



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
November 25, 2013
4:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Sterner, S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, D. Reed, F. Acosta, R. Corcoran

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, T. Butler

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 4:39 pm by Council President Acosta.

I. Executive Session

Mr. Acosta announced the need for an executive session to discuss to litigation. Council entered executive session at 4:39 pm.

Mr. Waltman, Mr. Spencer, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Snyder, Mr. Cituk, Mr. Murin and Mr. Denbowski arrived at this time.

Council exited executive session at 5:41 pm.

II. Agenda Review

Mr. Daubert and Mr. Bembenick arrived at this time.

Ms. Kelleher stated that an ordinance amending the Recovery Plan must be added to the agenda for introduction this evening. This amendment addresses the request to retain the current EIT rates for residents and non-residents.

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including the following:

- Ordinances setting the 2014 property tax rate

Mr. Acosta explained that Ordinance 60-2013 keeps the current format for property taxes and that Ordinance 61-2013 moves to the Land Value Tax. He stated that the Administration requested that both options remain on the agenda for a vote.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that both ordinances cannot be passed. Council must make a choice.

- Ordinance setting the 2014 General Fund Budget

Ms. Snyder stated that the budget ordinance contains all the changes as they were reviewed with Council.

Mr. Waltman questioned the recycling ruling on the budget. Ms. Snyder stated that \$500,000 is included in the budget to cover the six full time employees who were transferred back to Public Works and that \$1 million has been added to the contingency fund for recycling costs.

Mr. Waltman questioned if Council approval was needed to use the contingency fund. Ms. Snyder stated that it is needed and reminded all that \$1 million will not cover a full year of recycling activity at the current programming level.

Mr. Waltman questioned when the City appeared before the Court regarding the non-resident EIT. Ms. Snyder stated that the Court appearance is tomorrow morning. She stated that PFM will be present and that the City has the support of DCED.

- Ordinance setting the 2014 Capital Improvement Program Budget

Ms. Snyder stated that the only item is \$500,000 for the Central PA African American Museum project.

- Ordinance setting the 2014 Employee Positions

Ms. Snyder stated that the ordinance includes all the items and adjustments discussed with Council during budget discussions.

- Ordinance setting the resident EIT rate at 1.5% and the non-resident EIT rate at 1.3%

Ms. Snyder suggested tabling these ordinances until the City learns the outcome of the judge's decision on the EIT rates.

- Ordinance increasing the Per Capita Tax

Mr. Waltman stated that he does not support this increase. He stated that the City must do better in finding everyone who should be paying before those who do pay see an increase. He stated that he is not convinced the City is pursuing those who do not pay.

Ms. Reed stated that she is comfortable with the increase since an outside agency will be finding all those who should pay. She stated that this is a fairer way to increase taxes than always relying on property tax increases.

Mr. Waltman stated that Reading has a very transient population.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she supports the \$15 increase as it is more affordable than a property tax increase.

Mr. Marmarou stated that he also supports this increase.

III. Inauguration

Mr. Acosta stated that he is working to secure the ballroom at the Abe Lincoln for the inauguration ceremony. He stated that there is a committee doing the planning and that the committee will be asking for donations. The event will also be used as a way to display the refurbished art pieces found in City Hall.

The inauguration will be held on Monday, January 6 at 6 pm.

Mr. Acosta requested that Ms. Katzenmoyer secure piano music for before the event begins as people are arriving and a patriotic piece during the ceremony.

Mr. Corcoran's farewell event will be held on Wednesday, December 18 at 5:30 pm at Sofrito.

IV. Pagoda flagpole

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that there is a contingent who would rather have the flagpole at the fire tower.

Ms. Reed stated that she does not support this location. She stated that Mr. McMahon has done extensive research on the issue and stated that the pole will be lower, have a solar light and internal ropes which cannot be vandalized.

Mr. Marmarou stated that internal ropes also become problematic over time.

Council voiced its preference to keep the flagpole at the pagoda.

V. Reorganization

Mr. Acosta reviewed the Council committee structure and stated that committee placements must be made this January in addition to the naming of Council Vice President.

Mr. Acosta reviewed the list of Council seats on other BACs and community organizations. Mr. Daubert voiced his willingness to serve on the Recreation Commission.

Ms. Reed stated that she is willing to remain as a representative to the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS).

The meeting adjourned at 6:17 pm.

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