

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
November 11, 2013
6:15 pm

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

Todd E. Snyder, Director of Accounts and Finance
Joseph J. Bartello, III, 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:

Michael Kula, representing the City Solicitor
Elizabeth Kremer, City Treasurer
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Michael Bordner, Workforce Supervisor
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer and Fire Chief
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-nine (29) visitors present.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

Minutes of 10/14/13 and 10/28/13 and the 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 Snyder. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote. Minutes will be posted at cityofsunbury.com.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

Councilman Snyder said he would like to make a slight modification regarding the 2014 Budget discussion. He said tonight council will be voting on the 1st reading of the budget. Second reading will be scheduled on December 23rd.

Ms. Regina Russell asked Councilman Snyder if the reports approved were the monthly or quarterly reports that each council member is supposed to submit. Councilman Snyder explained the reports are prepared by the departmental personnel. Ms. Russell asked where the reports are filed so the public can receive a copy and Councilman Snyder answered they are in the city clerk's office.

SRI UPDATE

Ms. Meghan Beck said Litefest is hosting the Santa parade on November 29th at 6:30 m. The new terminology for the SPARC tax credit program is SPP instead of NPP. Some changes have to be made to the application. The banners will be returned to veteran's and their families on November 21st. The Business and Economic Development Committee is conducting surveys on how to best attract new businesses in the area. New Year's Eve plans are progressing. Some of the highlights are Magician Brent Kessler, free horse drawn carriage rides, Kingdom Kidz puppet show and a late night skate at the ice skating rink. Bad Medicine, a Bon Jovi tribute band will be the featured band. Lenape Solar and Triangle Tech are creating a new light bulb to be used in the New Year's Eve ceremony. SRI is looking for volunteers on December 2nd from 2-4 pm to paint store windows for Late Night Shoppers on December 5th.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Ms. Jamie Shrawder said she is in attendance at this meeting to have council approve the engineering firm for the Chestnut St. project. She gave council members a chart that shows the amount for services and project duration and frequency of visits (see attached). The average is approximately 4 months. CES Engineering is the best price for the amount of work at \$43,500. Mr. Lee Zeger of that firm is the engineer for the clearance/demolition CDBG project. Ms. Shrawder said he will be the best choice and makes the recommendation to award the bid to CES Engineering. Councilman Eister made the motion to award the bid to CES Engineering. Councilman Bartello asked why there was such a big difference in prices. Ms. Shrawder said she feels the people that bid at over \$100,000 do not want the work. Buchart Horn has the highest bid and Ms. Shrawder said again they probably have enough work and

did not want this project. Councilman Troup said overhead costs are factored into the cost. CES Engineering will already be in Sunbury for the demolition/clearance project so he did not have to charge travel twice. Councilman Snyder asked if in the contract there are specifics as to the scope of work and Ms. Shrawder answered yes. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

Ms. Shrawder said on November 21st she is meeting with the mayor at the Municipal Authority to look at their mapping software for the targeted code enforcement project that was previously discussed. If anyone wants to join them they will be meeting at 4:15. Next Wednesday a pre-construction conference is scheduled at 10:00 am with CES Engineering and Steinbacher Excavating regarding the demolition/clearance project for Chestnut St and Front St. Any council member is welcome to attend.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilman Snyder moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$150,359.83 from the General Fund and \$137,814.18 from the Wolverton St. Project. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

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

1st READING/2014 BUDGET

Councilman Snyder explained a vote on the first reading of the budget must be held to give 20 days notice to anyone that wants to look at the budget. The draft budget as shown includes a 2 mil tax increase. Councilman Snyder noted that as in years past council will work on the budget to mitigate any tax increase. He said it isn't guaranteed there won't be a tax increase but they will work hard not to do that. Between now and December 23rd budget modifications can be made to get to a budget that council members are as comfortable as they can be with it. Councilman Snyder moved to pass the budget as shown on the worksheet on a 1st reading. Second – Eister. No – Bartello. Yes – Troup, Eister, Snyder. Motion carried. The next budget meeting is scheduled for November 18th at 6:00 pm. The public is invited to attend.

FREE PARKING ON METERED STREETS

Councilman Troup moved to pass free parking from November 29th through January 1st for all metered streets. Parking Lots are not free. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Mr. Scott Schwartz said he brought up the feral cat issue and he got a copy of Northumberland's ordinance as passed by their council. Mr. Schwartz said their ordinance does not go into effect until January 1st. He also said at the last meeting an audience member said feeding the feral cats did not have an effect on their travel area. He said he is reading that if you feed them they will continue to come, multiply and attract other vermin. Councilman Troup said he knows that is true in his neighborhood. Councilman Troup said Northumberland Borough has scheduled a meeting with other municipalities in Northumberland County in November to see if there is any interest in a county-wide ordinance.

Mr. Bob Werline asked if insurance will be taken out on the new K-9. Chief Mazzeo said the dog is training right now. His intent was to see where the budget goes and proceed from there.

