

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
September 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
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
John Bakowicz, City Engineer
Timothy Miller, Police Chief
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. Mayor Persing mentioned the city lost a huge supporter of the City of Sunbury when Sidney Apfelbaum died last week and also thanked everyone for cards and flowers for the loss of his mother.

An executive session was held prior to this meeting to discuss police personnel.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

The Minutes of 8/8/16 and 8/22/16 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 Councilwoman Henry. Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote. Minutes will be posted at cityofsunbury.com.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

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

CDBG UPDATE

The city council meeting adjourned and Mr. Rob Cook from SEDA-COG explained that the city is planning to submit a grant for funding for the HOME program which is a competitive, federal grant that comes through DCED. Grants in the amount of \$800,000 allowed rehabilitation of 25 units with an average cost of \$31,948 in Sunbury. The new round should be able to accommodate 12 units. The program has federal requirements which must meet income guidelines and a local requirement is that taxes and water/sewer are up-to-date. Targeted areas are set by city council. The anti-displacement plan states that people are not displaced in any way with the only exception is if there is someone very young living in a home with lead based paint. That has not happened in Sunbury. Before work begins the Environmental Review must take place. Someone at SEDA-COG makes an assessment of the entire city and when projects starts a Tier 2 ER is completed specific to the homes being worked on. Mr. Cook said written and open comments will be taken until September 22, 2016 by 4:00 pm and he provided his contact information on the agenda. October 10th a Resolution will be passed stating the city is interested in pursuing the grant. The grant must be applied for by October 31st. When properties are rehabilitated it usually increases property values in the neighborhood. Ms. Julie Broschious asked what the financial criteria is. Mr. Cook stated it mirrors Section 8 financial guidelines. Ms. Sue Goddard (SEDA-COG) said the numbers vary by county and the number of

people in households. It is not easy to give a specific answer. For a family of 1-2 the incomes guidelines would be approximately \$32,000-\$34,000 gross family income. They are not specific answers but would be close. Mr. Cook said that is the first question they ask when someone calls so they know if it should be discussed further. Ms. Meghan Beck asked if this would be in a specific neighborhood and Mr. Cook said he is working with the officials to identify an area where the most need is. They also look at their existing waiting list and other projects in specific areas. DCED likes to see improvements reflect other improvements that may not always be housing. That is why they chose the ward Chestnut St. is in for the current grant. They also look at private investment in a neighborhood such as a new restaurant or business going in.

SRI UPDATE

Ms. Meghan Beck said the main hall of the Albright Center had 30 volunteers from Susquehanna University to pull out carpet and padding. \$200,000 was received from the PA budget through Representative Lynda Culver and Senator John Gordner. The tax credit application is due next week. The Biz Pitch competition information will be coming out in the next few months. T-Biz is still moving forward but the Market St. location is not going to work and they may partner with the YMCA. Lake Augusta Wine and Brew Festival is Saturday from 1 to 5 pm. Tickets are available. The Renaissance Festival was last weekend and not well attended but there were positive comments about it. The summer concert at the end of the month is cancelled. October 22nd is Boos and Brews which is to benefit the Hill Neighborhood and will be held at the Armory from 1 to 5 pm. October 28th and 29th is their haunted house tours. Councilwoman Kremer said city council is never given a report on finances regarding the events SRI sponsors and yet they use city property. Ms. Beck said they don't because they are not an arm of the city. Ms. Beck said they would be glad to share reports if asked.

