

**CITY OF MCKEESPORT  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY**

**7:00 P.M.**

**MAY 4, 2016**

This Meeting of Council was called to order on the above-stated date at the above-stated time after the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence by President of Council Richard Dellapenna with the following Members of Council present:

**RC-1           PRESENT:   RICHARD DELLAPENNA, KEITH SOLES, V. FAWN WALKER-MONTGOMERY, JAMIE BREWSTER-FILOTI, LUETHEL NESBIT, TIMOTHY BROWN.**

Prayer was led by Gladys Hunt-Mason.

Also present were Mayor Michael Cherepko, City Administrator Matthew Gergley, City Solicitor J. Jason Elash and members of the Administration.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**MOTION:   Mr. Soles moved, seconded by Ms. Brewster-Filotei, “to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 6, 2016.”**

**RC-2           YEAS:** DELLAPENNA, SOLES, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BREWSTER-FILOTI, NESBIT, BROWN (6)

**NAYS:** NONE (0)

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Received both the Fire Department and Police Department Reports for the month of April.

**MAYOR’S REPORT:**

Mayor Cherepko said thank you Mr. President and said he would be very brief tonight. I know we did a lot of talking last evening. Just a couple of announcements. I don’t know if you have been up on Versailles Avenue at all recently. We have a new Family Dollar Store, which is one of the first new constructions/developments on Versailles Avenue in decades. We do not have a date at this point but they should be having a grand opening within the next

month and I think it is great to bring that entity into that area to service many people in that area that maybe don't have the transportation and will have foot access, along with others that want to go there because it is a store of choice. I know many times, and I would be remiss if I did not just comment briefly. I know many times people see these, your Family Dollar and your Dollar General, and people say another Dollar store. I apologize for those that have heard me say this several times. Believe me, this administration is working very hard to bring in all kinds of different businesses from manufacturing on down to create new jobs. I am talking with a company now that if all goes well it could lead to possibly 150 jobs in our City, \$52,000 average salary, things like that so we have that going on as well, but I do want to remind you, I don't know the last time you have gone to Dollar General or Family Dollar but these are not dollar stores. They have dollar in their names but they are a retail store. They are no different than your five and ten, nickel and dime store, like Murphy's and those types of stores that have been here for years. I for one try to do my odds and ends locally and shop at Family Dollar down on East Fifth quite often. Stop in the new one in Christy Park on occasion and I can't find myself coming out without ever spending less than \$30 or \$40 but it is exciting. I think it is hard for people, right away that see dollar and they think it's a dollar store but they are not and you know a lot of stores that we grew up and even before me, people before me, you look back and a lot of those stores who were your name brand stores that everyone wants to see coming, you see them going out of business. Sears just announced. K-Mart and a lot of these other ones. I just think these are the new types of stores coming and we are exciting to welcome them in and we at McKeesport, no matter what business comes in, we need to make sure that we support them in order to help them stay. We were very fortunate to bring Aldi's in a few weeks ago, an international chain, a few months ago and when they bought Bottom Dollar, the majority of the stores they bought they did not open up an Aldi's but we fought hard and we got them there. We need to keep that in mind. We need to make sure we support them. We do have a development that is going to take place down behind the Rite Aid on Christy Park Section of the City. We are looking to have a construction company bring their corporate office into town and in addition that building will also house some attorney firms. They will lease from them as well, office space, so we have a couple of things going on there as well. There are some other things lined up that I can't really discuss too much but we are fighting hard and here in

McKeesport we have a lot of obstacles and challenges but we will work through them and perceive it just takes time. We have been on that collapse since the collapse of the steel industry 30 some years now and we are working our way back up. It's not going to happen overnight. You have to crawl before you walk and walk before you run but there are some good things going on.

Speaking of good things, a few years ago this Council we fought hard to get a grant to tear down almost 30 homes up there around the library and the school and there in the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward. We were turned down at first. Once again you talk about fighting through it, perseverance. Because the grant money we applied for wasn't for demolition we tied it into revitalization project. We named that section the Culture and Educational Sector because of the library and the little theatre and the forty million dollar state of the art educational facility, McKeesport Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist, and many of the other entities in that area, well we are looking to take that to the next step when you talk about Revitalization. I know you have heard me say it a while back but we are actually moving ahead now and I know Ms. Luethel, who is a Councilwoman, also wearing multiple hats with this with Action Housing, and we are partnering with Action Housing to build two brand new homes across from the new school and you are talking about an opportunity to provide two new families a chance to have a beautiful home in what we are calling our Cultural and Educational Sector of the City and that is going to be the first step. They are looking to build upon that and not only new homes that are part of that but also to remodel a lot of the homes that are up in that area and fix them up and sell them as well. So we are happy to continue moving on that and to announce that and I do thank Luethel and Action Housing for all their hard work in their partnership with the City and we will release more when we get more information.

We also have applied for a Recycling Grant. I don't want to go into too much of that either. I don't believe the media is here, which is good. But what we are trying to do is get the larger Recycling Bins. We do not have enough to give bins to every single house in the City at first but what we plan on doing is those who take the time out to call us because they want a recycling bin are probably the ones who are going to take recycling seriously and it will probably become a first call type. The ones that call first to get them will be the ones to get them. Unfortunately, we don't have a large percentage of people recycling in this City

and we really want to kick off this recycling campaign and keep it going because I could tell you for one a lot of people don't realize if you recycle you are going to put out more recycling than you are going to have garbage because it is amazing what is recyclable these days. Not only are we able to generate revenue, not only are we able to preserve our environment through recycling, but we can also cut expenses when we prevent all of those recycling goods from going into our landfills which we as taxpayers pay to get rid of the garbage. So I do appreciate the efforts. I know Mr. Tedesco has led this Recycling Grant effort and it wasn't easy either because of things that have happened in the past between DEP and McKeesport, things like that, we really fixed a lot, tied up a lot of loose ends and fixed some areas that maybe there were hard feelings, so to say. I think we are rebuilding that relationship and we are really hopeful that this Grant comes through.

The only other thing is a lot of good things going on at Renzie Park. Yes, we are getting ready for the Summer Concerts all the way up to International Village and the Patriot Day Parade and the Rib Feast, everything else that the Rec Board and all the volunteers on that Rec Board take their unbelievably dedicated time and energy to make these events successful. Also, the basketball courts at Renzie, we will have two full courts out there, they will be in without question by the end of the month and I am hoping on the first half of the month is what we are shooting for. The hockey rink will have lights installed and will be finished as well and we will be looking for Deck Hockey Leagues. The Spray Park, we plan on having a grand opening early June for all the kids to enjoy something special out there added to the Park was well. Some other things throughout the Park. Just so everyone understands, I think it is important to let the public know that those are all through Grants; those are all through RAD. That is funding we get for those projects. I do not want anyone to ever think we have other bigger things to be doing and we are wasting money. So some might think it is a waste to redo basketball courts, some might think it's a waste. That was all Grant money. Grant money is allocated for those particular projects. It is not money that you can take and put for anything else. I do commend Matt who has done a tremendous job with the RAD presentations, working with Jim Brown, our Recreation Director, the last several years to really where we have gotten more money for those types of capital projects than the City has seen for years. This year we are working on the

tennis courts, so you are talking about brand new tennis courts. I think what people need to understand as well is that not only are these facilities enjoyed by members of our community but we have people from outside the City coming to our City and anytime we have people from the outside coming to our City, to me that is a homerun. All too often we have the negative publicity that the news media and others like to focus on but it is always nice to see those people that come in, whether it's the first time, and they say wow I cannot believe this is McKeesport. Or whether it is someone that is proud to come here and they have been coming here for years. Whatever the case may be. But any time we have an opportunity to have events that attract outsiders you know we always look at it as hey let's shoot for being cost neutral. It's not about making money but if we can hold an event and not spend anything we are ahead of the game. If we hold an event and you have to spend a little bit of money, we are also ahead of the game. Just like the bike race we had that had what I forgot how many states represented. These are the types of activities we are going to continue to focus on as we continue to fight and overcome the daily challenges and obstacles that we face each and every day. We are excited about some of the things in Renzie Park. The Fishing Derby will be June 4. You can mark that on your calendar as well. We did have the Lake stocked also for the First Day of Trout where many families were down there fishing as well.

The National Day of Prayer tomorrow as Ms. Gladys Hunt-Mason said if you can make it down to the corner of Market and the Old Memorial Lot, Market and Fifth at Noon. A lot of the many others, please make sure that you pay attention and I thank you for being here tonight. It's good to see so many people want to come out and hear what is going on in their community. Pay attention to the Web Site. We are in the process of redoing our entire Web Site, having it professionally done to make it more user friendly and more efficient on the City end of things and to really expand. We also have the City of McKeesport's Mayor's Office Facebook Page about events and cancellations and things like that. The Banners are going up. That was said last night. The program that Jamie Brewster-Filotei took a lead on. Those are the banners to honor our Veterans, you don't have to pass you can still be living. If you have a loved one that you would like to see a banner up around town. It's \$100. Part of that you get the banner that will hang and you also get 2 pictures as well, whether you want to keep at your home or

office, they come with that as well. Other than that Mr. President, that concludes my Report.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor.

**CITIZENS IN THE AUDIENCE:**

Mr. Dellapenna asked Mr. Keith Giles to please come forward. Mayor Cherepko said, I do apologize but while he is getting set, I talked to you last night Mr. Ron Oleska is with us this evening if we want to get that done now. Ron has been part of the Ambulance Base since it first came in and has been a Board Member for 15 years and his term has expired and I am going to ask Council for his reappointment to the Ambulance Board.

**MOTION: Mr. Soles moved, seconded by Ms. Brewster-Filotei “to appoint Ron Oleska to the Ambulance Board.”**

**RC-3 YEAS:** DELLAPENNA, SOLES, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BROWN (6)

**NAYS:** NONE (0)

President Dellapenna apologized and called Mr. Giles forward and asked him to please state his name and business.

**Mr. Keith Giles, 336 Penny Street, McKeesport.** My name is Keith Giles and I am CEO of First Step Recovery Homes and I am here tonight to talk about a collaboration that we are in the process of formulating but first of all I would just like to thank Council for this opportunity to share what we are trying to do in the City of McKeesport and I would like to pass out, a newsletter we do twice a year, just to give you some information on our organization. Tonight I am representing a collaboration of concerned citizens, agencies and churches. I would like for them just to stand up as I mention their names before I go into what I am talking about. First Step Recovery Homes which is myself; the Center for Spirituality and St. Stephens Church which Fr. David Else; Minister Frank Francis of St. Paul; Reverend Richard Trust from Zion, although I don't know if he has a representative here, I don't think he does; Reverend Jones; Minister Edward Houston; Ms. Diane James of DID Associates and also a Freelance Reporter; and Mr. Richard Garland of Flepping Board. So we formulated this collaboration to

create the staggering unemployment, addiction and crime in our community. Our primary focus is to concentrate on the tremendous influx of citizens returning to our community because of the unfair Drug Laws enacted in the late 1980's. President Obama has declared clemency for those individuals which is causing housing, mental health and unemployment issues in our community. We have a great number of men and women returning with no marketable employment skills, no relevant training and most now having felonies on their records forbidding them from obtaining decent employment which heads to my second concern which is public safety. When those individuals cannot find employment and address their mental health issues or find affordable housing, it is going to cause more crime in our community and businesses will not be willing to invest in such a chaotic community and third we would like to assist the City government in trying to bring McKeesport back to its former state. We remember when the City was booming, prospering and was a town that other cities wanted to model themselves after. Our first step, no pun intended, will be to ask permission of the City of McKeesport to adopt a couple of blighted lots to maintain and manicure so we can bring pride, respect and dignity once again to this City. We do understand that there may be some insurance issues but hopefully we can iron out any issues that may arise. We really didn't come here tonight to overwhelm the City, it was not our major intent. But as we continue to move forward with our feasibility studies in our business class we intend to keep the City of McKeesport informed about our progress every step of the way and our major intent will be to replicate a program that is in San Francisco, California that is called "Dellancy Street" and we are coming together to try to replicate this, to try to help those and assist those that are less fortunate find employment, training and we want to make sure that they get their proper education, so we will keep the Council informed on our progress as we go forward. So we just wanted it to make it know tonight that we are formulating this collaboration and Ms. Mason I will be talking to you concerning the ad ministerial lines also and we will be speaking to them concerning these issues. So my main intent tonight was just to inform Council on what we are in the process of trying to do.

President Dellapenna thanked Mr. Giles and asked if there were any questions.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**ORDINANCE NO. 16-003 - BILL #18 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING ORDINANCE #14-25 TO CORRECT THE ELIGIBILITY DATES FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE DEFERRED RETIREMENT OPTION PLAN (DROP) TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS OF THE CITY.**

**MOTION: Ms. Walker-Montgomery moved, seconded by Ms. Nesbit “to approve Bill #18.”**

**RC-4 YEAS: DELLAPENNA, SOLES, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BROWN (6)**

**NAYS: NONE (0)**

**ORDINANCE NO. 16-004 - BILL #19 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE PROPER CITY OFFICERS TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO TRANSFER LAND KNOWN AS LOT & BLOCK 461-A-161 FROM THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT TO THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, TO AID THEIR REDEVELOPMENT OF SAID AREA.**

**MOTION: Ms. Brewster-Filotei, seconded by Mr. Soles “to approve Bill #19.”**

**RC-5 YEAS: DELLAPENNA, SOLES, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BROWN (6)**

**NAYS: NONE (0)**

**ORDINANCE NO. 16-005 - BILL #20 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE PROPER CITY OFFICERS TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO TRANSFER LAND KNOWN AS LOT & BLOCK 464-R-118 FROM THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT TO THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, TO AID THEIR REDEVELOPMENT OF SAID AREA.**

**MOTION: Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Brewster-Filotei “to approve Bill #20.”**

**RC-6 YEAS: DELLAPENNA, SOLES, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BROWN (6)**

**NAYS: NONE (0)**

**RESOLUTION #2016-16 - BILL #21 – RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2016 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN FOR FUNDING KNOWN AS B-16-MC-42-0106 UNDER TITLE 1 OF THE HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1974 (PUBLIC LAW 93-383), AS AMENDED.**

**MOTION: Ms. Nesbit moved, seconded by Mr. Brown “to approve Bill #21.”**

**RC-7 YEAS: DELLAPENNA, SOLES, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BROWN (6)**

**NAYS: NONE (0)**

**RESOLUTION #2016-17- BILL #22 – RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE PROPER CITY OFFICIALS TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS CORPORATION.**

**MOTION: Mr. Soles moved, seconded by Ms. Nesbit “to approve Bill #22.”**

**RC-8 YEAS: DELLAPENNA, SOLES, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BROWN (6)**

**NAYS: NONE (0)**

President Dellapenna said I need a Motion to Amend the Agenda and Add Bill #23.

**MOTION: Ms. Walker-Montgomery moved, seconded by Mr. Soles “to Amend the Agenda to Add Bill #23.”**

**RC-9 YEAS: DELLAPENNA, SOLES, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BROWN (6)**

**NAYS: NONE (0)**

**ORDINANCE NO. 16-006 - BILL #23 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 13-13 AS AMENDED, TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL FIREFIGHTERS PENSION PLAN OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT TO REFLECT CHANGES RESULTING FROM COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.**

President Dellapenna asked who wanted to introduce the Bill and Ms. Brewster-Filotei said she would.

**MOTION: Ms. Nesbit moved, seconded by Ms. Walker-Montgomery “to approve Bill #23.”**

**RC-10 YEAS:** DELLAPENNA, SOLES, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BROWN (6)

**NAYS:** NONE (0)

Solicitor Elash said, lastly before we adjourn I need a **Motion to Authorize the City attorney to satisfy all Downtown Business District Authority liens and City Tax Liens on Lot and Block Nos. 307-J-20, 307-J-16 and 382-E-153 owned by the Redevelopment Authority for Redevelopment purposes.** This is the old American Legion and Vegely property.

**MOTION: Ms. Brewster-Filotei moved, seconded by Mr. Soles “to approve the Motion of Solicitor Elash.”**

Ms. Walker-Montgomery asked Solicitor Elash to explain please. Solicitor Elash said that there are liens filed by the Downtown Business District Authority and some City Tax Liens. I guess the Downtown Business District Authority used to assess the businesses in the downtown area an amount of money, that is how they got funding back in the day and that ran out in the early 80’s, late 70’s, but we need to wipe them off now so that we can transfer. Mayor Cherepko said the one particular parcel, well both of them are for developments, one is for development and the other is right next to the old American Legion which building needs taken down and is right next to Lexmar. Lexmar is a City business on Market that deals with countertops, if you are ever looking for granite, countertops, what not for the kitchen. They are looking to take over that property next to them. If they are not to do that then it just becomes another eyesore in the City and another property that goes tax delinquent and property we eventually have to pay to tear down. But the owner wants to take it over and I believe he is going to tear it down as well. I believe that is his plans as well, probably add parking or something.

**RC-11 YEAS:** DELLAPENNA, SOLES, WALKER-MONTGOMERY, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BROWN (6)

**NAYS:** NONE (0)

**ADJOURNMENT:**

President of Council Richard Dellapenna thanked everyone for attending and please be safe and have a good evening and adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette James  
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

APPROVED:

Richard Dellapenna  
President of Council

*das*