

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2020**

Call to Order: Council met in regular session on Friday, December 11, 2020 via ZOOM Teleconferencing. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 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 December 1, 2020 Regular Meetings were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: – In Memoriam- Francis Libonati.

Perry read the resolution out loud for all.

Mundie stated the first time he ever met Mr. Libonati was in junior little league. He said he made everyone feel like they were baseball players, and wanted everyone to do their best. Mundie said he cared about the kids. He said he also did great job with junior little league at the 22nd Street field. He stated he was the Recreational Director at the new Mother of Grace gym and ran all the programs. Mundie stated he was telling everyone what to do, and there were the DiBonafazio wrestlers, and people playing basketball. He said he had everything organized and could go to him with any problem. He said he was a credit to Hazleton. Mundie said he loved kids, sports, and helping people. Mundie said he will be remembered forever.

Perry stated he was an icon of the City that “we have lost; too many this year”. Perry said he was an amazing man. He stated it is hard to explain. Perry said he remembers playing down at the 22nd Street field in junior little league. Perry said he remembered wearing the “Lois Swatere” uniforms from Harrisburg, the Hershey area. He said he taught junior little league, but he was able to work with him in the Recreation Department, sometime with his “stint” with Dr. Larry Mussoline. Perry said they had an amazing time, and he was a scholar athlete of the highest accord. He said he is a pillar of the community, and everyone will miss him.

Mundie stated when he coached Hazleton, in his twenties, he may have been the youngest coach in Pennsylvania. He stated he spoke to John Tarone who was a scout and his assistant. He said Tarone stated Libonati had an amazing basketball mind and was a great coach. He said he, abruptly, quit at 28 years old. Perry said teaching was the perfect job, for him, as an educator. He said he was always teaching and loved sports. Perry said he made you feel like you were the “most important person”. He said if he did not know your name, he would call you “cat or Calvin”. Perry said he was very close to his brother. Perry said he touched many lives. Colombo concurred. He said Libonati had the best stories. Perry said everyone will remember his teaching abilities for 35 years.

Jacqueline Libonati thanked all for this beautiful tribute. She said her husband would be happy with their kind words and stories. She said his many years were spent on the baseball fields with the youth of this community. She said she is fortunate that her children and grandchildren could hear these stories. Libonati said he was a good man and continued to be in his 80 years of his life.

Bid Opening: None

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton, spoke of the budget amendments. He said he brought this up with Perry's "first tour" in council, the building permits, especially for roofs, not collected as much over the years, needs to be brought up. Rabo said he spoke to Pedri about this before. He said this needs to be addressed.

He also spoke of the Hazleton Municipal Airport. Rabo said the money is still the same, in the budget, with the airport bringing in money. He said he would like to know why this was not increased. Rabo stated it has been a few years since the airport is self-sufficient.

He said he would like to see the City receiving more revenue from them. Rabo said the code needs to be brought up.

Rabo said Luzerne County removed their merit-based raises of 1 ½% and the state "froze" their salaries until the end of 2021. He said the City, in the past, has asked this of City employees. He said Leshko remembers the fire department took a wage freeze for two years, and voluntarily did this. Rabo said the City needs a little sacrifice because everyone is hurting currently. He spoke of Governor Wolf's latest "edit" with no more than 50% building capacity and shutting everything down. Rabo said this will hurt everyone going into the New Year.

Rabo spoke of the TAN Note for the City. He asked if Lynch could address if this was made separate for COVID-related expenses. He said the state, along with Congress, are talking about reimbursing for COVID expenses.

Ken Zipovsky, 3 El Camino Road, Hazleton, said he wanted to "reiterate" what he said at the council's first budget workshop. He said the proper thing, to do, is not give a raise, and budget increase, that is proposed by administration. He said items need to be brought back down and "reigned in". Zipovsky stated the prices need to be looked at, based on the economic status, of the potential future, will not be a good thing for the City. He said things are being shut down again and people will have a hard time. He said they are saying, "it is just so much for this, and that" based on the property value of a house. He said there are many people, on fixed incomes, that will be stuck. Zipovsky said county and school taxes are going up and will hit the homeowners. He said creating a full-time parking person, at \$70,000/yr., when the City is anticipating a \$120,000 revenue reduction, in parking fees, does not make sense. He said the parking employee will have less to do.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

(1ST READING)

Ordinance 2020-36

An Ordinance of the City of Hazleton Rescinding Ordinance 2013-12 (as Amended by 2015-3) Entitled an Ordinance Adopting the Quality of Life and Violations Ticket Process in the City of Hazleton and Rescinding Ordinance 2012-7 **(1ST READING)**

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon said the current Quality of Life Ordinance, on the “books now”, is more practical to be enforced through the International Property Maintenance Code. He stated he hopes council will take it “off the books” on a second and third reading and will not be part of the new code in 2021. He said he will be working on formulating on still utilizing the “quick-hit” type tickets for ice and snow removal, high grass, and garbage violations. He said the City knows how the notice-of-violation process goes under the International Property Maintenance Code with notices, magistrate complaints and appeals “in there” and becomes a nightmare to get someone to cut their grass. Atty. Logsdon said he will formulate a new more stream-lined and “quick-hit” version of the Quality of Life. He said it is much more efficient for the Code Department to keep using the International Property Maintenance Code and will attack this from a “different angle”.

Perry stated this was discussed “quite a bit”, and they are ready to go on this.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1st READING

(2ND AND 3RD READINGS)

Ordinance 2020-28

Modifying Annual Plan for CDBG Program Year 2019 (2nd
READING)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 2nd READING

Ordinance 2020-28

Modifying Annual Plan for CDBG Program Year 2019 (3rd
READING)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Ordinance 2020-29

An Ordinance Approving a Corrected Action Plan
for Fiscal Year 2020(2nd **READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 2nd READING

Ordinance 2020-29

An Ordinance Approving a Corrected Action Plan
for Fiscal Year 2020(3rd **READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

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 (2nd **READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Perry thanked Lynch for his diligence in working on the budget and fellow council members on the calls and former work sessions. He said they suggested 2021 budget amendments. Perry said council will begin to amend the items. Barletta asked if council needs to go "Line Item by Line Item". Atty. Logsdon said yes, "Line Item by Line Item." Perry asked Lynch if the 25 amendments will bring it down to where they were discussing earlier. Lynch said these 25 amendments end with a millage increase of .62 mils, a 10% tax increase, to generate \$532,382 in current real estate taxes along with all the other amendments, you will hear, to get a balanced budget, with this much of a real estate tax increase attached to it. He said the total millage, dedicated to the General Fund, is 5.3 mils.

Barletta said council was told there is, a possible, new tenant will be arriving in City Hall. She asked where this income is listed in the budget. Lynch said it is not in the budget, and the contract was not signed yet, and he did not know about this when he was making the budget. He said when it comes in, it would be placed in the miscellaneous revenue Line-Item or under lease revenue.

Perry asked Lynch if he wants to answer Rabo's question about the City's TAN Note. Lynch said this is a straight-forward answer. He said this is a TAN for normal TAN-purposes. He said it is for working capital at the beginning of the year. Lynch stated it is not for any "hole" for COVID purposes. Lynch said it is a normal TAN.

Perry said council will go "line by line" with their 25 amendments and make a motion on each one.

#1

The first amendment is Line-Item #301-3300 Delinquent Real Estate Collections prior year, 2020, to total \$330,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#2

The second amendment is Line-Item #321-3000- Building and Alteration permits to \$335,684.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#3

The third amendment is Line-Item #321-378- Rental Property Registration to increase to \$45,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#4

The fourth amendment is Line-Item 322-380- Street and curb cut permits to \$200,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#5

The fifth amendment is Line-Item #331-3100- Court magistrate fines to \$210,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Perry said what Atty. Logsdon brought up is all total fines will be going into this “pot” and there will be increased revenue in this.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#6

The sixth amendment is Line-Item #331-3130- Parking fines to \$260,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#7

The seventh amendment is Line-Item #351-3101- Federal Cares funding at an amount of \$73,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry said this is to take care offsetting the cost of a Health Officer through CARES funds. He said this balance is neutral.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#8

The eight amendment is Line-Item #359-3000- Payment in Lieu of Taxes to \$50,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Perry said it is somewhere “around there.” He stated the City does not know what the Housing Authority gives the City all the time and is not the same. He said he appreciates what they do for the City. Perry said it is “boosted up more” to what the City receives.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#9

The ninth amendment is Line-Item #400-3514- Conflict Counsel to \$2,0000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Perry asked if council wants to eliminate this completely. Barletta said she is fine with this. Perry said they will “bring this” to zero. He said it was at \$5,000. Lynch said he will keep a “running tabulation”. He stated real estate taxes was the last amendment. Perry said council does not have a lot of conflict with Atty. Logsdon. He stated if everyone is cutting, council also needs to cut.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#10

The tenth amendment is Line-Item #401-5483- Overtime to \$5,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Perry asked if this is being cut by \$5,000. Lynch said this is cutting it to \$5,000. He said it was \$20,000. Barletta said it is not right charging people for this. Barletta stated they are already paying for their copies. She said it should be at zero and was never charged in the past. Lynch stated this is not a charge to be passed along to the people. He said if the right-to-know requests are cumbersome, this is overtime for the labor. Lynch said, legally, the City cannot pass this on to the requestor. Barletta said the City charges the requestor for copies. Lynch said this is not a charge, it is for labor. Perry said this is giving this person overtime to cover the right-to-know requests. Perry asked council if they want to amend this to a "number they want". Barletta made a motion to bring it down to zero. She said the City never charged the taxpayers in the past and never had a Line-Item for this. Mundie seconded this.

