 Johnstown Common Council

Business Meeting - Council Chambers, City Hall

Monday, January 18, 2022 @ 6:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

Due to Covid-19 this meeting was closed to the public but broadcast using Facebook Live. The public was able to view the meeting from the official City of Johnstown Facebook page: City of Johnstown, New York

The proceedings of this meeting were taped for the benefit of the City Clerk; the minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings, therefore the minutes are not a word-for-word transcript.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Amy Praught, Mayor

ROLL CALL OF COUNCIL – Carrie M. Allen, City Clerk

IN ATTENDANCE:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [x] Amy Praught, Mayor | [x] Thomas Herr, City Treasurer |
| [x] Scott Jeffers, Council Member-at-Large  | [x] Michael J. Poulin, City Attorney  |
| [x] Bradley Hayner, Council Member Ward 1 | [x] Carrie M. Allen, City Clerk |
| [x] Scott Miller, Council Member Ward 2 | [x] Bruce Heberer, Fire Chief |
| [x] Eric Parker, Council Member Ward 3 | [x] David F. Gilbo, Chief of Police |
| [x] Max Spritzer, Council Member Ward 4 | [x] Christopher J. Vose, City Engineer[x] Diedrie M. Roemer, Director, Senior Citizens Program |

ABSENT - None

PUBLIC SESSION

An open question and answer forum to discuss issues pertaining to the Water Department Limited State of Emergency was held. Council Member Max Spritzer monitored Facebook during the session in order read any questions or comments and relay them to the Council.

* Mayor stated the State of Emergency is in effect until February 1st. City is running the day to day operations of the water department. She is working with the City Engineer (Vose) and Plant Operator (Denmark). Working on filling positions that are vacant; down 5 people not including 1A Operator and 2 trainees. Vose stated the next Water Trainee test is in March.
* Mayor asked Denmark to fill everyone in on status of water main break near Noble Ace Hardware. This is a section of water main that was put in 1992. There is hot soil in that area, which means something is attacking the water main. This will need to be replaced with high density polyethylene pipe. There have been about 8 leaks in the pipe since 1992 and the rest of the pipe is in rough shape. There are plans to replace 800 feet of the pipe.
* The Mayor acknowledged the effort of the water department and DPW working together; Vose stated this has always been the goal. Councilmember Miller questioned why this is an issue if they are both departments of the City? Vose clarified that while they are all the city there has always been contention over who controls the water department employees. DPW has always done their best to assist the water department and is proud of how they’ve worked together over the last few years despite some head-butting.
* No comment or questions were presented from the public. The Mayor closed the Public Session at 6:09.

PRESENTATIONS – N/A

PUBLIC HEARING – N/A

APPROVE MINUTES

December 20, 2021

Motion to approve – Council Member Spritzer

Seconded – Council Member Parker

Discussion: None

Ayes: 4

Noes: 1

Absent: 0

Abstain: 1 (Miller)

January 1, 2022

Motion to approve – Council Member Miller

Seconded – Council Member Spritzer

Discussion: None

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Absent: 0

Abstain: 0

APPROVE CLAIMS AND ACCOUNTS

Motion to approve, upon review – Council Member Parker

Seconded – Council Member Jeffers

Discussion: None

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Absent: 0

Abstain: 0

REPORTS FROM CITY DEPARTMENTS

Reports are attached hereto and made part of the meeting minutes.

* Spritzer commended the DPW crews on snow removal efforts. Vose said there have been a few issues this year but they’ve been addressed. Snow removal has always been a source of pride for them.
* Mayor asked Vose to explain the process for snow removal on sidewalks. Vose explained that the city takes care of city-owned sidewalks, property owners are responsible and liable for maintenance of their own sidewalks. His office fields complaints and if they aren’t taken care of the owners are notified.
* Spritzer brought up snow removal of hydrants to Chief Heberer. Heberer asked that if residents have a hydrant near their property it is a help to them and water department to assist in keeping them clear.
* Parker told Vose that it is nice to see that Miller Street Bridge is open after 10 years, and the sign dedicated to Mayor Julius. Vose said that the former mayor wanted to get the bridge done and was a driving force to get the funding for the bridge. Vose said that having the bridge open is going to be nice for a detour route when work begins on the Townsend Avenue Bridge.
* Parker asked Vose when he starts making a list for the roads to be paved, and how it comes up with the list. Vose states that they pave based on need, he tries to include streets in each ward. The garbage truck and plow truck employees help come up with a list, as they drive on all the city streets. The Mayor asked if all the funding was used. Vose stated that he tries to leave approx. $30k for contingency money which rolls over year to year.
* Miller asked Vose for the figures from Landfill (dumping vs. transfer fees), Vose apologized for not having the numbers but will provide information to Miller via email.
* Jeffers asked the Treasurer Herr how long it will take to do the 2019 & 2020 audits, once 2018 is done. Herr said that he hopes to have everything completed by the end of February.
* Parker pointed out that in the Treasurer’ office report that the sales tax was up 16% which is a much higher number than originally estimated in the budget.
* Spritzer asked the Senior Center Director Roemer if attendance at the center has been affected. Roemer said that she is not seeing much of a change, seniors are still coming out for activities. Proof of vaccine is required or wear a mask.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISONS

* Parker; Water Board

Organizational Meeting was held on January 3rd. Mike Capparello was named President, George DiMarco was named Vice President. Next meeting is scheduled for January 24th.

* Vose; Sewer Board

Appointed officers and set committees. Gloversville now represents the Board after 2 years of Johnstown representing. Officer will be Trudell as Chair, Vose as Vice and Siarkowski as Secretary.

LOCAL LAW – N/A

ORDINANCE – N/A

MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS

* Finance / Budget / Audit Committee

Councilmember Parker, Councilmember Spritzer

* Personnel Committee

Councilmember Hayner, Councilmember, Spritzer

* Public Safety Committee

Councilmember at Large Jeffers, Councilmember Miller, City Engineer Chris Vose, Police Chief Dave Gilbo and Fire Chief Heberer

RESOLUTIONS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 15. | Authorize Assessor to grant exemptions on 2022 Assessment Roll |
|  | Presented by Councilmember  | Hayner | Seconded by Councilmember  | Jeffers |
|  | Discussion: Parker asked what the exemptions were for. Poulin said they were for disability, senior, etc. |
|  | Ayes: 5 |  |  |
|  | Noes: 0 |  |  |
|  | Absent: 0  |  |  |
|  | Abstain: 0 |  |  |

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| --- | --- |
| 16. | Accept offer – city owned property from Gary Havlicek |
|  | Presented by Councilmember  | Miller | Seconded by Councilmember  | Hayner |
|  | Discussion: Jeffers asked if he’s bought city property before. It was a consensus that no one believed he had. Vose said the city has no plans to develop this property, which is located end of Yost Street and ballfield. There is no feasible way for the city to develop the properties in that area because of location. This is a good way to get a little bit of tax revenue back on the books. Miller asked if the paper street at end of Yost Street got Quit Deeded over to the ballfield. Vose said he believes part of it did. He also stated that the city can’t really Quit Deed paper streets as there aren’t any SBL’s associated to the properties. Miller asked Vose how we came up with a price; almost 3 acres. Offers are accepted and presented to Council for consideration. Vose stated yes its 3 acres but its landlocked 3 acres, not developable property which are factors to take in to consideration. Mr. Havlicek can’t develop property on paper street that borders his property, only the city can.  |
|  | Ayes: 5 |  |  |
|  | Noes: 0 |  |  |
|  | Absent: 0  |  |  |
|  | Abstain: 0 |  |  |
| 17. | Appointment – Sewer Board |
|  | Presented by Councilmember  | Parker | Seconded by Councilmember  | Miller |
|  | Discussion: None |
|  | Ayes: 4 |  |  |
|  | Noes: 0 |  |  |
|  | Absent: 0  |  |  |
|  | Abstain: 1 (Hayner) |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| 18. | Employee Handbook – Health Insurance |
|  | Presented by Councilmember  | Spritzer | Seconded by Councilmember  | Hayner |
|  | Discussion: None |
|  | Ayes: 5 |  |  |
|  | Noes: 0 |  |  |
|  | Absent: 0  |  |  |
|  | Abstain: 0 |  |  |

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| --- | --- |
| 19. | Agreement – Senior Citizens Service Center, Inc., |
|  | Presented by Councilmember  | Jeffers | Seconded by Councilmember  | Hayner |
|  | Discussion: Parker pointed out that the amount of payments in Resolution needs to be amended, figure is from 2021. $39,666 not $36,666 |
|  | Ayes: 5 |  |  |
|  | Noes: 0 |  |  |
|  | Absent: 0  |  |  |
|  | Abstain: 0 |  |  |

DISCUSSION

* Mayor Praught advised that the City Treasurer has submitted paperwork to Civil Service for a Human Resource Officer for the City. She feels it’s a necessary position. The position was included in the 2022 Budget. Miller clarified that the city would be creating this position.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Presidents’ Day – Monday, February 21st; city offices closed
2. Business Meeting – Tuesday, February 22nd @ 6:00 p.m.
3. Mayor congratulated Alexis Houser, Ms. Fulton County, as city of Johnstown resident and also to Isabella Henderson, Ms. Montgomery County.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council Member at Large Jeffers made a motion to enter in to executive session at 6:34 p.m. for the purpose of discussion of proposed, pending and current litigation.

Seconded – Council Member Hayner

Discussion: None

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Absent: 0

Abstain: 0

No action was taken during executive session.

Council Member Spritzer made a motion to come out of executive session at 7:05 p.m.

Seconded – Council Member Hayner

Discussion - None

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Absent: 0

Abstain: 0

MOTION TO ADJOURN at 7:06 p.m.

Council Member Hayner

Seconded – Council Member Spritzer

Discussion: None

Ayes: 5

Noes: 0

Absent: 0

Abstain: 0

Respectfully submitted,



Carrie M. Allen, City Clerk