HARB APPROVAL

Councilman Reichner moved to approve the recommendation of HARB for 440 Chestnut St. Mr. Rhoads explained the new owners of the property want to put off-street parking in and have part of it as a yard. They want to put a 6' fence up to separate the 2 areas. The stipulation from HARB is that a fence or any future construction cannot be closer to the curb than the face of the existing house and the fence must be white. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

RESOLUTION/SUB-DIVISION 836 SUSQUEHANNA AVE/837 N RIVER AVE

Ms. Kula explained the properties were involved in a sub-division in 1990 and divided into 2 equal parcels with the above addresses. The sub-division plan was recorded June 24, 2002 and now the owner of 836 Susquehanna Ave. wants to sell the property but has found it was not sub-divided in accordance with the municipal planning code. In order to pass the title to 836 Susquehanna Ave., the prospective buyer has requested that the city pass this Resolution waiving any such requirement and acknowledging that it will not bring an enforcement action against the purchaser of the property or her heirs, successors and assigns (see attached Resolution). Councilman Reichner made the motion to pass the Resolution. Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote. Ms. Julie Broschious asked who the property owner is and Ms. Kula said it is under Harmon/Jones with Harmon probably being the prospective buyer.

FIRE DEPARTMENT RADIOS

Councilman Reichner said the county is upgrading their equipment and have provided some equipment to the fire companies but not all they need. The fire department wants to purchase additional communications equipment. They have asked if they could do it through a loan through the city as they did for air packs and repayment would come from the Fireman's Relief funding they receive every year. They are able to get a better finance rate going through the city. The amount needed is \$117,000. Mr. Troup would like 30 days to send a notice to local banks for funding. Councilman Henry moved to allow Mr. Troup to shop the local banks for financing and to have Ms. Kula draw up an Agreement for the pay back of the loan. Mr. Jerome Alex asked who would own the equipment and the answer is the fire department – all the city is doing is securing a loan at a better rate. Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote. Councilman Eister said the fire dept. should contact the bank they have their relief fund invested in to see what kind of rate they would get. Chief Wertz said he would discuss that with the fire dept. treasurer.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilwoman Kremer moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$35,726.15 from the General Fund and \$10,338.27 from Liquid Fuels. Second - Henry. Unanimous vote. Mr. Troup asked city council members to watch their spending through the end of the year.

TAX EXONERATION

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

DISCUSSION

Mayor Persing said the Chief of Police is moving forward with the Regulatory orders and SOP's for the police department. The contract is still in arbitration and he is hoping it is settled before budget time. Based on the 2017 contract and 2017 budget, a shift is going to be made toward criminal investigation giving Cpl. Quinn help since Sgt. Blasé has been off for some time. As the chief works on responsibilities other things might change. At this time, a new position is going to be created with responsibilities toward criminal investigation. The police dept. is moving forward in the right direction. Interviews for part-time officers are going on now and a test for an Eligibility list for full-time hires is scheduled for October 8th. Mayor Persing would like to see 12 officers in the department and will fight for that. Ms. Julie Brosicous asked what the sticking points of the arbitration are. Mayor Persing said there are 28 items in the contract which must be whittled down to 4 or 5. Ms. Kula said they are waiting to hear from the arbitrator and it is not a contract issue between management and the police. Someone from the audience asked who the Captain would be and Mayor Persing announced it would be Officer Stephen Bennick. Chief Miller asked Officer Bennick to come forward to have his captain bars pinned on his uniform. Mr. Kurt Kurlovich asked if there is a pay increase with the position and how was he chosen. Mayor Persing said that will be discussed this week and it was done by the Chief from within the department. Ms. Julie Brosicous said shouldn't they discuss that prior to the promotion and Mayor Persing said they have agreed on a "range" at this time and it will be discussed again. Officer Steve Mazzeo said there is money left from Officer Hawkins' salary and asked if this was a management position and the answer is yes. The funding left from Officer Hawkins salary would be going toward hiring part-time police officers.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Regina Russell, Community Activist: Was the person tasered a defenseless, intoxicated, black man? Mayor Persing said that is not true and it is an ongoing investigation subject to arbitration and they will not be commenting on it. After the appeal process is over comments can be made. She also asked whose responsibility it is with weeds in the street curbs. Mayor Persing said if it is growing along the curb it would be the property owner. Councilman Henry said it is too late this year but next year his department is going to spray all the streets at curbs only. Mayor Persing asked how they were going to spray every street in Sunbury. Ms. Russell also asked if the police officers are being trained properly. Chief Miller answered that is Municipal Police Officer's Education Training Commission and there are training hours they must attend every year to continue to be certified as a police officer in PA. The Sunbury police department has been trained. Right now they are doing their annual firearms qualifications. The state requires that they meet the minimum standard and if they were not they would not be certified. Ms. Brosicous asked if that is also reflected in the insurance policy. Chief Miller said he does not think that is so. Every department must adhere to the same standards set by the state. Ms. Russell asked what happened to the funds for neighborhood watch and can that be started again so the community can get involved with the police department. Mayor Persing said they funded about \$5,000/year. That was a private grant not city funds.