(MOTION TO AMEND TO \$0 (zero):

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Mundie.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES 4-1

#11

The eleventh amendment is Line-Item #404-5100-Services- City Solicitor to \$80,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry said this was decreased from \$100,000. He said there is some need there and the Line-Item is not outrageous.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#12

The twelfth amendment is Line-Item #404-5314- Special Legal Services to \$60,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry said this is more for the union contracts. Barletta said the City is, currently, going through some contracts but is not sure why the Line-item needs to be increased. Barletta said the City always had this Line-Item and, currently, it is not the time to keep increasing attorney and solicitor fees. She said this item was increased by \$15,000. Perry said they could amend this to whatever. He said he is "open to anything". Barletta said she would like to keep it at the same amount, but administration wants to increase this line. Perry asked if this was reduced by \$15,000. Barletta stated, in 2019, it was budgeted at \$45,000 and did go over, and want to propose, in 2021, for \$75,000. She said council was bringing it down to \$60,000. Perry said this is fine with him. Lynch said there is not a lot of "wiggle" room. He stated these things the City is not choosing to "go out and do". He said the City needs to spend money on solicitor services, especially in the Special Services Line-Item. Lynch stated this is time spent for labor negotiations and deductibles sent out to insurance-appointed lawyers. He said this is all legal costs apart from normal solicitor costs which the City has a lot of. Lynch said the City could bring money in from somewhere else or just "shut it down".

Mundie said if the City goes over \$45,000, and they "go over", then Lynch would have to come to council for a transfer. He said it is not the "end of the world" for this Line-Item. Perry agreed. Mundie said if it happens to go over, council will need to vote for a transfer into this item. Barletta said there are other expenses, in there, budgeted for \$5,000. She said, year-to-date, the City used \$102.00 and, last year, the City used \$546.00. She stated there is \$4,500 "right there" the City could always transfer in. She asked, currently, why is there an increase. Barletta said there were always union contracts. Perry asked Barletta if she wants to keep it at \$45,000. She said yes. Perry said this is how it always was, and they would be saving \$15,000. Sacco asked all the work, they are doing, on the code book, would be "ballparked" into \$60,000 increase with all the extra time going into this. She asked if this would fall under a solicitor item. Atty. Logsdon stated it would fall under a solicitor item. He said the City's labor council is separate.

Perry made an amendment to stay at \$45,000. Barletta seconded.

(MOTION TO AMEND TO \$45,000):

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

AMENDMENT PASSES 4-1

#13

The thirteenth amendment is Line-Item #409-5220- Operating Supplies to \$10,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#14

The fourteenth amendment is Line-Item #410-5102- Wages to \$2,886,336.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry asked Lynch to explain this. Lynch said this is reducing the wages, from the original request, but it still raises the wages that covers all the new hires. He stated if the City gets all the new hires, this would be reimbursable under the grant. Perry stated this is just “housekeeping” kind of stuff they need to do.

Sacco asked Perry if they are able to “beef-up” the numbers, here, a little better, since they kept the other Line-Item at \$45,000. She asked if this could be given to the police department to have more “boots on the ground”. Perry said, currently, the City would save about \$22,000 between the conflict counsel, the right-to-know officer, and the special legal services. Perry asked Lynch to answer this. Lynch said council could amend “this up” to whatever they want to. Perry said it is cutting off “the edge”. Sacco asked anyone else if they like this idea. Barletta asked if this would increase the health care and uniforms for the police. Perry said to add, a police officer, is about \$100,000. Lynch said this is a good “rule of thumb”. He stated the alternative may be to not reduce the overtime as much. He said that way, they could run some saturation patrols. Perry asked if this is the next Line-Item. Colombo said yes. Lynch said this was a suggested cut of about \$30,000 or reduce it to only a \$8,000 cut.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#15

The fifteenth amendment is Line-Item #410-5113- Overtime to \$150,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Lynch asked if they want to bring it up to \$172,000 with the extra \$22,000. Perry asked Sacco if she wants to use the \$22,000 saved from the other Line-Item. Sacco said yes, use the \$22,000 they saved. Perry asked Lynch what this was up to. Lynch said it was at \$180,000. He said if they wanted to do this, they would amend this Line-Item to \$172,000. Perry said they are bringing it down, but not a lot.

(MOTION TO AMEND TO \$172,000):

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Colombo.

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

AMENDMENT FAILS 3-2

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BACK ON THE QUESTION:

Perry said this brings it back to \$150,000. He said he does not know if it would make a difference with \$22,000. He said he does not want to throw anyone “under the bus”.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

Barletta asked Atty. Logsdon since they decreased it, do they need three or four votes on this, or does it fail. Perry said this was only amended. Atty. Logsdon said a decrease is a majority. He said if any item is reduced, it is a majority of council.

AMENDMENT PASSES 3-2

#16

The sixteenth amendment is Line-Item #410-5374- Repair and Maintenance to \$20,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#17

The seventeenth amendment is Line-Item #410-5750- Capital Purchases to \$61,210.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry asked if this is in the police department. Barletta said yes.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#18

The eighteenth amendment is Line-Item #411-5183- Overtime to \$30,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry said it was at \$40,000 and reducing it to \$10,000 because they are reducing overtime in both department. Perry said they do a good job.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#19

The nineteenth amendment is Line-Item #411-5451-Vehicle Repair and Maintenance to \$25,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Colombo asked what the amount was. Lynch said it was \$30,000. Perry said it was a \$5,000 drop.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#20

The twentieth amendment is Line-Item #412-5100- Parking Salaries to \$125,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Barletta asked if this is for holding the hiring and not hiring right away. Lynch said yes.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#21

The twenty first amendment is Line-Item #412-5192- Health and Medical Insurance to \$39,541.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#22

The twenty second amendment is Line-Item #412-5750- Capital Purchases to \$0.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry stated they all see a need for this in the parking lots and moving the meters. Perry said these are "unprecedented times" to do this improvement. He stated anyway to save a dollar, for the public is a good thing.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#23

The twenty third amendment is Line-Item #413-5450- Contracted Services to \$80,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Mundie.

On the Question:

Perry said this is a drop of \$15,000.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#24

The twenty fourth amendment is Line-Item #430-5245- Street Materials and Paving to \$200,000.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Mundie.

On the Question:

Perry stated this amount was \$500,000 and are dropping it to \$200,000. Barletta stated the streets are in "dire need" of paving. She asked having the grant, the PIB loan and Section 108 loans, could the City bring this down, this year, to zero because the City has all these projects "in the works" and the LSA grant the City applied for. Barletta said the streets need to be repaved but is a tough decision. She asked for feedback from council members. Perry said they need to do something. He said it is been long overdue to have a Line-Item for paving. He said people think their taxes are going towards paving streets but has not ever. He said it is a debatable amount. He asked Lynch if they are cutting the Liquid Fuels amount to less than \$100,000 for paving. Lynch said the Liquid Fuels commitment will be reduced because of the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank Loan. He said the committed funds to road repair and paving will only be about \$100,000. Perry said they are patching and paving streets. He said the mayor may have done this. He said this is a service to the people. Perry said this is something the City has never given them. He stated there is a lot more to go on with a lot more streets to be done. Lynch said the important distinction, and something the public needs to know, is to repair the roads and for materials. He said this is not for wages. Lynch said this is an asset. He said all council members and all citizens own these roads. Lynch stated, together, they need to maintain it. He said to properly maintain, the amount is \$2,000,000 a year, then the City needs to make an active choice of what they could afford. He said this is a unique year. Lynch said people need to know if it is \$200,000, this is 15% of, optimally, keeping the roads at 100%. He said this is, literally, an asset and not a service. He said council is coming to a consensus of what they pay to maintain this asset. Perry asked Lynch how much it would cost for this particular Line-Item. Lynch said if the City looks at the roads more as a service, \$2,000,000 looked good, on paper, compared to a utility. He said he was not trying to compare the City to a utility. Lynch said \$500,000, a year, was about \$34.00 for a citizen. He said this is a unique year and people are hurting. He said he hopes the people communicate what they want to see and is built on, in the future, to increase funding for the roads. Perry asked if it would be \$2.00 per person. Lynch said the equation is \$200,000 divided by \$86,000 times 7.5. He said \$200,00, in paving, would be \$17.44 a household. Perry said, "I think they would want to pay \$17.00." Lynch stated this would come to about three miles. Perry said the City needs to start somewhere and the

City would not get much for \$200,000.

(MOTION TO AMEND TO \$200,000):

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Mundie.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

#25

The twenty fifth amendment is Line-Item #301-3100- Real Estate Taxes Current to \$4,551,009.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Lynch said the new number should be \$4,534,772 and would be the amendment to Real Estate Taxes current. Barletta asked for the non-contractual raises. She said she was reading what Luzerne County did and it is minimal amount at \$5,000 for raises. She asked if this is something to try to help the residents out more. Perry stated only a "handful" of employees got a raise that were not contractual. Barletta said this would show the residents that they are trying even though it comes to a small amount. She said it has been a tough year for everybody. Perry said Luzerne County has "millions of dollars". He said some people make \$1,000,000, some people make \$60,000 with a straight increase and was not fair for some people. Barletta made an amendment to hold the raises this year. Mundie seconded. Lynch asked what Barletta meant by holding them. Barletta stated not giving raises to the non-contractual employees. She said this would include all non-contractual employees including administration, clerk and the chief. She said there are only a "handful". Lynch offered to "forgo" his raise and leave the rest of them be. He stated some are not managers, in this group, and some do not make a lot. Barletta said Lynch's wages would stay at \$74,900. Lynch said correct. Perry said this is the same thing that Luzerne County council debated. Lynch said for him, in particular, he would give council the number. Barletta said she would make an amendment to do it "straight across." She said this is very nice of him. She said she is looking at the resident's and what she heard of, from people, on the budget, over the past two weeks. Barletta said a lot of people lost jobs, and she feels this is a "kick" to them. Lynch said the City's employees are very important stakeholders, whether they live in the City or not, and some do not make a lot of money and are not in management. She made an amendment to do it "straight across". She said this is an option. Perry asked Lynch the total amount. Barletta said it is nothing against the employees, and Luzerne County did the same thing. She said she wants to show residents they are doing something. Mundie said he appreciates Lynch's gesture in trying to help his employees. He said there are people who have jobs and do not make much as upper-management, but there are residents, in the next three weeks, who will not have an income, restaurant workers and servers, for Christmas and New Year. He stated Barletta is looking out for the residents of the City. He said it is a bad time, and should not be giving raises out, like Luzerne County said no to raises. Lynch stated the total for the non-contractual raises is \$4,300 and makes

up about .2% of new expenses. Barletta said it is very minimal. Perry stated he would rather reduce the paving of \$5,000 or \$10,000 for some of the non-contractual raises. He said, in Luzerne County, some managers are getting raises and some are not. Colombo asked Perry if they could take the extra money, from paving, to give the employees their raises. Perry said they would have to “make an amendment to an amendment.”

(MOTION TO AMEND TO REDUCE \$4,551,009 TO TAKE AWAY NON-CONTRACTUAL RAISES):

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Mundie.

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

AMENDMENT FAILS 3-2

Back on the Question:

Perry said it is not worth it at this point. He said he understands the gesture. Perry asked Lynch if they are “still at” \$4,534,772. Lynch said yes. Perry asked if they voted on this yet. Lynch said no. Barletta asked if they could make more amendments. Lynch said yes. Perry asked Atty. Logsdon if council could amend an amendment. Atty. Logsdon stated yes. Barletta said she would like to amend the Line-Item #430-5100- new item for stormwater. She said they “did it” to \$236,000 Barletta said they took an estimate of what the new related charges are. She stated for the new stormwater activity, it would be \$236,000 for gasoline, diesel, wages and supplies. She said this was added to the budget, this year, and needs to be taken care of. She said the activity and wages are in the first year and the start of it, could it be reduced to \$150,000, and break it down, “little by little. She said there are several Line-Items that include stormwater. Barletta asked if the City should start this high. Lynch said this is not what it is. He said this is for the work they are doing in stormwater. Lynch said if the City said, “not to do this work, they would do something else”. Lynch said he is trying to show the effort that goes into it. Barletta stated they are adding, to the budget, the \$236,000, and adding the gasoline for this, diesel and supplies. Lynch stated they did not add anything. He said this was added in the 2020 budget. He stated it is used as an illustrative tool and “gestural” thing. He said it is saying, “about 30% of their time is going to stormwater issues”. He stated if there was a stormwater fee, then the City could get reimbursed, get more guys, or do something else. He said it is not tracked any other way. He said, for the budget, it is a “gestural” thing. Barletta asked about the diesel fuel at the amount of \$13,500, with \$17,000 year-to-date, and in, 2020, spent \$40,000. She asked if the City is okay there. Lynch said the City should spend “a little less gas” each year. He stated the City should not use more gas because the budget is higher. Lynch stated in an economics term “inelastic”, the demand for the gas, the City needs it and is just budgeting for it. Barletta asked if this could be broken down, next year, so they know what is being spent in stormwater. She asked for it to not be “grouped” together.

Perry asked if there is anything else to go back to. No council members had any other amendments. Perry said they “will go” with the amended Line-Item -Real Estate Current for \$4,534,772. Perry asked Lynch what it comes to, in terms, of milage. Lynch said it is really close. He said there is not much of a difference. Perry concurred.

(MOTION FOR \$4,534,772):

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

(ON THE AMENDED BUDGET):

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Barletta asked what the new percentage is for the tax increase. Lynch said 9.7%. Barletta stated council worked hard on this budget. She thanked all members, especially Perry. She said he took his time to sit down with Lynch and time with each member. Barletta said Perry is the "voice for council". She appreciates the hard work from going from 33% to 9.7%. Perry stated they want to help the people. He said it is tough to understand what is going on. He said the percentage is still helping the people. Perry said council is giving them services, and each department is getting more things. He said he appreciates everyone's efforts. Perry said this is the first time, in history, to have a paving Line-Item which is desperately needed. He said they are not only patching but paving. Perry said everyone has been looking at this thing. Perry said they want to help each department become better and more efficient. He said he wants the public to be proud. Perry said they are not just passive members but active. He said they want to help anyway they can. Perry said people are losing jobs, and it is difficult.

Budget said with her no vote, she would like it to be a little lower. She stated looking at the residents who she spoke with, and in a pandemic, she needs to vote no in "good faith".

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

AMENDMENT PASSES 3-2

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 **(3rd READING)**

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Barletta asked Atty. Logsdon if council could pass this ordinance, on the third reading, tonight, because of the amendments. She said it needs to be advertised for 10 days. Atty. Logsdon stated they are ready to pass it tonight with the advertisement. Mundie said, in the past, they needed to post it, with amendments made, for 10 days, to pass it. Atty. Logsdon stated there is no other

council meeting scheduled, either. Perry stated Domines and Cross, from PEL, are on the call to answer their questions. Barletta said she was reading the Third-Class City Code. She stated, in Section 1108-9, Section 3, it states, "if there are any significant changes, there needs to be a 10-day advertisement for the public." Atty. Logsdon said they should be okay. He said because the City goes under the Optional Plan, the section he is reviewing, this would "trump" anything. He said if looking at the Optional Plan's law, it states, "the budget shall be in the form required by council, **(inaudible)**. The budget, as submitted, shall be balanced. The council may reduce any item or items in the executive's budget by a vote of a majority of council but any increase, of any items, shall become effective only upon an affirmative majority of a vote plus one members of council. Council shall, upon introduction of the proposed budget, fix a date for adoption, and shall accept as, otherwise, provided no later than December 31st immediately following." He said, based on what this says and, in contrast, what the Third-Class City Code says, they have advertised, and fixed, that, tonight, as the date that this would pass. Barletta said as long as they are good. She said she had the section in the Third-Class City code to refer to this.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Saco.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES 3-2

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 **(2nd READING)**

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Perry asked if the millage needs to be changed. Lynch said it is .6 to the General Fund and 5.28. He said it would be 6.28 total. Perry said Debt Service and Recreation are not changing. He said there needs an amendment on this ordinance, to read, 5.28 mils in Section 3.

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

(ON THE AMENDED ORDINANCE):

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

AMENDMENT PASSES 4-1

(ON THE ORDINANCE):

On the Question:

Perry said the total millage would be 6.78.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES 3-2 ON 2nd 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 (**3rd READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES 3-2

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 (**2nd READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry said these are just standard and had them before.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES 4-1 ON 2nd 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 (3rd READING)

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

ORDINANCE PASSES 4-1

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 (2nd READING)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry said no one is a fan of the mercantile tax. He said it is not fair to anyone. Perry stated if they are all in agreement, along with the mayor, they need to get rid of this, as soon as possible. He said they need to change to a payroll tax, and this would stimulate business. He stated there are, "those who are paying, and those who are not paying". Perry said the mayor had a nice article, in the paper, on this. He said no one wants to pay more taxes than they have to. Perry said they are all "on board" with this. He said it would make it easier, for everyone, to have a business here, and other businesses will want to come. He said PEL will give the City the option to go to a payroll tax. Perry said they all want to do it fair. Barletta agreed. She said it was well-stated in the paper article. She said she is looking forward, in 2021, for the change. She said it will help local businesses. Perry stated there needs to be a study done to make sure it is done properly.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES 3-2 ON 2nd 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 (3rd READING)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon stated that Mayor Cusat may veto this ordinance and is adamantly against this. He said there is a "built-in" meeting in case this happens for an override or reconsideration. Barletta said the mayor handed council the mercantile tax in the budget. She asked where the money would come to replace this. Perry stated it is more "symbolic" than it is actual. Perry said they need to vote to keep it. Perry asked Lynch how much they are talking about. Lynch stated there is \$460,000 in the budget. Mundie stated he does not know how the mayor could veto this, and still have it in the budget without a replacement. Lynch said what the City collects, in 2020, and collecting, for 2021, to receive for the following year. Perry said it is always a year behind. Lynch said they are passing the

budget with the understanding on working to eliminate it. He stated no one likes this. Mundie agreed. Barletta asked if they have the budget for 2021. Mundie said it was already passed for 2020. Lynch said the City also needs to go to court for the payroll tax. He said if it was not passed tonight, and the payroll tax “falls through”, then there is a hole to make up in the budget for 2022. Mundie said he agrees, with Mayor Cusat, that the mercantile tax hurts businesses and “pushes” people to West Hazleton and Hazle Township. He said the mayor did not explain, in the paper, what he wanted to do. Mundie said he needs to propose something the people could live with. He stated even a payroll tax will be hated by the residents and wants to move to West Hazleton and Hazle Township. Mundie said a replacement may even hurt the residents more. Perry said if the City could get more industries, in the City, on Route 309 or up the Heights. Perry said there is not an easy answer unless there is more income. Mundie said he voted no “symbolically” because he hates the mercantile tax. He said \$450,000 is a lot of money and needs to be replaced with something. He said a payroll tax may be fair, by residents may say they could go to Hazleton and West Hazleton to not pay the tax. Perry said this would be the “lesser of two evils”

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

ORDINANCE PASSES 3-2

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 (**2nd READING**)

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Mundie.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES ON 2nd 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 (**3rd READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

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 (**2nd READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES ON 2nd 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 (**3rd READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

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

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2020-98

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

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Perry.

On the Question:

Atty. Logsdon asked city council members if they received the memo of award recommendation from Alan Wufsus, City Engineer. They all said yes. Perry said this was the best company.

MOTION TO REMOVE FROM TABLE:

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

MOTION TO REMOVE FROM TABLE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-103

A Resolution Requesting Local Share Account Funds for the Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-104

Council Meetings for the Year 2021

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry asked if some of these things were changed already. The City Clerk stated Matt Domines of PEL wanted council to take off the November 23rd council meeting due to the structure and timeline for the budget. Perry also asked if they want to change some meetings to 7:00 p.m. Mundie asked if they could be changed to 7:00 p.m. until April 14th. He stated Sacco also has a business to run. Perry said Colombo also has things going on. He said council could, also, keep the same schedule as 2020. Mundie said it helps the people who work late to make the meeting. Perry made a motion to change the meetings-from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. until April 27th, 2021. Perry said the WORK SESSIONS will be right after the regular meetings if they need them.

Perry said November 23, 2021 council meeting also needs to be removed.

MOTION TO AMEND:

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta,

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

MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED

Resolution 2020-105 IN MEMORIAM- FRANCIS LIBONATI

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-106 Approving the new Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Hazleton and the International Association of Firefighters Local 507

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Mundie asked Lynch the changes or what is in the contract for the City. Lynch said he was not very involved in the process. Perry said PEL already approved this. Lynch said it has been plan reviewed and is ACT 47 Plan compliant. Lynch said he does not have a problem with it. Barletta said it is a huge savings for the City with employees paying more into the healthcare, almost double. Perry asked Leshko if the first year would “roll into” next year. Leshko said he was “in parts” of the contract talks. He said there will be a greater contribution from the members going from a \$20.00 co-pay to \$120.00 co-pay, plus higher deductibles were agreed on. Leshko stated PEL has approved this and commended the union and administration “coming together” to make this work in this time. Perry stated this is even one year ahead. Leshko agreed. He stated this will put them one year ahead and takes effect now. He said it will restart in January, 2021. He said J.T. Klein and Mayor Cusat worked closely and tirelessly. He said it was added if an employee does leave, after so many years, they need to pay back money to the City. He said there are a lot of “catch-all’s” cleaned up in it. He said healthcare was a big thing. Perry asked if it is about \$20,000. Leshko said the City will gain healthcare costs back. He said there is a substantial increase in health contributions. He said it is a “win-all” for everybody and said it will work out best for everybody.

Perry thanked J.T. Klein and Mayor Cusat for all their work, for a seven-year contract. He said everybody benefited from it. Leshko stated he is the chief of the best department “in the world” and

has a true team. He said his employees go “above and beyond”.

Mundie asked Leshko if Mayor Cusat was involved with the negotiations. Leshko said yes, him and Jack Dean. Mundie asked if PEL was okay with everything. Leshko said yes, everything went through PEL. Perry said Cross from PEL sent all council members, a letter, on this.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-107 Approving the 2021 Tax and Revenue Anticipation Note

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry said PEL recommends, the City, do this every year. He said it gives the City extra money, available, until the City collects their revenue.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES 4-1

Resolution 2020-108 Resolution for Plan Revision for New Land Development

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Perry said this is for Blue Creek Investments. Atty. Logsdon stated this resolution was a last minute “add-on”. Also, there is a representative, Paul Szewczak, to take any questions. He also said they need to take public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT- Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton, asked where this development is located. Perry stated it is on North Church Street, near Birch Knoll Trailer Park. Rabo asked if the public utilities will be okay for this development. He said when he attended the Planning Commission hearing, there was some consternation about the public utilities how this would work and how it would be put in. Perry said this is regarding the sewage.

Mr. A. Szewczak, Blue Creek Investments, said this is a revised planning module. He stated they, originally, got an approval for 450,000 gallons, of sewage, but this was for a specific deal they lost. He said they are looking, at about, 50,000 gallons, of sewage, and need a new resolution, to get them processed, through DEP, to get a planning module for this.

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, commended Atty. Logsdon about his opinion that this is the Optional Plan and not the Third-Class City Code for the budget. He said Domines misquoted the Third-Class City Code. He said he is glad Sean “picked” this up.

Rabo also spoke of the budget. He said he would like to see it “whittled-down” a little more. He stated there still is \$290,000, owed to the City of Hazleton, from Luzerne County. He said there is \$6,500,000 in one of these accounts. He said there is a Vacant Property Registration Ordinance that is “on the books” for many years. He said the City, currently, has more code officers to enforce this and collect the vacant property registration for the bank-owned properties. He said these two things would be measurable improvements for revenue generation and less of a burden on the taxpayers.

He asked Lynch regarding the reimbursement from the state and the Congress along with the \$290,000 from Luzerne County if this would go into miscellaneous or Accounts Payable funds.

Rabo wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Happy New Year.

J.T.Klein, Local 507 Hazleton City Firefighters Union President, thanked all city council members for voting for their contract. Klein said he appreciates it. He said it was a little bit of work, on and off, for a couple of months. He said he did his best to help the City out and the times “we are in” right now. He wished everyone a great holiday.

Donald Leshko, Hazleton Fire Department Manager, asked all city council members to talk with all City department heads. He said he knows they went through a lot with the budget and amendments. He said they all need to have communication. Leshko said, “they have a job to do, and council has a job to do”.

Atty. Sean Logsdon stated the City has not forgotten about the \$290,000 owed to the City. He stated the obstacle is regarding a building to be sold. He said he will follow-up on this.

Perry said the City cannot count this money if it is not there. He said he shares this, with his brother, on Luzerne County Council. regarding this issue.

Perry thanked Lynch for all his power points. He thanked Lynch for all his openness, honesty, and his willingness to work. He also thanked him for his offer to forgo his raise. Perry said he has done “yeoman’s” work here.

Comments from Mayor: None-absent.

Comments from City Administrator: Lynch said he would advocate any one-time realization of funds to be put into a restricted fund to build up a fund balance for the City. He said the City could capture these funds. He wished everyone Happy Holidays and stay safe.

Comments from Council: Mundie thanked Perry for working hard on the budget. He said he would like this to be a zero-tax increase, especially with the pandemic that is crippling the economy. He said residents will not see the vaccine until the summer or fall of 2021. He said he hopes this gets the economy "moving". Mundie said there are 800 businesses closing each day. Mundie said Lynch did a good job on the budget, and his sentiments for offering to forgo his raise. Mundie stated Perry did a good job on getting the tax increase down. He said the City needs to find ways to generate more revenue and try not to keep "hitting" the taxpayers "over the head" with tax increases. Mundie said they cannot afford it. He said he hopes 2021 will be a better year. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah.

Colombo wished the City Clerk a Happy Birthday. Perry said Matenkoski works tirelessly, in the background, organizing, fixing and amending things. Perry stated she is a great asset. All city council members wished her a Happy Birthday. Colombo also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Hannukah. He also congratulated Mayor Cusat on his recent engagement.

Barletta thanked all council members for taking a lot of telephone calls and spending time away from their families for working on the budget. She also thanked Lynch and the department heads for all their work. Barletta also thanked Leshko in taking all her texts and "driving him nuts". She said council looks out for all departments to make sure they are getting what they need to help the residents. She stated getting the tax increase from 33% to 9.7% tax increase was a good thing. She said they will never get it to zero but will keep trying. Barletta said this is why she voted no, at this time, to look out for the residents, in the middle of the pandemic, and seeing people struggling, seeing local businesses, and people on fixed incomes.

Barletta said as a council member, she has a lot of questions and is "known for this" in sending e-mails. She said it is not to be annoying, but to ask questions on the budget. She said some people are upset over this and witnessed this herself. Barletta said it is upsetting to see this with "her own eyes" from the department heads. She said if she sees something is broke, she wants to help. Barletta said this is her job, as a councilwoman, to question the budget and Line-Items. She said she has to put her name on.

She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. She also congratulated Mayor Cusat regarding his recent engagement. She said this is very exciting.

Perry told Barletta to never stop asking questions.

Sacco said council put a lot of work and effort into this, especially Perry. She said she is "torn" because she is a business owner and sees the normal "wear and tear" and costs that goes into things. Sacco said council is being very fair. She said if it was not a pandemic, she would be more in favor of costs. Sacco said everyone should put their "straps on" to get through this. She said council is being very fair and humble. She wished everyone good health and Merry Christmas. She said she looks forward to 2021.

Perry said council is looking out for the public, and no one likes a tax raise. Perry said it is a lot of work. He said the City is paying \$85,000, a year, for ten years, for poor practices done, in the past, of no tax increase, to cover expenses. He stated 2-3%, of this, are common increases. Perry said if a resident

owns property, they are paying taxes. Perry said if the City tells residents that they would pave the streets, they would be more apt to know this. Perry asked Lynch what the 9.7% increase would be for a average household. Lynch said about \$45.00/year. Perry stated no one wants to pay anything. He said the City is giving them services and improving the City. He said businesses are coming in. Perry said the City is looking at two major properties plus one on Poplar Street. Perry said the City is also getting new owners in the Dorr-Oliver building with five more buildings. He said the City needs infrastructure and roads. He said they need to move forward and help every department in getting new vehicles with refinancing and a VAC truck for DPW. He stated the City needs to grow and try to progress. Perry said they will work with the code department to have a stellar department. Perry said council is not working for the pay, because it is minimal, for the City. He said no one wants the mercantile tax and wants to get rid of it. Perry said Sacco is working with Mayor Cusat on the business licenses. Perry said the City, for the first time, will have a paving budget. He thanked the police department with their saturation patrols, all department heads and for the employees putting up the Christmas decorations. Perry said they are "thankless" jobs and are not thanked enough. Perry thanked Gary Perna for Winterfest. He said it was great.

Perry said he and Colombo have been talking about EMS and getting the City's own EMT's and ambulance service. He said the City needs to look at a future Comprehensive Plan for this. He said there are not enough ambulances and emergency services.

Perry wished everyone a Merry Christmas and thanked everyone for all they do.

Comments from Junior Council: None.

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.