after dark. Fighting, foul language, littering, the use of illegal drugs and alcohol and damage to the band shell are all occurring at the park. While everyone is invited to use the public parks we will not tolerate illegal activity and destruction to continue. Effective Tuesday signs will be posted at the site that the park is open only during daytime hours. Anyone in the park after dark will be arrested. Surveillance cameras will also be installed at this site.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht, City Clerk