Julie Brosicous: What is the status of the GPS on city vehicles? Mayor Persing answered that has not been pursued at this time. She also asked when someone has a code complaint, what is the process? Councilman Reichner answered the clerk will give complaints to one of three code officers. They will enter it as a complaint into the system and go appraise the situation. If it is a valid complaint they will put their findings in the system, send a letter to the party (the landlord is responsible for the property if it is another situation such as garbage a letter will be send to both landlord and tenant), give a time frame to remedy the situation and if it is not completed the landlord may receive a

citation. Ms. Broschious asked if it is confidential after the complaint is done. Councilman Reichner answered the finding would not be confidential. Ms. Broschious asked if the person that is being complained about is told who made the complaint. Ms. Russell said in her neighborhood everyone is told who made the complaint so everyone knows it was her. Ms. Broschious said Regina has made many complaints and why did an officer show up on her doorstep and have the person being complained about with him. Councilman Reichner said he does not have a clue and asked when it happened. It was years ago. Ms. Broschious also said there are 2 receptacles in front of the home next to her that should have been emptied September 2nd by a recycler. Councilman Reichner said the agreement would be with the tenant and they could find out when it is supposed to be emptied. Perhaps the bill isn't paid so they won't pick it up. Councilman Reichner said someone will be there tomorrow to check it out.

Becky Enders: If she owned a double house in the city how many people can live in each side? Mr. Rhoads said they would have to evaluate the situation. There is a place near her that has about 20 people in a double house. Mr. Rhoads said he would check it.

Kurt Kurlovich: How many officers are there now? Chief Miller answered 7 plus 2 off on injury. He asked how many officers are on shift together and the mayor answered they try to have 2 at all times. Mr. Kurlovich asked since he is a newly appointed chief is he getting out and helping the guys? Mayor Persing said no, he was hired as an administrative chief only.

Fred Campbell: What has to be done to bring the police force to 12? Mayor Persing said it would depend on the budget. Mr. Campbell asked if there has been a tax increase thought about. The Mayor answered budget time is coming up. Mr. Campbell said he is for a tax increase if more police officers are hired.

Julie Broschious: Asked Councilmen Reichner and Eister about an article about LED lighting at businesses. Councilman Eister said they have discussed that with some businesses. Councilman Reichner said they have been talking to businesses that are open 24 hours/day to get together to increase the lighting at their buildings. There are 594 lights in the city that are high sodium lights and they will be replaced with LED lights. Once the contract with PPL is reviewed it will come before council for a vote. She said there are quite a few street lights out for some time. She said Bloomsburg made an agreement with PPL that it is their poles but the community replaces the lights. Councilman Eister said the city has that option too but the cost is outrageous.

Laurie Johnson: She and Ms. Beck have both been on the complaint end of the code office and they have never been able to find out who complained about their properties. They have asked and were never told. She also thanked the city and the fire police for helping with the Renaissance Faire. Councilman Reichner asked for signs for pedestrians to slow down due to people crossing to events at the river. Fire Chief Wertz said there are signs that say "be prepared to stop ahead." Mr. Jerome Alex said the Relief Association of the Fire Dept. could purchase signs like that because they could use them for fires and accidents.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The non-uniform employee MMO (Minimum Municipal Obligation) for 2017 is \$132,209.

The Lake Augusta Wine and Brew Festival is Saturday.

The Fire Dept. Memorial Service is October 16th with a parade at 1:30 and service at 2:00.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk