

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2020**

Call to Order: Council met in regular session on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 via ZOOM Teleconferencing. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm.

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

Roll Call: Barletta-present; Colombo-present; Mundie-present; Sacco-present; Perry-present

Minutes of Previous Meetings: The minutes of the November 10, 2020 Regular Meeting, November 18 & November 24, 2020 WORK SESSION meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: None

Bid Opening: – 1. 2020 Bid Proposal for Snowplow Equipment Rental- **NO BIDS RECEIVED**

2. 2021 Unleaded Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Contract

ALL BIDS WERE READ BY ATTY. SEAN LOGSDON-

1. Russell Postupack Oil Co., LLC, McAdoo, PA. Atty. Logsdon stated Mr. Postupack submitted a letter with his BID and states, “ I would like to submit the following proposal, for your consideration, unfortunately, currently, due to volatile market conditions of fixed fuel prices, are unavailable. This is due to present high pricing and low product availability at the terminals.” Mr. Postupack is proposing to provide the following products, at RAC prices, that are carried from various terminals plus all terminal fees and mark-up: 87 Octane unleaded gasoline will be provided at a RAC price, plus 0.24 cents plus terminal fees, the low Sulphur diesel fuel will be provided at RAC price plus 0.23 cents plus terminal fees.

Donald Leshko, Hazleton Fire Chief, stated this is what Mr. Postupack is paying at the terminal. He said RAC pricing is the fee that is coming out of the terminal. Leshko stated Mr. Postupack added on a couple more cents.

Atty. Logsdon said the 87 Octane unleaded gasoline is .24 cents, per gallon, above the refinery cost, at today's refinery cost, plus mark-up, for 65,000 gallons of unleaded gasoline for \$153,400, estimated price, less FET. For the low-Sulphur diesel fuel, the .23 quoted, at today's refinery price plus mark-up, listed above, for 50,000 gallons for \$133,405 total cost, an estimated price, less federal excise tax.

Atty. Logsdon said for the 87 Octane unleaded gasoline .024 at an estimated at \$153,400 and for the diesel, .23 per gallon, at an estimated cost of \$133,405 less the federal excise tax.

2. Talley Petroleum Enterprises, Inc., Grantville, PA. Atty. Logsdon stated Mr. Talley said to furnish and deliver 87 Octane gasoline, for a one-year period, for the City, fixed price, per gallon, and for the life of the contract, including transportation, \$1.6796 per gallon, and total cost of 65,000 gallons of 87 Octane gasoline is \$83,980, fixed mark-up and transportation cost is

\$1.5862 per gallon above the refinery cost. This mark-up and transportation costs shall remain fixed for the life of the contract. All refinery costs subject to market fluctuation. The mark-up and transportation costs alone add .2475 and at today's refinery price plus mark-up for 65,000 gallons of unleaded gasoline is \$103,103. For the Ultra-low Sulphur diesel fuel for one-year period, fixed price per gallon and transportation for the life of the contract, is \$1.7412 per gallon, total cost of 50,000 gallons is \$87,060. The fixed mark-up and transportation costs is \$1.6704, per gallon, above the refinery cost. This mark-up and transportation costs shall remain fixed for the life of the contract. All refinery and prices are subject to market fluctuation. Mark-up and transportation costs, alone, add \$.2475. For today's refinery price plus mark-up listed, the total price for 50,000 gallons, is \$83,520.

Atty. Logsdon said the total is \$103,103 for 65,000 gallons of 87 Unleaded gasoline and \$83,520 for the diesel fuel.

Mayor Cusat stated Alan Wufsus needs to review all BIDS. Atty. Logsdon said he will "get these to Alan".

Perry said city council will be voting on this resolution later in the meeting. Atty. Logsdon said Alan needs to review these before voting. Perry said there is "quite a difference in pricing". He said council may need to postpone the vote until the next meeting. Atty. Logsdon agreed. He stated Alan could review and he could consult with the fire, police and streets departments, for their input, and then make a decision on December 11th, 2020. Perry said council could table this resolution when it comes up. Perry agreed.

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton, spoke of the corrected Action Plan for CDBG. He asked what the modification is. Rabo also spoke of the budget ordinances. He stated looking into all the money that is owed to the City needs to be explored before any increases or "sacrificial cuts" are done. He suggested Mayor Cusat or City Administrator could look into this. Rabo also spoke of the Hazleton Public Transit Authority resolutions. He asked who gave, Ralph Sharp, HPT Director, the impression that Luzerne County was going to eliminate the local match. He said it was clear it was coming from the LCTA. Rabo asked Sharp regarding the money budgeted, for 2021, for paying back the City, and for the CNG pumping station, if these will be included in the construction.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

(1ST READING)

Ordinance 2020-28

Modifying Annual Plan for CDBG Program Year 2019
(1ST READING)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry said Zeller will be "the guy" to explain any of this. Zeller stated this is for COVID-19 funding and this is an additional amount after the first round through the state. He said it will be used to fund the Health Officer position. Perry asked if this is for \$146,800. Zeller said yes. Mundie asked what other things the City could do with the money. Zeller said not many. He stated there are strict rules. Zeller said, a few months ago, when approved, there was some PPE money, some money put in to administer the funds, the initial Health Officer position, and some money for some

business loans. Mundie asked Zeller if he has the definition on what the City could use the grant for. Zeller said it is very complicated, and the City needs to get approval for “every little thing”. Mundie asked what the City will do with the rest of the money. Zeller said he just stated what the City will do with it: The Health Officer, which was approved already, business loans, administration, and PPE. Perry asked if the business loans are loans that people could come to him for. Zeller said the City cannot do anything with this, until after the New Year, due to duplication of services. He said if someone gets a loan, from the county, and could get \$5,000 from the City. He said if they take \$5,000, from the City, they would be precluded to take the county money. He said there would be a lot of angry people. Barletta asked how much money is set aside for the businesses. Zeller stated over \$200,000. Perry asked if this takes effect in 2021. Zeller said the City needs to wait until they see what they did with the county funding and their CDBG allocation.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES ON 1st READING

Ordinance 2020-29

An Ordinance Approving a Corrected Action Plan for
Fiscal Year 2020 (**1st READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Barletta asked if the amount is \$88.00. Zeller said it is “ridiculous” to go through this. He stated they either underfunded or overfunded, all over the country, CDBG entitlement communities with minuscule amounts. Zeller stated council needs to do an amendment.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES ON 1st READING

BUDGET ORDINANCE 2020-30

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, 2021 and Ending December 31, 2021 (**1st READING**)

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Perry stated this is the first reading of the budget. He said council does not have to amend everything right now. He stated they could discuss various items. Perry said by December 11th, 2020, they need to balance out the budget.

Lynch stated he has met with councilman Perry and discussed some goals he has for the budget.

He said he drew up some of his potential amendments based on their discussions. He sent a series of amendments to city council members, in an e-mail, in document form, that would reduce the tax increase to 1.03 mils and would keep the full amount of paving. Lynch said on December 11th, council could make amendments, to the budget, and make sure it balances.

Perry said they could discuss the line items that Lynch prepared. He said city council had two budget meetings to look and review the budget. He stated the first thing is to discuss the items and amend, if they want, all at one time.

Perry said the City is collecting taxes at a 90% rate. Lynch said the true collection rate is between 89-90%. Lynch said he came up with an equation to take any item, in the City's budget, and know what it costs, a person, for a given year. He said take the amount, divide the number by 86,000, and times by 7.5. He said this comes out to \$43.57 for \$500,000 for paving. He said, in real estate taxes, for a person, doing \$500,000, it would cost a person \$43.57 a year. Perry asked if this is for the average household. Lynch said 86,000 is what a tenth of one mil brings into the City and, 7.5 is the median home value divided by 10. He said if the City did the full \$2,000,000, for streets, that comes to \$174.30, and sounds like a utility. He said this would give the City optimally paved and optimally "cared for" roads.

Perry said they could review the amendments "line by line." Perry said there are about 15-16 items on Lynch's list. He said Barletta sent him some stuff and discussed them with Colombo. He said Mayor Cusat and Lynch could give insight on some. He said there is a "guesstimate" on the mercantile tax. He asked if the City could estimate higher. He said there are a lot of revenue-side items to look at. Perry asked if business licenses and rental registration properties should be increased. Perry said Lynch mentioned Building Alteration permits, Line item 321-3000. He said this was increased from \$220,00 to \$320,000. Barletta stated this is very reasonable with the new building inspector. Lynch said he will generate revenue. He said this revenue could be "wildly variable" because a massive project, in the City, would "dwarf" any one year. Perry said there are five buildings in one spot.

Perry spoke of Street and Curb Cut permits, Line Item- 322-380. Lynch said this would be raising the revenue line for street and curb cut permits to \$200,000 to match the UGI funded expense on the expense-side. He said this will all "wash out". Perry asked how much higher the Delinquent Real Estate collection is than before. Lynch stated about \$28,000. Lynch said there was a Line Item added, 351-3101, for Federal Care funding for the position of Health Officer. Perry stated the areas of court fines, fines and forfeitures, and violation of ordinance and parking fines may be areas to bring more money into the City. Lynch said other than EIT, any COVID-affected revenue will not improve anytime soon. He stated the revenue will be affected. He said any changes made, to revenue, the City is "hedging" on the bet of it will come in or not and the, likelihood, the need to raise taxes, in 2021, and weaken the City's position.

Lynch spoke of Line Item 359-3000- Payment in Lieu of Taxes. He said the pilot came in 2020 was about \$57,000 and suggested raising this amendment to \$50,000. He said this should be maintained before doing this. Perry said they have been consistent over the years. Lynch said he does not know if there are "riders" built-in or is expected to go up.

Lynch said the following are changes to expenses: Line-Item 400-5314- Conflict Counsel is reduced to \$2,000. Perry said he received a letter from Atty. Slusser that he resigned as the city council's Conflict Counsel. He suggested eliminating this completely. Lynch said they could leave this in the budget but does not mean they spend it. Perry asked council if they had any questions on public safety. He asked if the police overtime is on the amendment list. Lynch said he has this, as a suggested amendment, and a reduction of \$30,000, to \$150,000. He said they are only his suggestions, and council could change them.

Perry spoke of the Parking Meters and monthly parking permits. He stated the Parking Garage fees

is a little higher. He stated residents are stating they are paying more and should be getting more for their money. Lynch said he has a reduction, in Parking salaries, to \$125,000, to delay the re-hire of one additional position. He said a part-time position is not a huge amount of money to supplement.

Lynch said his suggestions are "little trims" on the expense side. He said he trimmed the Conflict Counsel, overtime and executive, both, legal lines, by \$20,000. He stated the wage line, for police, is a reduction of about \$300,000, but an increase of about \$309,000 from the previous year. He said overtime was reduced to \$150,000 based on getting new hires done and more men to cover. He said, with COVID-19, there could be high overtime and with employees getting sick.

Perry asked if there is a reduction in the Right-To-Know officer overtime. Lynch said this Line-Item is 401-5483 with a \$15,000 reduction to \$5,000. He said in the Line-Item for Parking, the City hired one person who needed benefits but there is also a retiree who is leaving. Lynch stated there were two-full plans in the budget. He said he does not think the plan to replace is for a full-time person and does not have to budget the medical cost. Lynch said this would save the City money.

Lynch said the "two big pieces" left is 1.03 mills, of a tax raise, to cover these expenses. He said he left in \$500,000 for paving, \$324,000 in obligated expenses, and some changes in raising a couple of things. He said one is paving, and outside the grant, some police and capital requests in the budget. Perry said the Legal Services was reduced from \$70,000 to \$60,000. He asked if the Special Legal Services was the same. Lynch said it was \$70,000 before. Barletta asked if this is increasing by \$20,000. Lynch said it was, originally, \$80,000, but may be a misprint on the Word file. He said he suggested reducing them, each, by \$20,000. He said these issues need to be addressed and cannot "just sit". Lynch said council could take this Word document and compare this to the original November 10th budget and this would be the amended changes if they wanted to. Lynch said these are only suggestions, and council makes the ultimate changes. Perry agreed. Barletta asked about the Solicitor and Legal Services line. She said this is being reduced to \$60,000 each plus \$5,000 for other expenses. She said the budget, for solicitor ship, would be \$125,000. Lynch said the solicitor was, originally, at \$100,000. He said the Word document is wrong. He said, on the Excel file, he has "80 & 60", respectively, for solicitor and special legal. He said he is reducing this by \$35,000. Perry stated overtime is \$150,000. He asked if this is in the police budget. Lynch said this is just for the police budget. Perry asked if repair and maintenance is in the police budget for \$20,000. Lynch said yes. Lynch said "410" is for police and "412" is for parking. Perry asked if capital purchasing, for \$61,000, is for the police department. Lynch said yes. Perry stated the parking salaries are \$125,000. He asked if the reduction in medical insurance is \$39,000. Lynch said yes.

Barletta stated there is another increase, in gasoline, of \$15,000. She said this was increased by \$15,000 in 2019. She said this is a lot. She said they talked about the police uniforms at the previous Work Session meetings. Barletta said this seems like a big increase. She said the repair and maintenance Line-Item went from \$5,000 to \$41,000. Barletta said she knows the City is leasing new vehicles, and this was discussed at the last Work Session meeting. She said she knows that the police department wants to increase the K-9 Unit but, may be retiring one, and there may be one "active one". She stated she does not know why this item, would increase, by this much, right now. She said these items were discussed at the first Work Session meeting. Perry stated Barletta referenced to the postage Line-Items. She said the postage seems "off" for all the departments along with communication levels. She asked how everyone tracks their postage at City Hall. Perry also had a question about the cellular and internet services for the police department. He asked if the capital purchases are for the cars. Lynch said, "contained in there it is" but is not \$60,000, in 2021. He said any questions on the remainder of the money, he would need to talk to Chief Schoonmaker. Mayor Cusat said it is either contracted services or capital purchases. He said the

City is a little low on these. He said the Live Scan is \$6,500, the DUI bloodwork is \$10,000, mobile fingerprinting is \$1,980, the PAWS system is \$2,509, the Report System is \$4,578, the timing devices are \$337.50 every two months, AT&T is \$4,725, the body cam is \$22,000, the computer server is \$60,000 and the scope is \$5,100. Perry asked if this is in the contracted services and capital purchases. Barletta said the total comes to \$35,000. Mayor Cusat said some of it would go to "5450" and some in the "bottom one". He said the cars need to go in there too. Barletta asked if the cars are in the capital purchases Line-Item for \$38,000. Mayor Cusat said yes. He said Line-Item 5450 is underfunded and should be about \$120,000. Barletta asked what is new, this year, from last year, in this Line-Item, because \$45,000 was spent in 2019. Mayor Cusat said the new computer server is \$60,000 a year and the body cams are an extra \$22,000. Barletta asked if this money is to maintain them. Mayor Cusat said yes. Police Chief Brian Schoonmaker said they are a loud-based service and needs to pay the server through the company that does everything, for the City, for the evidence recording. Barletta asked if this is under contracted or capital. Schoonmaker said it is under contracted. He stated the capital purchase was originally for the purchase of the cameras, and most were obtained through donations. Barletta asked if the capital purchasing would be just for the vehicle leasing for \$38,000. Schoonmaker stated the original \$38,000 would cover the first year of the leasing program and is on the higher side. He said the other \$30,000 was expected for the cameras which, thankfully, the City got donations, at this point, and tried to divert this money to helping bolster some other antiquated programs within the police department. She asked if the \$63,000 would go into the contracted services Line-Item that is left from the capital purchases line. Schoonmaker stated he was going to use the money to put towards other projects in the police department. He said contracted services are already planned out on a yearly basis. She asked if the \$63,000 is for something new. Schoonmaker said it was for trying to replace the older equipment and different things within the department. Mayor Cusat asked if this is where the ammunition would "fall into". Schoonmaker said that is a separate Line-Item.

Perry said most City departments have a capital purchases Line-Item. Barletta asked Schoonmaker if \$63,000 is something they could work with, for now, or \$50,000 since the City received the cameras. She said it seems like \$63,000 is now "open there" since the donation for the cameras. Schoonmaker said the remaining money would be used for other camera projects throughout the City. He said this would help improve the current systems the City has and has been unmaintained for several years. Mayor Cusat said Line-Item 5450 is short, just with the computer system. He said if council wants to move some of the 5450's down to the capital purchase, 5750, and should work out to the same. He said it is budgeted at \$100,000 with 101 and 35 is \$135,000, the stuff he read to them comes to \$119,000, plus the vehicles is \$158,000. He said this leaves them a little short, even with the cameras purchased with donations. Schoonmaker said he is looking at his spread sheet, he sent out to all. He stated the 5450 contracted services did not carry over, from the second page and came out to a total of \$117,730.046. He said he agrees with Mayor Cusat that there is a vast difference in the carry over. Perry said there was \$35,000 and now it is \$117,000. Schoonmaker said correct. He said this Line-Item was an error. Lynch said it does not matter because council is just talking about the amendments they want to make. Perry agreed. Lynch said they will make sure everything is accurate before it is approved.

Perry asked council if they have any questions regarding the fire department's budget. Leshko said they could always "add and change" their budget. He stated he hopes this year's budget holds up. Perry asked why there is a big cost for overtime. He said with the new firefighters, he thought his department did not need as much overtime. Leshko stated they need to keep the overtime in the budget. He said a few employees may need more overtime this year with one firefighter off sick and his department "was down" with one firefighter leaving. He stated this shows how important how it is to have five firefighters in each group. He said this was a great enhancement to cut overtime in 2019. He said, in 2020, there was the one firefighter, that left, to go to another department. He said there was some time where there was overtime until the other employee was hired. Leshko said they are still experiencing some overtime now. Perry said the actual, in 2019, was \$26,400, and to date, it is \$19,000. He said he is just having a "buffer", of \$40,000, just "to make sure". Leshko said they will have changes with some OIC's working. He said this will help some employees with their vacation time. He said he, currently, has one employee off with a back injury, but is not work

related. He said this causes overtime, "at points". Barletta asked about Line-Item 5451, Vehicle Repair and Maintenance set at \$30,000. She asked if there would be a decrease with the new truck's coming. Leshko said he will let them know in 2022 when the City receives the new fire trucks. He said this is a good possibility and are his hopes. He said there will be three vehicles and the transmissions and motors will be covered under the warranty. He said the only thing is to keep their maintenance up with oil changes and tires. He said the fire department's maintenance has been holding "pretty good." He said the only reason they are good at that is because his firefighters put in a big effort to get the parts and fixing the vehicles themselves. Leshko stated this is a big savings. He said if they did not do the work, themselves, their budget would have been "blown" already. Barletta said it looks like they did about \$12,000 in 2020. Leshko said it is over \$20,000 in expenses for 2020 for repairs. Perry said it was \$40,000 in 2019. Perry said they still have trucks that need to be maintained for another year. Leshko said his department will keep going with "band-aids" and will keep their "fingers crossed."

Perry spoke of the Parking Salaries. He said they were reduced from \$145,000 to \$125,000. Mayor Cusat said council should not "play with this" too much because once they negotiate the contract, the newer employees that make \$20,000/yr. will see a sizable increase in their base because they are set at the minimum right now. Perry asked if this is for someone not being kept on. Lynch said there is a retiree and may be reducing it "under the guise" of waiting on replacing a person. Perry said in Line-Item 5750, there is \$36,000 for Parking Gates, and the amount has not changed. He asked if this is for one or two lots. Mayor Cusat stated it is for one lot but there are two entrances onto the Wyoming Street lot. He said it is one coming into the Wyoming lot, and one going out onto Green Street. He said it is for repairs to the parking lot paving. Perry asked if this includes money for paving. Mayor Cusat said yes. He said the City would overlay parts of the parking lot themselves. Barletta asked if this needs to get done in 2021. Mayor Cusat said they have been waiting. He said the City got a grant for new sidewalks, and is applying for the rest of the grant for Green Street "up". Mayor Cusat said if they do not see the City putting their money in improvements, they will not get funding for this. He said the street will be paved, in 2021, with new sidewalks. He said by putting the gates in, the City would not need to get the money tags, which costs about \$1,500-\$1,900/year. He said the City could utilize these meters, in the lot, to repair the broken meters, throughout the City. Mayor Cusat stated the City would not need to use the meters in that lot with new gates installed. He said it could wait but needs to be done. He said the City would be spending money on meters and tags. Perry said if the revenue is down, in the parking department, and putting money into something that is not bringing "money back", this may have to wait. He stated parking meter fines are down. Perry said the City would enhance this, but not getting anything for it. Mayor Cusat said businesses were shut down for six months due to COVID-19. Perry said, then, the City should be increasing parking fines and come back to normal by March. He stated some parking areas need to be increased. He said it is not a good investment at this time. He said enhancing the parking lot does not mean people will come back. Mayor Cusat said he is looking at the "cosmetic" side to show the multi-model people that the City is trying to help with the project. He said the Wyoming Street project came in at \$1,000,000. He said the City received a \$300,000 grant and took three years to do the sidewalks. Mayor Cusat said they will not fund the rest if the City does not show an improvement. He said he wants to get this area, of the City, paved. He said if they spend a couple dollars, to show them the City is trying, they may get the other \$700,000 to fund the rest of the Wyoming Street sidewalks. He said it is like, "Look, I am doing something". Perry asked if the paving needs to be in the parking budget as opposed to the DPW budget. Mayor Cusat said it would be dedicated and the City might get "skipped over" and it might "get an alley" and not a parking lot. Lynch said these are two different things. He said the City is generating revenue and one is a service, provided to the taxpayer, to keep the roads in good shape. He stated the paving, for parking, should be generated out of revenue that the parking generates, to pave the lot. Perry said if the City is going to do this, the City needs to bring more money in. Lynch said it is all just a "sliding scale" of risk. He said the City is investing more but expecting less. Mayor Cusat stated the City is

giving people somewhere attractive to park their car and feel secure. Perry said last year, “they were there anyway” when everything was normal. He said the City needs to show the residents that these are improvements and not just throwing money at “bad loans”. Mayor Cusat stated he is explaining the City’s projects and not just asking for a tax increase to not do anything. He said he understands Perry’s position but he is explaining to residents that the City is not asking for money to “throw away”.

Perry said Barletta had a question on postage. She said it was for the Code Department. Barletta stated this department has no postage being used. She said they need to send out business licenses and notices, and this Line-Item is zero. She stated it does not seem accurate. Barletta asked if there is one account for postage and how is it broken down for each department. Mayor Cusat said there is a chart, for each department, at the mailing machine, and whatever department “comes up”, they will mark the total for the day, “spread-sheeted”, and gathered. He said they may not have done this. Lynch stated it is the same as the fuel issue. He said the City knows how much postage is being used but they did not have the time to “break it out” to put into Accufund. Lynch said every time the City pays for the postage payment, it is just “hitting” wherever she is choosing it. He said they would need to look through all the paperwork to see what postage is for what department. Lynch said it is cumbersome, it could be done, and they have it. Colombo asked if the City gets the bulk-mail rate. Lynch said yes. He said if there were 100 letters sent out from the Code Department, they write on the sheet there were 100 letters sent out, and when Lisa gets the bill, for all postage, she just pays it. He said Lisa picks whatever postage line in Accufund is where the bill will be posted. Lynch said they could “go back in” and make a general entry, they have the information but has not done this. Mayor Cusat said Lisa pays the bills and Jessica does the mailing. He said when Jessica is done, at the end of the year, she will give it to Lisa, and Lisa will make the adjusting entry. Mayor Cusat said there is also advertising done for the Code Department. He said the adjusting entries will clear up “all of these”. He stated it is the same for the gasoline. He said, at the end of the year, when Angela Spanial sends over the sheets from DPW garage, they get re-allocated with the closing adjusting entries. Barletta asked about the capital purchases for \$25,000 and for vehicles. She asked what the City is looking to do with the vehicles. Mayor Cusat asked what Line-Item it is. Perry stated Line-Item 5750 and on page 29. Barletta said the City just got a Ford Explorer for the Code Department. She asked what vehicles the City was looking at for the department. Mayor Cusat said he does not recall any new vehicles that were recently purchased. The only new vehicle the City is getting is from the COVID-19 money from Luzerne County. Perry asked if the City needs the \$25,000. Lynch stated he needs to ask the department head. Mayor Cusat said, currently, the Code Department has four code officers and two vehicles. He said the employees are “doubling up”. He said this is not very productive. Perry asked if the Health Officer will get their own vehicle. Mayor Cusat stated the Health Officer will be getting a vehicle, from the county, with the COVID money. He said this vehicle could only be used by this person. Perry said they will need to find out what the \$25,000 is for.

Perry said Barletta mentioned about the stormwater related activity for gasoline on Page 33. She said the amount is \$236,000 along with the fuel, for it, is \$225,000. She stated this seems high, for a “starting point”, in 2021. She said she previously requested, two years ago, for a breakdown, and never received this. Lynch said all this is asked of Frank Vito, Highway Department/Public Works Director. Lynch said he asks Vito to tell him what percentage, of time, are his employees spending on stormwater activities. Lynch said Vito said about 30%. He said he took two Line-Items to visualize the 30% that is going to stormwater activity. He stated these could be addressed as a separate issue or expense if the City choose to pursue this route. He said there are other mandated costs, coming “down the line”, for stormwater. He said, collectively, these expenses are a “different-sort” of a normal charge for DPW but in “this neighborhood”. He said the City is saying this is how much money the City is spending, on these activities, that could, otherwise, be reimbursable. Lynch said looking into the budget reports in Accufund, this is not seen in Accufund. He said the “good portion”, of effort, is going towards stormwater in Public Works.

Perry stated the Line-Item for street paving and materials is \$500,000. He said with all these suggested amendments, to the budget, the City is at about 17% tax increase. Lynch said the suggested budget amendments are the dependable or safer revenue, expenses he thought that

could be “trimmed”, but every proposal is there with the paving and gates and the non-obligated expenses in any department they are asking for.

Perry said council could take Lynch’s suggestions or delete these. He said if council agrees with Lynch’s 16 amendments, half of the tax increase would be reduced with his suggestions. Perry said if council wants to change the paving Line-Item, this will reduce the increase down. He said he would like to see the parking fines increase. Perry asked if Mayor Cusat is still keeping the parking garage as a “full” payment. Mayor Cusat said he is trying to lease the entire parking garage out. He said he did not come to an agreement yet. He stated the usage, currently, is down, with the school’s not being “back in”. He stated Lackawanna College students are parking on a private parking lot. Perry asked if this lot is across from Jimmy’s Quick Lunch. Mayor Cusat said yes. He said they do not want to pay him so they are paying someone else. He stated the Markle Building is not fully functioning and do not have all these spaces. Perry said Lackawanna and Luzerne County students will “be back”. Mayor Cusat said Lackawanna College is parking down the street now and could hurt the City.

Sacco asked Perry if where “we are at now”, with the 16 things “Lynch gave us”, it puts it at 17%. Perry said it is about half, 1.7 mils. He said 17 would be a good number to work with. He stated they do not have to do anything now. Perry said no city council member wants to pass this budget “as is”. He asked Atty. Logsdon how council goes forward with this. Perry said council could still pass the budget, on first reading, and still amend the budget. Atty. Logsdon said they need to make sure they do not “run a fowl” of any of the rules in re-advertising the budget if there is a significant amendment. Perry said there will not be significant amendments. Mayor Cusat said a certain amount of percentages in increases and decreases require a re-advertisement. Perry said they are high amounts. Mayor Cusat said some are 5 or 10% but does not recall. He said council never made the amendments before the first reading. Mundie said he thought it was 20%. Perry asked PEL representatives to help them out with the percentage. He said it would take another hour to go through all the amendments and vote on them. He stated he could make a motion to accept them “as they are” presented to them and “trim” from there. He said this is a starting point. Sacco agreed. Lynch said passing this budget is just acknowledging the form, that it was submitted by the mayor, and that his proposal is “on the table”. He said coming to the meeting on December 11th, 2020, with something prepared that is balanced and that everyone has had their input. He said the amendments could be done in “one shot”. He said they just need to stress that this does not bind, the City, to these tax increases, with the first reading. Lynch said they may not anticipate them to stay in. Sacco asked if this is saying council is agreeing to all the listed amendments. Lynch said council does not have to make all the amendments tonight and could be made on the second and third readings. Lynch said they are just passing, the budget, on the first reading. Perry asked Mayor Cusat if council usually amends the budget on the first readings. Mayor Cusat said, since 2011, there have always been amendments made with the first reading. Lynch said he thought they would be doing this. He said he spoke with PEL representatives and they said they do not have to make amendments tonight.

Matt Domines, PEL representative, suggested city council schedule another WORK SESSION meeting, between now and December 11th, to all get together to discuss the amendments. He said, then, they could all get organized, then “run through” and pass the budget. Domines said they need more work on this. Perry stated they do need to work on this more. He said they could have another WORK SESSION meeting to work on this more. Domines said if council makes amendments tonight, and “going into” a WORK SESSION, they may be amending and making amendments. Lynch said it goes on public display on December 2nd. He said it may be a good thing that it stays in there, as submitted, and the public could review it. Perry said it is out in the public, and council is not approving this, as is. Domines said not “as is”. He said council could make amendments up until the final approval on December 11th. He said, under the Third-Class City

Code, the first reading is an introduction, and it requires two readings to pass an ordinance and the second one “triggers” the second vote and this enacts it, not the first one. Lynch said he stresses the importance of public engagement. He stated this would give them a chance to look at this. He said the public needs to review the budget to see if the City should commit to paving the roads or other proposals in the budget. Lynch said he received one or two calls on the budget. Perry stated this is not a normal time in the lives of anybody in history. He said council is doing stuff for the residents with paving roads, fix parking lots, and giving new cars and services they are paying for. Perry asked what the “fine line” is when it is enough. He stated they are trying to improve the City. Perry said there are contractual obligations and healthcare costs. He asked how much more they want to go to give additional services. He said there cannot be an increased tax rate for paying the City’s debt. He said they hope to refinance the City’s debt. Sacco said the amendment list consists of 16 items and asked if the five council members are on a “decent page” to have Lynch to start working on them. She said they will go to a WORK SESSION, and they are just “beating a dead horse”. She asked if everyone is on the same page. Perry said he agrees with all that Lynch “put on here”. He said a starting point should be half. He said even though they are presenting, this budget, to the public, he does not feel comfortable at 33% increase in taxes. He said all council members do not agree on the 33%. Barletta asked about what to do with the proposed amendments. Perry said the biggest thing is increasing revenue and paving and gates. He stated this is, roughly, \$336,000 in paving and an increase in revenue of \$50,000. He said a total of \$400,000 could be cut “right off the top”. He said these are suggestions from Lynch. Perry asked if they should “tweak” any of these areas. He stated it is a dilemma they need to decide on. He said if all city council members agrees on the 16 proposed amendments, they could amend them all. Perry said council could say, “they want more cut in this area or that area”. He said if they agree with the 16 amendments, they could amend them all and have a WORK SESSION to cut more. He said Sacco mentioned this.

Atty. Logsdon said in the terms of the Third-Class City code, he said they are “throwing” around the term amending the budget in a way it is not meant in the Third-Class City Code. He said he is looking at the Enactment Provision, Section 11809, on the annual budget section of the Third-Class City Code, and states, “Council shall, after making the changes and modifications as appear proper, enact the budget and the appropriation measures required, to put into effect, upon the date fixed for enactment.” He said the Third-Class City code does not state to make amendments. He said there is a whole separate section in amending the budget notice and could be done in January. “The budget shall reflect, as nearly as possible, the estimated revenues and expenditures of the City in which the year the budget was prepared. Should it appear on any revision, of the budget, that the estimated expenditures, in the enacted budget, would be increased of more than 10% in the aggregate, or more than 25% in any individual item, over the proposed budget, the budget cannot be enacted, with all the increases, unless the budget is made available, to the public, for another 10 days.” He said they need to keep this, in mind, in terms of making any changes or modifications to the budget. Lynch asked if council does not need to take this an action and say, “this is what they want to do”. He said council would need to agree on the changes and modifications. He said this needs to be “laid out” as to know what is being changed at the December 11th. He asked if they know what modifications are going to be made. Perry asked if council wants to reduce paving by 25%, they are not able to go over 25% of a Line-Item. Atty. Logsdon said it only applies to any estimated expenditures more than 10%, in the aggregate, or 25% in any item. Perry asked if Atty. Logsdon is talking about increasing the budget, and not decreasing the budget. Atty. Logsdon said correct. Barletta asked if they could make changes in the revenue increases. Atty. Logsdon said as long as they are 10% in the aggregate and more than 25% in any individual item in the proposed budget. Perry stated he does not know if they would get to 25%. Lynch said if they were to pass the budget, on first reading, council could have this prepared, ahead of time, and ready for the second reading or a meeting in between. He said he “gets their concern” and this is a public meeting on public record that the City does not plan on doing it. Perry asked if this is what Domines suggests. Domines said it is up to city council. He said Atty. Logsdon asked if there is a consensus to adopt the budget “as is” tonight. He said he understands council looking at the public perception. He said it is already “out there” with the 33% increase. He said this is more of a formality. He said this is the mayor’s budget, under the optional plan, which came out in November. He said, now, it is formally introduced to city council. Domines said the second reading needs to be balanced under

the optional plan. He said they need to figure out what the final product will be. He stated they need to spend enough time, on each Line-Item, and come to a consensus, at a WORK SESSION meeting. He said there are a lot of “intangibles”. He said having another WORK SESSION will “gel” all of this together. He said, then, most of the work will be done. Domines said a lot of other municipalities do this. He said the first reading is an introduction, and the second and third readings is when they make their amendments. He said, then, it falls back to the mayor because he has veto power in the City. Perry said he does not remember, in the past, going line by line. He said they are re-hashing the same things. He said it needs to be a consensus. He asked if council wants to vote on the budget “as is” and make the amendments on one “fell swoop”. He said if everyone agrees to the amendments, and the majority votes on these areas, they could have it at 17%. Lynch said if this was him, and sitting in Perry’s seat, he would vote to pass it, and use his time, at the end, stating he was not in support of the tax increase, agrees on the amendments, and will be amending the budget on December 11th. Perry said they would all suggest this too. Perry asked for any suggestions from council members. Mundie said Perry worked hard on the budget to get it down, but if they put amendments in here there will not be a balanced budget. He said Lynch would then have to balance the budget. Lynch said he was prepared to make the adjustment to the real estate Line-Item. He said this could be ready to go “for the next one”. Lynch said Domines stated they have already seen this and use the time, to clarify, that they are making a procedural vote, and work on it for the next “real” vote.

Perry said no one will accept the budget, as is, if the budget is passed on first reading. He said they all want it cut more than half. He said the changes need to be agreed upon and could have another WORK SESSION meeting. Lynch said he will make his time, at the end of the meeting, to state it is a procedural vote. He stated Sam Galski could write this in the Standard-Speaker. Barletta said if they vote, for the amendments, it may be more of a “disaster” going into fix it. She said they are all on the same page to see a tax decrease. She said they all do not want a 33% tax increase. She said they cannot make amendments because they would be here “all night”. Barletta said this is just a procedure to get to the next step. Barletta said they all need to stick together because they are all on the same page.

Barletta stated, with her vote, yes, on the first reading, but it is not the final budget and not a 33% tax increase.

Colombo said he “mimics” what council woman Barletta stated, this is not the final budget, and they need to “tweak it”.

Perry said there is work to be done. He said they may have another WORK SESSION and get it to a finished product by December 11th.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-no; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES 4-1 ON 1st READING

Ordinance 2020-31

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 2021, Beginning January 1, 2021 and Ending December 31, 2021 (**1st READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry asked if this is the "right thing". Atty. Logsdon said yes. Atty. Logsdon stated it is for the tax rate total and breakdown with debt services for recreation and general revenue. Barletta asked what numbers they need to fill in for each. Atty. Logsdon asked Lynch if he has the numbers and if it could be broken down for debt service, recreation and general fund. Lynch said the numbers are: General Fund-6.75, Debt Service- 1.41, and Recreation- 0.09. Atty. Logsdon asked what the grand total is. Lynch stated 8.25. Atty. Logsdon said if they are looking at the draft ordinance, Section 1 will say Tax Rate total of 8.25 mils, Debt Services will be 1.41, Recreation will be 0.09 and General services will be 6.75.

Perry said council will vote on this and this will "not stay" as they do not agree on this. He said on December 11th, this total will be much different.

Barletta said with her vote, yes, then voting to change at the next meeting. Colombo said with his vote, it will be changed on December 11th. Perry said they will change as they see fit.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-no; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES 4-1 ON 1st READING

Ordinance 2020-32

Re-Enacting Ordinance 1931 which Continues in Force and Effect for the Period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, Imposing the Real Estate Transfer Tax (**1st READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry stated they all council members should have received an e-mail from Atty. Logsdon. He said the e-mail had a "bunch of ordinances, at one time". He said they were, probably, incorrectly done, over the years.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes, Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1st READING

Ordinance 2020-33

Re-Enacting Ordinance 88-14 which Continues in Force and Effect for the Period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, Imposing the Mercantile and Business Privilege Tax (**1st READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry asked Mayor Cusat if this is something he wants to remove in the future. Mayor Cusat stated yes. Perry said this is something the City of Scranton is trying to do, but not until 2021. Mayor Cusat said this would be the collecting of the tax in 2022, so this would not affect the 2021 budget. He said the money collected, this year, is from the year of 2020. He stated this money collected, in 2021, for the sales, would not be seen until 2022. Mayor Cusat said he would like to see this replaced in the future. Perry asked if there is a worker's employee tax. Mayor Cusat said there is an option, to explore, for ACT 47 communities. Perry said PEL did recommend the City to do this. Mayor Cusat said he is against the mercantile tax. Perry stated it is not "business friendly". Mayor Cusat said people who want to come to the City, bring it up, and state, "why would they come to the City when they could go one mile away and pay less taxes". Perry asked if this takes awhile to change the process. Mayor Cusat said yes. Perry asked if the City cannot collect more than is collected. Mayor Cusat said it goes by what the City collected in the last year. Sacco asked with PEL's new suggestion, could it be modified, or just "wipe it off completely". Mayor Cusat said he wants to remove the mercantile tax completely and replace it with other forms. He said it does not have to be done right now. Mundie said people are going to West Hazleton and Hazle Township, outside the City's boundaries, opening businesses, and not paying the mercantile tax. Mundie stated it is a deterrent to businesses. He stated Scranton did this with a certain type of payroll tax on a number of employees. He suggested Mayor Cusat getting some information, from Scranton, on how they structured it. He said they collected about \$1,500,000 or some "ridiculous number". Mayor Cusat said the number could only be the same as the number collected on the mercantile tax in 2020. Perry said Scranton will be doing this in 2021, and they are having weekly meetings. Mayor Cusat said the City's ACT 47 coordinators are the same as the City's. He said he briefly discussed this matter with PEL and they are aware. He stated, for the last 30 years, this has been a nightmare for small businesses. He said this is the right thing to do, for the City's businesses, to remove it. Domines asked Mayor Cusat if he is removing the privilege tax in 2020. Mayor Cusat said for 2021. Domines said the City needs the prior year collection. He said the City cannot get rid of it because they need the revenue. Mayor Cusat said this ordinance allows the City to collect this tax, from January, 2021, to December 2021.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-no; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES 4-1 ON 1ST READING

Ordinance 2020-34

Re-Enacting Ordinance 1933 which Continues in Force and Effect for the Period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, Imposing the Per Capita Tax (**1ST READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1ST READING

Ordinance 2020-35

Re-Enacting Ordinance 1949 which Continues in Force and Effect for the Period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, Imposing the Resident Tax (**1st READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1st READING

(2ND AND 3RD READINGS)

None

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2020-92

Approving the Purchase of a New ADA Accessible Van for Hazleton Public Transit

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Ralph Sharp, Hazleton Public Transit Director, said he received a federal CARES grant. He said, in this grant, the City was approved to purchase a new ADA Accessible Van for the paratransit service that they supply to the residents in the surrounding area. He said it is a 100% fully funded grant and there is no local match required. Perry asked Sharp if he has any of these vans. Sharp said he does have three and replacing one. He said the criteria, to replace a van, is five years and 150,000 miles.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-93

A Resolution Authorizing the City of Hazleton to apply for a Luzerne County Local Share Account Grant on behalf of the Pennsylvania Theatre of the Performing Arts

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry thanked Mary Pat Stroia for attending the meeting along with Frank Seratch. Perry stated the total requested is \$305,000. Perry said city council wants to help them out as much as they can. Stroia said city council approved, in 2019, for them to submit an LSA grant but the grants were not distributed in 2020. She said they are coming “back to the table” and asking council to reapprove this. Perry said they do not know what is going to happen, but council will do whatever they could.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-94

A Resolution Authorizing the City of Hazleton to apply for a Luzerne County Local Share Account Grant on behalf of the YWCA of Greater Hazleton

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-95

Authorizing the Filing of a Proposal for Funds with the Community and Economic Development, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to Provide Homeless Services or on Behalf of Other Entities to Provide Homeless Services

PERRY STATED THIS RESOLUTION IS OFF THE TABLE. Atty. Logsdon agreed. They said it is not “happening”.

RESOLUTION DIES

Resolution 2020-96

A Resolution Approving the City of Hazleton to apply for a Keystone Community Grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Barletta asked what this is for. Atty. Logsdon said it is a request from the Hazleton Creek Project. He stated KRS Development Group is the LLC purchasing the property. He said it was sent, to him, to put in front of city council. He said he did not get any other information except to put this on the agenda. Barletta asked if they are applying for a grant. Atty. Logsdon stated they want to apply for a Keystone grant but need us to do it and sign off on it. He said it is like the LSA grant. He said he wishes he had more information.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-97

A Resolution Awarding the Contract for as needed 2020 Snowplow Truck, Equipment and Operator work

NO PRESENTATION- RESOLUTION DIES

Resolution 2020-98

Awarding a Contract to Furnish and Deliver Unleaded Gasoline and Diesel Fuel

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Mundie.

MOTION TO TABLE:

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION TABLED

Resolution 2020-99

Approving the Purchase of a New Ford Cutaway Fixed-Route Bus for Hazleton Public Transit

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Sharp said the funds the City will be using for the purchase of the bus are from a Congested Mitigation and Air Quality Grant. He said this is what CMAQ stands for. Sharp said this is a federal grant received and 100% federally funded with no local match required. He said they will be replacing a cutaway that they currently have. He said the buses' "use of life" is over.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-100

Rescinding and Replacing Resolution 2020-40 Approving Purchase of One CNG Bus for Hazleton Public Transit

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Sharp said in May, 2020, council approved the purchase of the same CNG bus but they were going to use 1517 state funds. Sharp stated if they use the 1517 state funds, a local match is required. He said since they City received the CMAQ grant which is \$1,350,000, this could only be used to purchase buses. He said he will use these funds instead of using a local match. He said he needs council to reapprove this and the next resolution. Mundie asked how many buses the City has. Sharp said the City, currently, has twelve fixed-route buses in his fleet, and three paratransit buses. Mundie asked how many CNG buses. Sharp said five CNG buses, currently, and this will make seven. He said over half of his fleet will be CNG. Mundie asked Sharp where they go for their natural gas. Sharp stated there is a portable fueling station that is at the City's contractor site. Mundie asked if there will be a new fueling station put out at the new site. Sharp said yes. He said it will be a permanent fueling site to fuel his buses. Mundie asked how fuel-efficient they are. Sharp said they burn a lot cleaner than the diesel fuels. He stated efficiency-wise, the City is seeing a savings but not until the City has their own filling station. He said, currently, every time they come and refill the tanks, the City is getting a "trucker-type" fee of \$600.00 a load.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-101

Rescinding and Replacing Resolution 2020-42 Approving Purchase of One CNG Bus for Hazleton Public Transit

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Sacco.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-102

A Resolution Authorizing the City of Hazleton to apply for a Luzerne County Local Share Account Grant on behalf of the Hazleton City Authority Water Department

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

New Business: None.

Old Business: None.

Comments from the Audience: Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton, spoke of building alterations. He asked if this is for all building alterations “across the board” or certain alteration increases in permit fees. Rabo spoke of the rental registration. He said the City should add additional fines for additional people living in the rentals that was not disclosed in the rental registration application by the landlord. Rabo also asked the City Administrator about the property tax rate increase. He said the rate increase, for property taxes, in terms of the utility rate increases, is not accurate comparison, for street paving, considering the fact he was on the HCA Board, in 2017, the board, at the time, voted on the filtration plant modification. He said there was no rate increase, at the HCA, because they identified money sources and things they could utilize, from state and federal authorities. Rabo said the budget, of the HCA, is comparable to the City and has almost the same budget and revenue the City has. He also spoke of the \$25,000 of savings. Rabo said he brought this up with Mayor Cusat and city council when the delinquent tax claims were withheld. He said this validates the \$25,000 was saved for the bank fees and not the \$50,000, that Mayor Cusat asserted, for the lawyer fees. Rabo said the attorney still gets paid \$25,000.

Rabo said a “titan”, from the area, former county councilman and commissioner Ed Brominski died. He stated he was a fighter for the “working poor” and lived the word accountability. He said if any member of junior council or city council wants to see how a person, in terms of a public servant, as far as legislative body goes, held administrators accountable, to study him. Rabo said his name should be considered for the Hometown Heroes program.

Comments from Mayor: Mayor Cusat said First Friday will be held downtown on December 4th, 2020 and Winterfest at the park on December 6th, 2020. He said it is decorated very nice and hopes it will be well attended event and better attended than other things in the City.

Comments from City Administrator: Lynch said Rabo missed his point to the comparison to a utility. He stated the City provides a service and needs to be paid for it. He said the City’s General Fund budgeting, as far as he could see, has done no funding in road repair and replacement. He said \$500,000 is 25%, in road funding, and is optimal for the City. He said it works out to about \$47.00/year and to do the full \$2,000,000, his point is it works to about \$170.00/year comparable to any person would pay for their refuse or sewer. Lynch said he was not making a comparison to the HCA or insinuating they do not do their job or is not a good organization. He stated the City needs to pay for roads and does not put funding toward this. He said the vote, for the budget, was largely “procedural” and is being moved along. He said it would be critical, for the City, to get feedback, from the public. He said he has talked to some people and the City. He stated the City needs to pave the roads. He said the residents will see that the tax increase is not a crisis but a proposal to do things that were not done before. Lynch said the overall real estate tax bill, in the City, is comparable and may be lower than average to some other places. He said it is not over-burdensome. He asked the residents to please engage, look at the budget, and come to the city council meeting on December 11th.

Comments from Council: Mundie said he knows they worked hard on the budget to get a tax increase. He stated there are 800 small businesses closing, every day, in the country. He said the news says there are people starving. Mundie said a lot of restaurants will be closing because of the cold weather and not being able to serve people outside. He said there are a lot of people out of work. He said this is why he voted no on the budget. He said it is not the time to have any increases.

Barletta asked if city council should have another WORK SESSION budget meeting before December 11th. Perry said they could. Perry asked if they could meet on December 8th or 9th.

Lynch said city council just needs to review the budget amendments, talk about the street paving, and “put it together from there.” Perry agreed. He said they could lower other things. Lynch said they could talk more next week, can “jump” on ZOOM any night, and just review some things. Perry stated they could take more “off the top”. He said they could “caucus” and talk. He asked city council members if they agree. They all agreed.

Perry thanked Sharp for securing the \$2,500,000 CARES grant funding for lost revenue for the HPT.

Perry said city council will be doing a resolution honoring Francis Libonati. He said he was on the Recreation Department for 20 years. He said this will be on their agenda for December 11th, 2020.

Perry spoke of the city council agenda deadline. He said Eileen Matenkoski, the City Clerk, needs some courtesy in getting items to her by the deadline. Perry said he will give the power to the City Clerk not to put the items on the agenda. Perry said she, “keeps on changing, and keeps on changing things.” Perry said Cross of PEL mentioned the City Clerk of Scranton cannot be “crossed” and will not put any items on after the deadline. Perry asked what the deadline dates were in the past. Matenkoski said Lisa Shema, the previous City Clerk, who was the City Clerk for 10 years, had a 3-4-day deadline, before the meeting. She said Barletta changed the deadline to 1 ½ weeks before the meeting. She stated this is good because it gives city council members a chance to review the agenda items. Perry said he knows it gets crazy with LSA grant applications at the end of the year. Perry said the City Clerk could say no or could pass it to him, or city council members, for review. He said if the item does not need to go on the agenda, it could be placed on the next agenda. Perry said they really need to put the “hammer down”.

Perry said on the budget, the City cannot go to a no tax increase and is being overseen by PEL. He said there is a 3-4% healthcare cost and contractual obligations. He said the City cannot learn their lesson, from PEL, until they would go to zero. He said if they went to zero, they would have to “bump it up” the next year or the year after. Perry said there must be some “leeway” here. He said he understands businesses have closed or someone has lost a job. He said they want to do a minimal tax increase, as possible.

Comments from Junior Council: None.

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.