Ms. Regina Russell said at the last meeting she asked how much money was accumulated for houses that were under demolition and she asked if that total was available. Councilman Snyder said he does not have that information because of working on the budget. Ms. Russell asked if there is an audit done before he leaves office. Councilman Snyder explained there is an outside audit conducted every year and all the books are audited. Ms. Russell said she has been attending meetings for over a year and is still trying to address Councilman Eister's property at 406 Walnut St. Each time she vocally expresses something such as naming ordinances or complaining about something the tenant is doing, it seems like he is told something from someone to continue what he does and it seems like why is this person not following any type of ordinances. Why isn't he being fined? In the 3 years she has been complaining, he was fined 1 time. The last time she mentioned (and brought pictures) the dumpster has warning stickers on it for children not to play on it. Now there is an older rusted dumpster there that is higher in height. When she looks out her window she is looking at dumping grounds. She would like consideration in asking him or Councilman Eister to park the dumpster somewhere else. It is collecting water in the rain and it is a health issue. She does not understand where anyone's integrity is about this. If it wasn't Councilman Eister's property she sincerely believes this would have been handled and the gentleman would not be able to continue doing what he has been doing. Let him park it around the

corner in front of his property in his block. There is a railroad and a parking lot near the high school and why does it have to be on a residential street. It does not make the homeowners properties look good. The quarterly newsletter from the City is asking homeowners to be accountable for beautification of the City. They ask the tenants to have the responsibility also. Some how code cannot enforcement anything. She said she knows council is trying to make a point to her about who has the power but this is not about power. It is about the value of someone's neighborhood and their property. She is a homeowner that pays her taxes and wants the same consideration if it was their neighborhood and look out a window and see what she is looking at. Ms. Shrawder said she would speak about the demolition money. Councilman Snyder said Ms. Russell wants to know the accumulative costs the Redevelopment Authority has spent versus houses sold. Ms. Shrawder said the CDBG funds spent on demolition are not meant to make the funds back. \$270,000 of CDBG money has been spent to clean up blighted properties and approximately \$25,000 has been made on the sale. 30% of what is made can go back into demolition. The rest has to go into other CDBG projects. Ms. Shrawder explained the city takes possession of the property, demolishes it and auctions the land off to the high bidder. Lots are not worth much because they are small and do not meet codes to build on them. They are generally sold to the neighbor for a side yard. That is why CDBG funds are being used – to get rid of the blight.

Ms. Becky Enders asked when contracts are signed and the low bid is accepted, are references checked? Councilman Snyder said there is a due diligence process and contracts are turned over to the city solicitor to review and insure there is proper bonding and certificates of insurance among other items he looks for. Ms. Enders said the city did not get a good deal when the company replaced the gas lines. Councilman Troup explained that is up to the gas company, not the City. The City does not do any kind of bid or contract with the gas company. He is aware that they have not been patching the holes properly but he is constantly talking to them about doing the job properly. Councilman Snyder explained utility companies have the right to tear up streets to repair and replace and unfortunately municipalities have to fight with them to make the street the way it was before it was torn up. Councilman Snyder said if citizens complain to the utilities, they would have that on their record and if there are enough complaints they might change their ways. Ms. Enders said the hole at 4th & Raspberry Ave is sinking again. Councilman Troup said they have been in touch with UGI regarding that area. Councilman Snyder also said they should write to the legislators to be able to fix the streets if not done properly by the utility and bill them for that work. At this time that can't be done.

Ms. Jan Dockey asked where the cameras are monitored. Councilman Snyder said the cameras are in place to record and store data for investigative purposes for whenever it is needed. When an incident happens they can go to the cameras and get the video. No one monitors it 24 hours a day. The system was not designed with that in mind.

Ms. Laurie Johnson said she has been attending council meetings for a long time and she has been hearing Ms. Russell complain about Councilman Eister. Ms. Johnson said her business is landlocked and is held hostage by Mr. Danley who said he owns the alley. No other hauler can get in to get her garbage. The only place she can dump her garbage is between his building and hers. She said maybe what is happening at Councilman Eister's property is it is being used for the dumpster. She doesn't know because she hasn't seen it but maybe he has no other place to put it. Maybe she should check that out before she complains for a year about it. Ms. Russell said Ms. Johnson should check out 406 Walnut St. It is a garage being rented to a tenant so Councilman Eister has the authority to say it has to be moved. Ms. Johnson said maybe he is stuck like her business is.

Mr. Dan Saxton, secretary of the Sunbury Fire Dept said the fire department is always struggling for revenue and volunteers. On November 16th they are having a fundraiser in conjunction with Ford Motor Company in Dearborn Michigan from 9 am to 4 pm. All you do is test drive a vehicle and complete a survey. No one calls you and there is no cost or obligation. For every test drive, \$20.00 is donated to the Sunbury Fire Dept. It is done for market research. The event is happening at the Shikellamy High School and they will have food and music. They can make up to \$6,000.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk