



CITY COUNCIL

Committee of the Whole

Monday, February 22, 2016

5:00 pm

Agenda

Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted at Council Committee of the Whole meetings. However, citizens are encouraged to attend and observe the meetings. Comment from citizens or professionals during the meeting may be solicited on agenda topics via invitation by the President of Council.

All electronic recording devices must be located behind the podium area in Council Chambers and located at the entry door in all other meeting rooms and offices, as per Bill No.27-2012.

- I. Access to Records/Information**
- II. Review Snow Emergency Plan**
- III. Alvernia Area and the DCNR**
- III. Agenda Review**
- IV. Other Matters**



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
February 8, 2016
5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, C Daubert, B. Twyman, D. Reed, J. Slifko, J. Waltman

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, W. Scott, A. Dominguez

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:02 pm by Mr. Waltman.

I. Executive Session

Mr. Waltman announced the need for an executive session relating to personnel matters. Council entered executive session at 5:03 pm and exited at 6:43 pm.

Mr. Dominguez and Mr. Scott left the meeting at this time.

II. Agenda Review

Mr. Cituk and Mr. Murray joined the meeting at this time.

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including:

- Resolution ratifying the AFSCME 3799 contract with first level supervisors
- Mr. Waltman stated that the Administration has requested that this resolution be withdrawn from this evening's agenda. Council agreed to withdraw the resolution.

III. Other Matters

- Managing Director

Mr. Waltman distributed a draft memo for Council review. He suggested that the memo be reviewed by the Solicitor before public comment is made.

- Council BAC assignments

Mr. Waltman distributed copies of the resolution making the Council BAC assignments. He stated that he will be unable to serve on BCAP and requested that a senior member of Council staff attend in his place. He recommended Ms. Katzenmoyer and stated that the next meeting will be held tomorrow at noon. Mr. Twyman agreed to attend as well but stated that he does not want to overburden his schedule at this time.

Mr. Daubert stated that Mr. Twyman should be added as an alternate to the Recreation Commission. Mr. Twyman stated that they struggle to meet quorum on a regular basis. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the Rec Commission's solicitor has opined that only two Councilors can vote on any given topic.

IV. Access to Records

Mr. Waltman suggested that Council staff compose a memo regarding work flow issues from the loss of access to property maintenance records.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that access not be completely eliminated but that there needs to be policy about how to use the information. Mr. Daubert agreed and stated that he supports the need for a paper trail.

Ms. Kelleher stated that she did follow the designated process with the request by sending it through the Citizen Service Center (CSC). Mr. Waltman suggested that the situation be documented and discussed at an upcoming meeting.

Ms. Reed stated that many times constituents make requests of Councilors and Council staff. Mr. Younger suggested that it may be an issue of access to the system rather than to the information itself.

Ms. Reed stated that if access is not reinstated that there needs to be an appropriate response time. Mr. Younger suggested that the Administration may respond only if there is an issue. Council did not agree with this approach.

Mr. Waltman stated that further discussion is needed. He stated that Council led the way to correct the data in the database.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz reminded all that the system of requesting information did not work well in the past and that's when access was granted. (*Note: access to the database has always been read only.*)

Ms. Reed expressed the belief that controlling access to information is always problematic.

Mr. Waltman noted the need to find middle ground. He stated that healthy relationships function well and that data access is needed.

Mr. Daubert questioned if the system can log usage. Mr. Waltman stated that it cannot log usage. He stated that the read only access has been removed and all requests for property information must go through the CSC.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that the property data be made public. Mr. Slifko agreed and stated that this is a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) issue and that it should be available.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that many questions need to be answered.

Ms. Kelleher explained that this process is also used for backgrounds on applicants to BACs. She stated that the information obtained is not even disclosed to Councilors and is held confidentially by Council staff. She stated that staff works with individuals to resolve issues.

Mr. Twyman noted his concern with this issue and the need for further discussions.

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk*



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

February 16, 2016

5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, B. Twyman, J. Slifko, J. Waltman

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, B. Rivera, C. Zale, D. Cituk, R. Johnson, G. Mann

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz. Council began the committee meetings as a Committee of the Whole since several Council members were interested in items on each individual committee agenda.

I. 2015 Preliminary Year End Results

Mr. Mann stated that the 2015 preliminary year end results are positive. He stated that half of the \$4 million ending balance was the unused contingency fund. He stated that EIT revenue was up 5% in 2015 and that the increase is attributed to the resident portion of the tax. He stated that he will be studying this trend.

Ms. Kelleher suggested that perhaps Berks EIT is continuing to find residents who did not pay EIT taxes in the past. Mr. Mann stated that this is possible.

Mr. Mann stated that the Real Estate Transfer Tax must also be studied. He stated that a loophole was recently closed by State law to capture more transactions. He stated that the City's cost of healthcare also needs further review.

Mr. Waltman stated that Council uses the recovery plan when preparing its budget. He suggested that the recovery plan be reviewed in early 2016 for progress and to update the projections. Mr. Mann agreed. He stated that after he looks at the issues above in

greater detail he will plug the updated figures into the recovery plan to update the projections and to note progress the City has made.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that Council receive quarterly reviews of the budget in relation to the recovery plan.

Mr. Waltman stated that it is also very important for the public to understand that the budgets are based on the recovery plan.

Mr. Mann congratulated the City for its positive fund balance as it works to exit Act 47.

Mr. Waltman stated that it is critical that the City is healthy as it exits Act 47 to avoid receivership. He noted the need to rebuild the local economy.

Mr. Marmarou stated that a news story today reported that another PA employer is moving operations to Mexico to reduce labor costs.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted how federal legislation affects local communities. She stated that not all members of Council can attend the Act 47 meetings held on Thursday afternoons. She questioned the need to continue these meetings. Mr. Mann stated that initially these meetings were set up to keep communication open and to build trust. He stated that he is willing to provide updates directly to Council and he is open to revising the meeting schedule.

Mr. Pottiger joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Waltman agreed that meetings should include all of Council and suggested a monthly update.

Ms. Kelleher suggested that the update occur at the Strategic Planning Committee meeting since all members of Council attend. Council agreed. This agenda topic will be added for the April Committee meeting.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for the Mayor to be informed of this change. Mr. Waltman requested Ms. Kelleher inform the Mayor's office.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the Mayor's ideas regarding finances will also impact the City's financial recovery. She noted the need for the public to understand what Act 47 is and what it means to the City.

Mr. Waltman stated that the City must try to avoid receivership. He stated that if the City exits Act 47 and is not solvent there will still be problems.

II. Update Fire Tower and East Ends Agreements

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that there has been an attempt to review all lease agreements. She stated that the Mayor is currently reviewing the East Ends agreement but that there is no written agreement with Pagoda Skyline for the Fire Tower.

Mr. Marmarou stated that the Standards of Living Committee and the law office have begun reviewing the agreements.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the Mayor was reviewing both of these locations. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she is only aware that he is reviewing East Ends.

Mr. Johnson stated that he does not have any additional information on these locations. Mr. Younger stated that they are under review by a legal specialist. He stated that the East Ends lease agreement has expired.

Mr. Waltman requested a more detailed update in the near future.

Mr. Twyman questioned if there was a specific concern about the Fire Tower. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that there is not. However, the Fire Tower is being opened to the public and there are risks involved.

Mr. Twyman noted the need for consistency with agreements and to keep people involved. Council voiced its agreement. Mr. Waltman stated that liability to the City can be problematic without written agreements.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz praised Pagoda Skyline for their efforts to preserve Skyline Dr.

III. Pagoda Wall

Mr. Johnson stated that he is working with the construction manager who performed work on the wall in the past. He stated that the proposal is being reviewed by law and the consultant will try to determine why this issue keeps recurring. He stated that the wall is dry laid and that the entire wall may be sagging. He noted the need to find the cause of the issue before further construction occurs.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned public safety in the area. Mr. Johnson stated that this will be accessed and the area cordoned off as necessary.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that in historic photos of the area there were three retaining walls but that two are now totally gone.

Mr. Johnson stated that the City has many locations where it has deferred maintenance and is working on a plan to address the items.

IV. UGI Meters

Mr. Johnson stated that his staff reviews the street cut permits.

Mr. Younger stated that this issue is being litigated and further updates would require an executive session.

V. Agreements with Playground Associations & Other Organizations

Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that the Standards of Living Committee has been routinely reviewing lease agreements.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that Ms. Katzenmoyer prepare a list of the agreements that have already been reviewed and the agreements requiring review for all members of Council.

VI. Other Matters

Mr. Waltman noted the need for Council to revisit codes issues, litter, trash, the Penn Street properties and street paving.

Mr. Marmarou expressed the belief that the 300 block of N 5th St is one of the worst in the City with litter and trash. Mr. Waltman agreed and noted the need for the City's gateways to sparkle. He stated that he picks up trash where he is able and that there is litter everywhere throughout the City. He noted the need to hold residents accountable for their environment.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that this issue be placed on the Strategic Planning agenda. She noted the need for Council to tie issues to legislation to move the City forward.

Mr. Waltman suggested that instead of inspectors issuing tickets that they function as resource officers and assist and engage the community.

Mr. Marmarou stated that these issues tend to be worse where there is a concentration of rental properties.

Mr. Waltman stated that codes issues are still big issues and that the City overall should not look this dirty.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that Mineral Spring Rd near the Lindberg Viaduct looks filthy. She noted the need for a reality check when it comes to some feeling that visitors are less important to the City than its residents.

Mr. Twyman expressed the belief that clean-ups should be done by City employees earning a minimum wage. He also noted the need to utilize the City's Clean City Coordinator.

Mr. Waltman stated that this issue must be driven by the Administration with Council support.

Mr. Twyman stated that the Can-It model also worked well. He stated that during his travels to Washington DC, Philadelphia, and New York City he compares them to Reading and that Reading is not bad.

Mr. Waltman expressed the belief that government cannot solve this issue but that it must be through an engaged and accountable population.

Mr. Slifko expressed the belief that gateway beautification is important and suggested forming a task force to study the issue. He stated that the City can make policy changes as necessary based on their findings. Council agreed with this approach.

Mr. Waltman suggested that after the gateways are addressed that the program expand into the neighborhoods.

The Committee of the Whole disbanded to begin the Finance Committee at 5:50 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk*



CITY OF READING, PA
MEMORANDUM

TO: Department Directors; Division Managers
CC: City Council
FROM: Mayor Wally Scott *WS*
DATE: 3 February 2016
SUBJECT: New Procedures for Accessing Internal Records

As you may be aware, my administration recently took actions to limit the access to the city data management system for Property Maintenance records. I am providing this memorandum to explain the reasoning behind this policy and to correct some misinformation that has recently been made public.

First, this new policy is not preventing anyone in my administration from accessing records and information stored in the system. What this policy will do is provide a level of accountability, control, and record-keeping that is currently missing from aspects of the process.

Secondly, as it regards City Council staff, the water billing information is retrieved via council request to RAWA staff; Property tax info is, and continues to be, publically accessible via Berks County; and Individual tax information requests are submitted to Berks Earned Income Tax staff either directly or via City Hall Customer Service Center staff. None of these processes have been altered in any way. The change that was made brought the access of Property Maintenance information in to alignment with the aforementioned operations.

Employees continue to have access to information that is essential city business in service to our customers, the citizens of Reading. Clerks in the City Property Maintenance Department have full access to the Property Maintenance related records stored in city databases as access is necessary for the performance of their duties. However, other employees, outside of the Property Maintenance function, and who do not require full time access to perform the day-to-day responsibilities of their position, will be required to make a written request for the specific information or records that they are seeking.

Requiring a written request provides an additional layer of accountability to those who provide sensitive information to the City because it will limit electronic record inquiries to those who are using the system for essential City business while ensuring that city staff are responsive to those requests.

Obviously, requiring this extra step in the process could potentially hinder legitimate use of the system. However, I can assure you that the procedures we put in place will result in only minimal interruptions.

I hope this memorandum clarifies the issues regarding the actions my administration has taken. I look forward to working with you in improving this process.



Without Access to the Hansen Database Council Staff:

- Loses ability to create labels using the property addresses within the database
- Loses the ability to check zoning on a property
- Loses ability to verify information on a Conditional Use application
- Loses ability to check current ownership for a property
- Loses ability to obtain contact information for the current property owner
- Loses the ability to see Building and Trades permits approved
- Loses ability to view property maintenance information on a property
- Loses ability to run various reports within the database such as the Blighted Property report for the BPRC
- Loses ability to respond to Council and citizen inquiries re zoning and rental history, etc.
- Loses ability to check if a property owner has a business license and has paid business privilege taxes.
- Loses ability to check status of QoL tickets issued at a property
- Loses ability to see the complaints made at a property
- No longer has direct access to public information