

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2019**

Call to Order: Council met in regular session on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 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: The minutes of the September 11, 2019 Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: Amanda Diddron, Vice-President Strategic Planning & Peter Graustein, Community Outreach Director- PA Adult & Teen Challenge- Fighting Opioid Addiction.

Peter Graustein, Community Outreach Director, said his position covers all of Hazleton and all of Northeast Pennsylvania. He stated there is, now, a groundbreaking initiative in Hazleton and in Northeast Pennsylvania to establish a greater presence to more deeply connect with the local community. He said it is an honor and privilege to speak to city council. He thanked Mayor Cusat, Council President Bob Gavio and council members for this opportunity to speak. He also thanked community member John Patton of the Standard-Speaker. Mr. Patton also invited them to speak at the Opioid forum at Marian Catholic High School. Mr. Graustein said this was a very successful event. Graustein said his organization is working with New Providence Homeless Shelter. He said some Hazleton residents have been referred to their program for substance-use treatment. Graustein said several local church pastors have joined in helping establish a deeper communication within the City. He said Steve Molinchock, volunteer liaison, has been the “boots on the ground” in helping connect with the right people in the right places. Graustein stated Amber Diddron has been a long-time leader of PA Adult & Teen Challenge. She has been part of the executive team for a while and is Vice-President of Strategic Planning.

Amber Diddron thanked everyone for inviting PA Adult & Teen Challenge members to speak. She said the title of strategic initiatives is an “odd” title. She said she does a lot of things to keep the organization running and to work with communities like the City of Hazleton to provide support in this time of need with the opioid and other addictive substances crisis. She said she oversees the admissions department, conducts contracting with single county authorities, Medicaid contracts, and private pay contracts with Highmark and Capital Blue Cross. She also oversees the Community Outreach Program with Pete and Deb. Diddron also stated she oversees the Family Programming Program.

Diddron stated she grew up a very “sheltered life”. She said she never had an experience with anyone who dealt with drugs. She said she met her husband at bible college and got married. She has two children. Diddron stated her husband is a graduate of the PA Teen & Adult Challenge program in 2009. She said her husband experienced a relapse in 2014. She said this is a usual part of the recovery process. Diddron did not know where to turn, and with the providence of God, she was working part-time in the Accounts Payable office of Teen Challenge. Diddron said, at the time, there were no regular family programs or outreach programs for families. She said the staff taught her what addiction means and how she can recover. She said her husband just celebrated five years of sobriety and they have

celebrated ten years of marriage. She said this never would of happened if it were not for Teen Challenge.

Diddron said Teen Challenge was started in the 1960's, in Brooklyn, for young gang members to escape the gangs in the New York City. She stated teens needed to get out of the city to grow some life skills. She stated a farm was donated to Teen Challenge for them to have this experience. Diddron stated their center is based in Rehrersburg, PA, for over sixty years. She said it gives an opportunity for people to learn new skills and "walk with the Lord". She said it is a very faith-based program. Diddron stated they then started to service adults. She said five years ago, and overseeing the admissions department, she and Chris McFadden, CEO, investigated how many telephone calls, received in one month, were they able to help. She said it was 20 people/month who were, ultimately, helped, out of 100 calls received within one month. Diddron said their organization was offering a long-term, faith-based program and a lot of people were not ready for this. She said a lot of people did not know they needed long-term care and detox. Diddron stated many people are struggling with a heroin addiction which needs to go through the detox management process. She said, within a year, there were 200 admissions. Diddron said, currently there are 2,000 admissions/year. She said there is a great need in the City. She said the levels of care include detox, a 30-day residential program including Spanish speaking tracks and faith-based tracks. She said there are Spanish-speaking counselors and staff members. Diddron stated there is also the long-term faith-based program essential for long-term recovery. She said there is an intern-training and workforce development program. Diddron said graduates from the long-term program can "stay-on" as an intern, and are helped with finding employment. They also have a restoration program for people who suffer from relapses. She said within the last year they have required a network of out-patient facilities called The Naaman Center. She said they are working to build their out-patient programs. They have also established a full-time family program department to help families find help and restoration in their lives. Diddron stated they have a full-time medical staff and offer 24 hour/7-day a week transportation service to pick people up. She said they will pick-up anybody in the state of Pennsylvania. She said they are, currently, contracted with the Luzerne County Men's Programming through the Single County Authority. She said this is for anyone without insurance. She said they, currently, do not have a contract for a women's program but would like to expand in this area. She said they have a short-term detox program for women. She stated they are contracted with Medicaid and Capital and HighMark Blue Cross/Blue Shield. She said they are engaged with the local community, pastors', churches, civic groups, homeless shelters and community leaders. Diddron stated their Vice-President of Clinic Services recently spoke as a guest panelist at the Standard-Speakers Opioid Crisis Public Forum at Marian Catholic High School. Diddron stated they have admitted 12 people from the City of Hazleton in the past year, and 21 people from Luzerne County. She stated if they can help a "single-one" that this can make a big difference. Diddron said a graduate of their 2017 program has become a full-time staff member. She said he has grown "leaps and bounds" as a person. She stated Chris McFadden, CEO, is a local Northeast resident. He was a high school football player, received an injury, and was prescribed Opioids. She stated his life "spiraled" out-of-control. He came to Teen Challenge in 2007. She said he has a "passion and love" for this area and the state of PA. Diddron said she is grateful for his leadership.

Diddron said they are committed to this area. She said they are here for your disposal and are "your servants." She said everyone knows somebody who has struggled with an addiction problem. She stated she did not know drugs and alcohol are such a problem. She said whatever a resident may need, they can always call their call center- 24 hours a day/7-days a week.

Bid Opening: Hazleton City Hall Improvements Project- Atty. Sean Logsdon opened and read all bids.

1. American Asphalt Paving Company, Shavertown, PA. BID- \$413,598.075. BID BOND included.
2. HPCI H&P Construction, Inc., Kulpmont, PA. BID-\$430,734. BID BOND included.
3. Bognet, Inc., Hazleton, PA. BID- \$278,277.075. BID BOND included.

All BIDS were given to engineer Tim Sisock, Barry Isett & Associates, for review.

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton, spoke of Ordinance 2019-8- Modifying Consolidated Plan for CDBG Program Year 2018. He spoke of the transfer of money from East End Park to West Court Playground. He said there has been a lot of vandalization of playgrounds in the City. He said the playground, behind Dollar General, has been vandalized. He stated there was a party there with diapers and used syringes. Rabo stated he hopes this is taken care of. He is hoping CD money would be utilized for this.

He also spoke of Ordinance 2019-9- Regulating Recreational Vehicles Within the City. Rabo said he noticed there was not a mention, in the ordinance, regarding ATV's at gas stations. He asked what is the law if ATV's would go to a gas station, fill-up, and run "rough-shot" around the neighborhoods. Atty. Sean Logsdon stated this is included in the ordinance, but this is only amending the penalties provision. He stated everything else stands.

Rabo spoke of Ordinance 2019-14- Amending Ordinances of the Hazleton City Code for the Setting of Licenses, Fees and Inspections. He asked what constitutes a gaming room. He said there are different types of gaming rooms. Rabo spoke of the recent incident, on Laurel Street, with 200-300 people in one building. He said this ordinance needs to be clarified.

Old Business:

ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2019- 8 Modifying Consolidated Plan for CDBG Program Year 2018 (**3rd READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

RESOLUTIONS

None

New Business:

ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2019-9 Amending Ordinance 2018-15, Regulating Recreational Vehicles Within the City (**1st READING**)

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Barletta.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1st READING

Ordinance 2019-13 An Ordinance Establishing a Designated Fire Lane on the Southern Portion of East Hawthorne Street from South Woodward Court to South Poplar Street (**1st READING**)

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Gavio.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1st READING

Ordinance 2019-14 An Ordinance Amending Ordinance Nos. 10-108, 94-12, 95-18, 95-26, 2003-07, 2005-8, 2006-34, 2007-9, 2007-29, 2009-17, 2010-2, 2011-8, 2012-9, 2013-5, 2015-25, & 2016-31, and Chapters 24, 140, & 203 of the Hazleton City Code for the Setting of Licenses, Fees and Inspections (**1st READING**)

Presented by Mope. Seconded by Perry.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1st READING

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2019-35 A Resolution Awarding the bid for the Greater Hazleton Society and Museum’s Improvements/Weatherization Project

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Barletta.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2019-36 Awarding the Contract for the Hazleton City Hall Improvements Project

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Tim Sisock, Barry Isett & Associates engineer, reviewed all the bids that were read. He stated Bognet, Inc., Hazleton, PA is the lowest bidder at their bid of \$278,277.075. Atty. Logsdon said city council needs to make an amendment stating Bognet, Inc., is the lowest bidder with a bid of \$278,277.075.

Motion to Amend:

Presented by Mope. Seconded by Gavio.

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

MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Roll Call (As Amended):

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED

Comments from the Audience: Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton, said at the last city council meeting there was discussion regarding the loitering law with the current one, on the books, not being legal. She said there was discussion about blocking a right-of-way. Deakos stated she would like to see this on the city council agenda. She said she noticed a person “hanging” around the Hazleton Parking Garage all the time. She said it is not a “warm” feeling and said he spends a lot of time there.

Atty. Sean Logsdon said he is “on it”. He said he will have it ready for city council.

Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton, stated he was not at the last city council meeting. He said, on the WORK SESSION agenda, he has some concerns with the Parking Ordinance- Ordinance 2019-10. He

said this needs to be cross-referenced with the city's Zoning Ordinance. He said the City Zoning Ordinance is the ultimate land regulation for the City, and not a stand-alone ordinance. He said a stand-alone ordinance is only to solidify a main ordinance regarding state law. He said this needs to be brought to the "forefront". He said then city council members would then allow the public to have input at a public hearing. He said then the solicitor would validate this. Rabo said this is in the state municipal planning code. He said another concern, he has, is there is no mention of parking close to corners and intersections. He said there have been a lot of vehicles parking close to corners. Mope said this is part of the ordinance that is being addressed. She said all that is being changed is double parking. Gavio said this will be under discussion. Rabo said under the Municipal Claims Act, a \$50.00 filing fee for a title search is collected at the Prothonotary's office. He said this cannot be double charged.

He also suggested the solicitor review this. He said this may be a conflict if this goes in front of the judge.

Rabo spoke of the recent City paving project. He said there has not been a sufficient amount of base coat applied to the streets, (Wyoming and Seybert Streets). He said this will be a problem in the winter. He stated he took pictures of each phase. Mope stated there is also a problem with the milling. Rabo said by putting too much finish coat and not enough base this is a problem.

Comments from Mayor: None-absent.

Comments from City Administrator: None.

Comments from Council: Barletta thanked the PA Adult & Teen Challenge representatives for their presentation.

Adjournment: Gavio motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.