

MINUTES

HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2018

Call to Order: Council met in regular session on Monday, December 17, 2018 in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

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

Roll Call: Barletta-present; Colombo-present; Mope-present; Perry-present; Gavio-present

Minutes of Previous Meetings: None

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: None

Bid Opening: None

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton, said there was an amendment, at the last council meeting, on the budget. She said she hopes this is done at this meeting. She also stated the city of Hazleton's 2019 budget was not provided at the council meeting for the residents. She said the public should have a hard copy available to them.

Antonio Rodriguez, 718 Muir Ave., Hazleton, said he is proud of the Hazleton Police Department. He commended Police Chief Jerry Speziale on a job well done for the recent drug bust. He said he is proud of Mayor Cusat. He said the Hazleton City Police Department deserves all the "backing" the residents give them.

Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton, also commended the Hazleton City Police Department, PA State Police Department, and all neighboring police departments on the recent City drug bust. He also spoke of the 2019 budget. He said there should be a position budget attached to the original budget. He said Luzerne County does their budget this way. He said it is to see what positions are either increased or decreased. He said the City of Hazleton is one of the few municipalities that does not do this. He asked if the city administration is still seeking \$290,000 that is owed to the City of Hazleton by Luzerne County for the Broad Street Exchange Building. He also spoke of the Vacant Registration Ordinance and bank foreclosed properties. He said these need to be included in the budget. Rabo said this would bring predictable and sustainable revenue, and fund the code and police departments. Rabo spoke of the LSA grants. He said the LSA money should go towards things needed for the City. He said he is strongly supporting the fire, police department for the utility vehicle, and the city parks for their revitalization and repairs. He said, currently, the Hazleton Municipal Airport is self-sufficient. He said they need to pay back the City for prior years the taxpayers funded their projects.

Atty. Logsdon said he will follow-up on the \$290,000 owed to the City of Hazleton from Luzerne County. Mope stated Atty. Logsdon can get information from Mayor Joseph Yannuzzi's term in the transition of the Security Savings Bank Building. Perry told Atty. Logsdon to check with David Pedri, Luzerne County Manager.

Police Chief Jerry Speziale, Hazleton Police Department, spoke of the LSA grant he is requesting. He said the LSA grants are for Newtown, Parkland, critical infrastructure and hospitals. He said the grant is for three police vehicles, fully-equipped with trauma equipment. Speziale stated it is for allowing police officers to go in with fire fighters in case of a crisis in the City. He said it is for rapid deployment to get the first responders into a critical scene. He said this situation can happen in the City of Hazleton.

Perry asked if these are special vehicles. Speziale said it is for three marked police vehicles and all cars will contain trauma packs, rams, and breach tools. He stated it is called "breach and entry". He said the days waiting for a swat team are over. He stated all police officers will have ballistic helmets and shields. He said all officers will be able to go in with the tactical medical team.

Old Business:

ORDINANCES

Budget Ordinance 2018-43 An Ordinance Providing for the Appropriation of Specific Amounts Estimated as Required for the Various Departments of the Government of the City of Hazleton, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania for and during the Fiscal Year, Dating from January 1, 2019 and Ending December 31, 2019 (**BUDGET ORDINANCE**) (**2nd READING**)

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry stated he will be voting yes on the 2019 budget. He said city council has had a chance to make any amendments. He said this is the most reasonable budget he has been a part of. He stated he has been doing this for many terms. Perry said it has been a shared-effort between city council and administration.

Roll Call: Barletta-no; Colombo-yes; Mope-no; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES 3-2 ON 2nd READING

Budget Ordinance 2018-43 An Ordinance Providing for the Appropriation of Specific Amounts Estimated as Required for the Various Departments of the Government of the City of Hazleton, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania for and during the Fiscal Year, Dating from January 1, 2019 and Ending December 31, 2019 (**BUDGET ORDINANCE**) (**3rd READING**)

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Perry.

Roll Call: Barletta-no; Colombo-yes; Mope-no; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES 3-2

Ordinance 2018-44 Re-Enacting Ordinances 1931, 1932, and 1933, which Continue in Force and Effect for the Period January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019, Imposing the Real Estate Tax, Earned Income Tax, Per Capita Tax, and Resident Tax, Respectively (**2nd READING**)

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Barletta.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES ON 2nd READING

Ordinance 2018-44 Re-Enacting Ordinances 1931, 1932, and 1933, which Continue in Force and Effect for the Period January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019, Imposing the Real Estate Tax, Earned Income Tax, Per Capita Tax, and Resident Tax, Respectively (**3rd READING**)

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Perry.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

18-47 An Ordinance of the City of Hazleton Fixing the Tax Rate of Real Estate Located in the City of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, for All City Purposes for the Fiscal Year 2019, Beginning January 1, 2019 and Ending December 31, 2019 (**2nd READING**)

Perry. Seconded by Gavio.

Roll Call: Barletta-no; Colombo-yes; Mope-no; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES 3-2 ON 2nd READING

18-47 An Ordinance of the City of Hazleton Fixing the Tax Rate of Real Estate Located in the City of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, for All City Purposes for the Fiscal Year 2019, Beginning January 1, 2019 and Ending December 31, 2019 (**3rd READING**)

Barletta. Seconded by Colombo.

Roll Call: Barletta-no; Colombo-yes; Mope-no; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes

ORDINANCE PASSES 3-2

RESOLUTIONS

None

New Business:

ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2018-86 A Resolution Authorizing the City of Hazleton to apply for a Luzerne County Local Share Account Grant for the City's Parks and Recreation

Presented by Mope. Seconded by Colombo.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2018-87 A Resolution Requesting Local Share Account Funds for the Hazleton Regional Airport

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Barletta.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2018-88 A Resolution Requesting Local Share Account Funds for the City of Hazleton's Fire Department Station Upgrades

Presented by Mope. Seconded by Barletta.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2018-89 A Resolution Requesting Local Share Account Funds for the Purchase of One Multi-Purpose/Utility Vehicle for the Hazleton Fire Department

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Perry.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2018-90 A Resolution Requesting Local Share Account Funds for the Purchase of Equipment for the City of Hazleton's Police Department

Presented by Mope. Seconded by Barletta.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2018-92 Amending Resolution 2018-76, Awarding a Contract to Furnish and Deliver Unleaded Gasoline and Diesel Fuel

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Mope.

On the Question:

Barletta asked what changes (amendments) were made to the resolution. Atty. Logsdon stated the original resolution was effective for two years, but the bid was for one year. Atty. Logsdon stated this was not stated in the original resolution. He also said the monthly payment due on the contract is for \$831.64.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Comments from the Audience: Janice Sigmund, 927 West 1st Street, Hazleton, stated she is mad about the school buses parking on the city streets. She said she cannot park in front of her own house. She said the noise starts at 7:00 a.m. She asked how the drivers can take these buses home.

Mope asked Atty. Logsdon if there was a letter sent out by his office. Atty. Logsdon said yes. He said he is aware of this situation. Mope asked Atty. Logsdon how long Mr. Pedri of the Code Department needs to wait to send out tickets (violations). Atty. Logsdon said he does not know how long he needs to wait. Atty. Logsdon stated he has sent a letter to the bus company's (Rohrer) corporate office. He said Mr. Pedri has been in contact with their local office in Drums. He said the City has the authority to site them and forbids any type of buses to be parked on city streets.

Sigmund asked who will site these violators. Mope said if they are parked on the streets on the weekend, the police department can ticket them. Perry asked if the buses are parked all the time. Sigmund said not every day. Perry asked if they are parked over the weekend. Sigmund stated sometimes on the weekends. She said she has complained to the Hazleton Zoning Board, but to no avail. Perry said there is an ordinance against this. Gavio stated the City needs to start enforcing the ordinance. Mope said she has the same problem at her home. She said the buses would run early in the morning.

Colombo said he had drove a school bus, several years ago, and had to drive the bus back to the garage.

Atty. Logsdon said he will follow-up with Charlie Pedri and get a time frame.

Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton, spoke of the LSA grants. He said when Mayor Cusat was elected, she wrote a grant for a street light. Deakos said either the City lost a grant, or the grant went elsewhere. She stated there should be a second grant to do the rest of the street lights. Deakos thanked

Allison Barletta for speaking up about the Christmas lights at City Hall. She said there were three Street Department workers decorating the Christmas tree. She said, in the meantime, there are potholes to be filled. She said the Street Department workers are overwhelmed putting up Christmas decorations.

She also spoke of a City landlord refusing to return a security deposit to a renter. She said this was an apartment unit, with four or five apartments, and was condemned. Deakos stated there should be an ordinance stating if a unit is condemned that the landlord needs to find alternate housing for the renter. She said the landlord needs to take responsibility to help the tenants.

Mope asked Atty. Logsdon if there is something he can do. Atty. Logsdon said he will look into this.

Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton, spoke of the \$290,000 owed to the City. He said, in 2015, the Downtown Alliance sought the old Security Savings Bank Building for the Arts Center. He said the former mayor went up to the County Council meeting asking for Luzerne County to transfer ownership to the City of Hazleton. Rabo said he was going to use the \$290,000 owed for the Broad Street Exchange Building in exchange for the Security Savings Bank Building. He said the transfer never happened. Rabo said this was to be council's approval, and not the mayor's. Rabo said the Downtown Alliance bid it out, and received this property for \$30,000. He asked why the mayor never went after the \$290,000.

Rabo also spoke of future solutions for reoccurring revenue. He said the converted properties and the rental registration ordinance was amended with a fee schedule. He asked why Mayor Cusat does not collect on these properties. He said if the property is condemned, the landlord is subject to find the tenants housing. He said the problem with converted/condemned properties, and going to auction, is people are purchasing these properties, repairing them, and then are rented out. Rabo said this is a safety hazard, attracts crime, and erodes the tax base. He said this issue needs to be dealt with in 2019, and should be enforced.

Antonio Rodriguez, 718 Muir Ave., Hazleton, asked when the next city council meeting is. City Clerk and Barletta stated December 27, 2018. He said it should be in January, 2019. Gaudio stated there are three meetings in December. He said there is a schedule with bid openings for the City's salt contract.

Atty. Logsdon said he spoke with a representative of the PUC. He said he has been out to the railroad site regarding the complaint of the loud noise. He said he will be doing a report, and said he will forward this to city council. He said the representative stated he will be in town, for a few days, to investigate.

Comments from Mayor: None- absent.

Comments from Council: Perry wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Perry thanked the Street Department for filling a pothole that is nearby to his home. He said a neighbor wanted him to thank the gentlemen.

Colombo wished everyone a Merry Christmas. He said issues brought before council "do not fall on deaf ears". He said the problem with the train noise has been rectified. He said the next problem to fix are the buses parked on the City streets.

Mope thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas. She also thanked the Highway Department for repairing potholes, requested by residents, throughout the City.

Barletta wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Gavio wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Comments from Junior Council: None.

Adjournment: Gavio motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned