

City of Reading City Council
Regular Meeting
February 8, 2016

Council President Waltman called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by a representative of Pastor Felipe Fana, Iglesia Misionera La Senda.

All present pledged to the flag.

The executive session held during the Committee of the Whole meeting was regarding personnel matters.

ATTENDANCE

Council President Waltman
Councilor Daubert, District 1
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2
Councilor Twyman, District 3
Councilor Marmarou, District 4
Councilor Reed, District 5
Councilor Slifko, District 6
City Auditor D. Cituk
City Solicitor C. Younger
City Clerk L. Kelleher
Mayor W. Scott

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

City Clerk administered the Oath of Office to:

- 2nd Deputy Fire Chief Larry B. Moyer Jr.
- Lieutenant-Fire Prevention Officer Robert J. Stichter
- Fire Marshal Jeremey L. Searfoss

Council recognition of Berks Catholic Berks Best fall sports

Mayoral proclamation for Sam Bryant for his snow removal efforts

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Waltman stated that there are six (6) citizens registered to address Council; five (5) on non-agenda matters and one (1) citizen registered on agenda matters. He inquired if any Councilor objected to suspending the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting. As no one objected the rule was suspended.

Councilor Daubert read the public speaking rules that were adopted by Council.

Andres Acuna, of Eckert Avenue, announced the recent championship of members of the East Reading Boxing program. He provided the history and importance of the program offered.

Jeffrey Nein, of Perkiomen Avenue, noted the mayor's negative push at City Council and he questioned why he would object to the reappointment of the City Clerk due to her years of experience and high performance. He suggested that everyone begin treating each other with respect and that everyone begin respecting the Country's flag and the laws. He took issue with the threats to remove Council members made by Mr. Rivera at past meetings. He expressed the belief that Pay to Play has become Pay to Work.

Mike Sveda, representing AFSCME 3799, stated that this collective bargaining group has worked to negotiate a contract with the administration over the past year. He asked Council to consider delaying their ratification of the contract which will allow the seniority issue to be addressed in the contract. He also stated that the group would like to discuss the contract with the new administration.

Stefan Kosikowski, of South 17th Street, stated that the change to the Charter form of government centered all the executive powers with the mayor. He questioned the need for checks and balances. He noted the need for the public to be informed about the rationale behind Council's rejection of the mayor's candidate for managing director. He expressed the belief that Council deliberated outside the required public forum.

Ed Terrell, of Franklin Street, expressed the belief that the vacant managing director position disrupts city business. He noted that two (2) members of Council who were on the Democratic County Committee publically supported the non-Democratic candidate for mayor. He questioned the accountability of those devious people. He expressed the belief that the current FBI investigation is related to some sitting here this evening.

Nate Rivera, of North 6th Street, noted the passion of the Hispanic community. He questioned why four (4) police officers are present at the meeting when they should be working to fight crime. He expressed the belief that having officers at the meeting is a waste of tax dollars.

Johanny Cepeda, of Walnut Street, began by speaking in Spanish. She noted Council's conflict with the previous administration. She expressed the belief that the community's interest in attending the recent Council meetings is due to their interest in participating in government. She questioned why the mayor's nominee for managing director was rejected.

She noted the nominee's work with the community and the administration.

A citizen (name illegible on the sign in sheet), of South 5th Street, suggested that Council and the mayor work together and work with the Hispanic community. He noted that voters will have the ability to select Council members at the next election. He asked Council to consider the mayor's new ideas.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES

Council President Waltman called Council's attention to the agenda for this meeting, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading and the minutes from the January 27th Regular Meeting of Council, postponed from January 25th due to the snow event. He noted the need to amend the agenda due to the mayor's request to withdraw the resolution to ratify the AFSCME 3799 contract.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Daubert, to approve the minutes from the January 27th Regular Meeting of Council, postponed from January 25th and the agenda, as amended. The motion was approved unanimously.

Consent Agenda

WITHDRAWN

A. Resolution No. 15-2016 – Ratifying the AFSCME 3799 Contract with First Level Supervisors

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

The mayor did not provide a written report to Council. He made comments to the audience, in summary:

The mayor announced that the administration is preparing for their 2nd snow event and work is occurring on the City's snow emergency plan. He noted the need to change the way the City issues contracts, no longer allowing contractors to do "add ons" that exceed the original value of the contract. He expressed the belief that he takes the high road when expressing his beliefs. He noted the need for the public to be educated on candidates when they vote. He stated that citizens elect City officials and they have started participating in their government.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if improvements have been made to the City's snow emergency plan. The mayor stated that work to revise and improve the plan is ongoing. He stated that in the future snow removal will begin when the snow fall amount reaches 12 inches.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

City Auditor Cituk read the report distributed to Council at the meeting, in summary:

- Revenue from the five (5) MDJs came in \$94K under budget
- Revenue from the Cable Franchise came in at \$88K over budget
- Revenue from the PILOT (Payment in lieu of Taxes) came in at \$71K under budget

REPORT FROM DEPT. DIRECTORS, BOARDS, AUTHORITIES, & COMMISSIONS

Heather Hanna stated that she recently became the president of the Reading Public Library Board. She noted that the City's increase in Library funding has built an important bridge for the Library as contributors can now have confidence in the City's belief in the City's library system.

Ms. Hanna described the programs and services offered by the Library through 2015. She noted the Library's work with the County to increase efficiency and streamline operations. She introduced the Acting Library Director, who has been employed by the Library since 1998.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

No ordinances were eligible for final passage.

Pending due to 14 day layover requirement

Bill No. 6-2016 – eliminating the penalty section from the Curbside Waste Fee ***Introduced at the January 27 regular meeting; Advertised Feb 8th***

Bill No. 7-2016 – authorizes the transfer within the 2015 Department of Public Works, Division of Solid Waste & Recycling budget \$20,500.00 from Legal Services (56-07-46-4224) to Contracted Services (56-07-47-4216) for the purpose of covering funds for the last residential solid waste contracted service invoices of 2015 ***Introduced at the January 27 regular meeting***

Bill No. 8-2016 – amending City Code Chapter 23 Boards, Commissions, Committees and Councils Part 4 First Energy Stadium Commission by adding liaisons from the Public Works Department and City Council ***Introduced at the January 27 regular meeting***

Bill No. 9-2016 – execution of a Right-of-Way to convey to the PennDOT, a right-of-way upon that portion of premises 0.0421 acres along State Route 625 in Cumru Township as attached in the exhibit ***Introduced at the January 27 regular meeting; Advertised Feb 8th***

Bill No. 10-2016 – execution of a Temporary Easement for Construction Purposes to convey to PennDOT, a temporary construction easement upon that portion of premises p.056 acres along State Route 625 in Cumru Township as attached in the exhibit ***Introduced at the January 27 regular meeting; Advertised Feb 8th***

Bill No. 11-2016 – amending the City Code Fee Schedule Section 126 Property sales: certificate of transfer; health and safety inspections ***Introduced at the January 27 regular meeting; Advertised Feb 8th***

Bill No. 12-2016 – amending the 2016 Position Ordinance by replacing the Housing and Development Coordinator with a Community Development Coordinator in the Community Development Department ***Introduced at the January 27 regular meeting***

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

There were no ordinances introduced at this meeting.

RESOLUTIONS

There were no resolutions requiring adoption.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Marmarou announced the College Heights Community Council meeting scheduled for Sunday, February 14th at 7 pm at Nativity Lutheran Church.

Councilor Twyman noted the positivity of those participating in this evening's meeting. He announced the plan to create a Citizens Initiative Committee.

Councilor Slifko noted his concern with the public's questions about the rationale to reject the mayor's candidate for managing director. He stated that Council collectively does not believe that the candidate possessed the high level of qualification demanded by the Charter. He agreed that the candidate is a very nice person. He explained the form of government and the reasons why the managing director position requires high administrative/executive qualifications.

The mayor asked Councilor Slifko to refrain from speaking about this issue due to his belief that Councilor Slifko's remarks are incorrect.

Council President Waltman stated that Council will be releasing their rationale to the public shortly.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the importance of public participation. She suggested that the public research the openings on the Boards, Authorities and Commissions on the City's website and apply to fill vacant positions. She described how her personal experience prepared her to serve on City Council.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the great programs offered by the East Reading Boxing Club.

Council President Waltman reviewed the Council meeting schedule.

Councilor Daubert moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk