

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2020**

Call to Order: Council met in regular session on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 via ZOOM Teleconferencing. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 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 April 28, 2020 Regular Meetings were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: None

Bid Opening: None

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton (*voice inaudible*).

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

(1ST READING)

None

(2ND AND 3RD READINGS)

None

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2020-42 Approve Purchase of One CNG Bus for Hazleton Public Transit

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-43 A Resolution Appointing Conflict Solicitor

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-44 Contract for Materials 2020-2021

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Colombo asked how many bidders there were for the materials contract. Perry stated there were six different bidders- Mid-land Asphalt, Pennsy Supply, Hazleton Materials, M&J Contracting, Franzosa Trucking, and Hazleton Site Contracting. Perry said Alan Wufsus, City Engineer, prepared the spread sheet with all the bids.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-45 Contract for Materials 2020 – 2021 with Community Development Block Grant Funds

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Sacco.

On the Question:

Perry stated this resolution contains the same number of bidders. Atty. Logsdon said the City was required to do two separate resolutions for the materials contract.

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

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2020-46 A Resolution Waiving the Late Penalty Fee For Fiscal Year 2020

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

On the Question:

Perry stated this resolution was adopted from Luzerne County Council's. Dan Lynch, City Administrator mentioned the City collects the money. He said it is a fairly small amount.

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: Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton, said a parking strip between Laurel and Wyoming Streets needs to be repainted. She said this causes parking spaces to be lost. Frank Vito, Department of Public Works Director, said this will be taken care of. Deakos stated she noticed graffiti at the Laurel Street Parking Garage's stairwell. Ralph Sharp, Hazleton Public Transit Director, said employees will be cleaning up the graffiti in the garage. She also mentioned that some City road patches are causing a "bump" when driven over. Deakos asked if these can be leveled out. Vito said he will take care of it.

Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton, spoke of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. He is wondering how the 2020 budget is going. Rabo stated he is worried about the 2021 budget. He said City administrators need to meet with the ACT 47 coordinator and discuss other ways of generating income besides raising EIT and property taxes. He said the City needs to go to the state so they can allow for alternatives.

Perry stated city council and City administration meets with the ACT 47 Plan representatives on a weekly basis. Rabo said Mr. Cross and the City administrators need to "go to the state" regarding the EIT tax. He said this issue needs to be taken to Harrisburg. He said there are other options that need to be explored.

Rabo asked Charlie Pedri, Code Enforcement Director, about zoning issues in the City. He said out-of-state residents are coming into the City and placing a higher risk for COVID-19. He asked if there are currently any inspections being done on converted properties. Pedri stated any complaints his office receives, there will be an inspection done. He said either a Notice of Violation (NOV) or a warning will be issued. Pedri stated if a neighbor calls the office, this issue will be checked out. He said there have been several situations with family members violating the City's zoning ordinance. He said some family members are living in the basements. He has told several relatives that they cannot live in the basement.

Rabo said he also concerns with out-of-town residents parking in the City and the use of their vehicles. He said they come late at night and "take-off" before the curfew. He said then they "go back" around 4-5:00 a.m. to their "home" state. Pedri stated the code department checks out specific complaints. He said code officers just cannot drive "up and down" the City streets.

Rabo also spoke of parking during the PA Primary Election. He said there are other alternatives to accommodate City parking. Donald Leshko, Hazleton Fire Department Director, said residents will be allowed to park at Height Terrace and at the Castle. Rabo asked if there will be sufficient parking for voters. Leshko stated, currently, voters will not be allowed to use the City's fire stations. Leshko stated there will be very sufficient parking. Rabo asked if there will be handicapped parking available. Leshko stated there will be for temporary handicapped residents who are using their placards. Leshko said there

will be handicapped parking, at the Castle, on the side of the building. He said the gymnasium is handicapped accessible.

Perry stated residents are also mailing in their votes due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Comments from Mayor: None.

Comments from City Administrator: Mr. Lynch stated he received the Pennsylvania Municipal League's (PML) update from a recent online conference along with DCED representatives. They stated all state municipalities will be impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He said they gave some preliminary numbers. He said there will be a significant reduction in the EIT taxes and spoke of some alternatives. He stated he will need to "reach out" to local legislators and plan accordingly.

Mundie suggested Lynch contacting Tarah Toohill and John Yudichak in getting help for finances for the City. He asked how the mercantile tax is going, so far, for 2020. Lynch stated he has no numbers right now. He stated there will be a reduction, in the City's numbers, across the board. He stated there will be about a 2% reduction in fines and permits with a 5% reduction in real estate taxes. Lynch stated 60-70% of revenue comes from EIT and Real Estate taxes. These estimated numbers were given to him by PML.

Comments from Council: Mundie suggested city council sending a letter to all state legislatures regarding payment on the City's MMO (Minimal Municipal Obligation). He said city council also needs to encourage other municipalities to do the same.

Perry stated there maybe an issue with the City's MMO. Lynch stated he asked DCED this question today. They said everything is "on the table".

Mayor Cusat stated he has recently spoken with Senators Bob Casey, Pat Toomey, Matt Cartwright, and Dan Meuser regarding the MMO. He stated this will be a big problem.

Mundie stated letters need to be sent to everybody. He said if enough governments "make noise", something will be done.

Colombo thanked Mundie, Perry, Sacco, Barletta and Mayor Cusat for all their support at the 2nd Hazleton Dinner at Holy Rosary Church.

Perry also thanked everyone for their support at the dinner and for Mayor Cusat's hard work in the church's basement. He said there were over 400 dinners given out tonight. He thanked all for helping out the City in this coronavirus pandemic.

Comments from Junior Council: None.

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.