

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2024**

Call to Order: Council met in a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, September 24, 2024, in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.

Silent Meditation and Pledge of Allegiance: A silent moment was taken followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Bruno-present; Colombo-present; Nilles-present; Ondishin-present; Perry-present

Minutes of Previous Meetings: The minutes of the September 10, 2024, Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: – Council President Perry announced the dollar amounts of the 2025 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for each of the four pensions plans, as follows:

- *Police Pension Plan - \$2,975,750*
- *Firemen Pension Plan - \$2,439,549*
- *Non-Uniformed Pension Plan - \$697,197*
- *Public Transit-\$0*

Bid Opening: None

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): None

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCES:

(1ST READING)

Ordinance 2024-17 An Ordinance Authorizing the Vacation of a Portion of an Unnamed “Paper Street” Between Branch Court and Lincoln Street in the City of Hazleton

(1st READING)

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Perry.

On the Question:

Atty. James Brando, an attorney from the law offices of Christopher Slusser, Esquire, was present for the petitioner, Regina Fisher. Brando stated Fisher is seeking the vacation of a paper road which was never accepted by the City of Hazleton. He said this road is a private road Fisher has maintained. Brando stated Fisher is seeking the portion of the paper road that is directly adjacent and behind her home.

Atty. Logsdon asked Atty. Brando what the address is of Mrs. Fisher's property. Atty. Brando said Mrs. Fisher's address is 912 West 15th Street, Hazleton, PA, and there are four parcels to her property.

Atty. Logsdon stated there is a question if vacating a street would cause issues with neighbors. Atty. Brando said this would not create a "barricade" on the street. He said Fisher could not preclude anyone in accessing this area. This alley way has not been used as a thoroughfare.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1st READING

Ordinance 2024-18

An Ordinance Authorizing the Vacation of a Portion of an Unnamed "Paper Street" Identified as an Extension of N. Pine Street and located North of E. Holly Street in the City of Hazleton (**1st READING**)

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Bruno asked if this "paper street" has some value to the City. Mayor Cusat said if the City did not develop the street, in 21 years, the City loses their vested "right" to it. He said this will allow value to their property. He stated the property owners could sell the property and the City would receive more transfer tax "when the time comes".

Atty. Logsdon said he will ask the applicant to be here at the next City Council meeting.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1ST READING

(2ND AND 3RD READINGS)

Ordinance 2024-15

An Ordinance Repealing Chapter 354, ARTICLE I of the Code of City of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, "Vacant and Abandoned Property Registration", and Replacing with a New Chapter 354, ARTICLE I, to be Entitled, "Registration of Foreclosing Mortgages and Vacant Property" **(2nd READING)**

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said this service will be good for the City, especially for foreclosed properties.

He said this will be a "shared" service with this organization.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Ordinance 2024-16

An Ordinance Authorizing the Erection of Stop Signs and Creating a 4-way Stop at the Intersection of 9th Street and Pardee Street
(2nd READING)

Presented by Nilles. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry asked if all the corrections were completed from the last meeting. Atty. Logsdon said yes. He said instead of a one stop at this intersection, it will be a four-way stop there.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2024-44

Approving Professional Services Agreement Between the City of Hazleton and Hera Property Registry, LLC

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said this will not cost the City anything. He said all the files belong to the City, and the City could terminate this contract at any time.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2024-45

A Resolution Requesting Local Share Account Funds for
Hazleton City for the Pine Street Park Improvements Project

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2024-46

A Resolution requesting Local Share Account Funds for Hazleton City for
the Remaining Street Paving in the Heights Neighborhood of the City

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Ondishin.

Roll Call: Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

New Business: None.

Old Business: None.

Comments from the Audience: Dee Deakos, 43 Mine Street, Hazleton, spoke of the LSA grants on the agenda. She said the City needs an LSA grant for public safety, especially on the streets. Deakos said a lot of the City intersections need more stop signs.

Mayor Cusat said there are 1,400 intersections in the City.

Comments from Mayor: None

Comments from City Administrator: Lynch said he read the City of Hazleton's MMO's for 2025. He stated there was an increase of about 21%. He said Jason Fine wanted to change the pension assumptions, and this was approved by the Pension Board. Fine estimated the difference would be about \$500,000.

Perry asked how the City is doing on their audits. Lynch said the auditor is moving quickly. Lynch said the City 2021 audit has been completed, and the City's 2022 audit should be done soon. He said the prior actuary did not complete the Gatsby reports. Fine will be completing 2021, 2022 & 2023 Gatsby reports for the auditor. Lynch said the auditor should be working on the City's 2023 audit by December.

Comments from Council: Perry stated City Council members have been receiving numerous emails regarding stray cats in the City.

Mayor Cusat stated if Vector Control traps a cat, they will release it. Their services do not spay or neuter a cat. He said the City's budget for a Vector Control employee is \$28,000/yr.

Atty. Logsdon said the only answer to the stray cats is getting "the word out" that City residents should not be feeding stray cats.

Perry stated City Council members and City administration will be meeting in an Executive Session with members of the Hazleton City Authority regarding contract issues.

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.