

City OF MCKEESPORT

REORGANIZATION/WORKSHOP MEETING

MONDAY

5:45/6:00 P.M.

JANUARY 6, 2020

Solicitor Elash said this is the date, time and place set for the Reorganization Meeting of McKeesport City Council. I'd like to start with taking nominations for President of Council.

MOTION: Mrs. Brewster-Filotei moved, seconded by Mr. Barry, "to name Richard Dellapenna as President of Council."

Solicitor Elash asked for any other nominations and since there were none he then asked for a vote.

RC-1 YEAS: KEITH SOLES, TIMOTHY BROWN, JAMIE BREWSTER-FILOTEI, JIM BARRY, BRIAN EVANS, LUETHEL NESBIT (6)

NAYS: NONE (0)

President Dellapenna said thank you very much, I appreciate the vote of confidence.

President Dellapenna then asked for nominations for Vice President of Council.

MOTION: Mr. Brown moved, seconded by Mr. Soles, "to name Jamie Brewster-Filotei as Vice President of Council."

RC-2 YEAS: KEITH SOLES, TIMOTHY BROWN, RICHARD DELLAPENNA, JIM BARRY, BRIAN EVANS, LUETHEL NESBIT (6)

NAYS: NONE (0)

President Dellapenna congratulated Mrs. Brewster-Filotei.

President Dellapenna concluded the Reorganization Meeting and welcomed everyone to the Work Session portion of the Council Meeting.

Secretary James read the following proposed Bills:

Bill #1 - Introduced by Brian Evans – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Appointing Annette James as City Clerk for a Two Year Term.

President Dellapenna asked for questions or comments and Mayor Cherepko said the only thing I could say is if Council votes no tonight that will be the fastest term we've ever had and she was already sworn in.

Bill #2 – Introduced by Jamie Brewster-Filotei – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Establishing Regular Meetings of City Council for the Year 2020 and January 2021.

Mayor Cherepko said I believe these are all normal; there's no changes. Last year we changed because of the 4th of July and June and all meetings are the first Wednesday of the month; no meeting in August; and January's meeting we will not have to meet on a Monday because it's not an election year for us local officials, so that will be the first Wednesday in that month as well.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor.

Bill #3– Introduced by Timothy Brown – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Setting Forth the Paydays for the Year 2020.

Mayor Cherepko said another normal 26 paydays, every now and then you get the 27th but 26 paydays.

Bill #4– Introduced by Jim Barry – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officers to Enter Into a Pest Control Contract with Pest B Gone for a Period of One (1) Year.

President Dellapenna asked for questions and comments. Mayor Cherepko said they held their prices and they've been doing a good job. I know, Tommy, you communicate with them a lot. Steve, no issues, right? They do a good job and they are holding their price.

Bill #5– Introduced by Luethel Nesbit – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Appointing Marc C. Turnley as Auditor of the City of McKeesport for the Fiscal Year 2020, and Authorizing the Proper City Officers to Execute a Contract for Said Services.

President Dellapenna asked for questions and comments. Mayor Cherepko said same thing, Mr. Turnley has been our Independent Auditor for a few years now. When we switched over we went out for proposals a couple of years ago and he is

keeping his prices the same and our administration after a couple years of giving him all the information and things are going much more smoothly now.

Bill #6– Introduced by Timothy Brown – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officers to Enter Into an Agreement with Ace Pyro, LLC for the Purpose of Providing Fireworks Displays at Renziehausen Park for July 4th (Independence Day), August 11th (International Village), September 7th (Labor Day), and TBA (Patriot’s Day).

President Dellapenna asked for questions on Bill 6 and Mayor Cherepko said same thing here I think I’ve for the most part gotten nothing but positive feedback and there’s not many things in the City where we get positive feedback. They’ve done a good job and have been year, how many years now Steve, 4? This will be their fourth year and they’ve done great shows; people are happy; so they guarantee us at least the same or better.

Bill #7– Introduced by Jim Barry – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officers to Execute Any and All Documents Necessary to Engage the Services of Building Inspection Underwriters to Perform Building Inspection and Enforcement Services in the City of McKeesport for a Period Not to Exceed One (1) Year.

President Dellapenna asked for questions or comments on Bill 7. Mayor Cherepko said this is the company we brought in a couple years ago when our Building Inspector retired. We decided to use a third-party and save money when it comes down to between benefits and retirement/pension obligations things you have for employees, and they are doing a pretty good job for us.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor.

Bill #8– Introduced by Keith Soles – An Ordinance of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Amending and Supplementing an Ordinance of the City of McKeesport Effective October 6, 1956, and as Amended, Repealed or Otherwise revised by Ordinance from Time to Time, Relative to the Establishment and Maintenance of City Employees Pension, Annuity, Insurance and Benefit Fund or Funds, to Amend Certain Provisions of the Pension Plan or Program Applicable to the Police Employees of Said City.

President Dellapenna asked for questions and comments on Bill 8 and Mayor Cherepko said this was just a change to the pension plan which really has absolutely no impact on the City. If anything, it would be a better impact. It deals more when someone is on Worker's Comp and goes out on pension. It's basically what happens after they have their 20 years. So, once someone has their 20 years here there is no difference between a disability pension or a regular pension in regards to the City of McKeesport's standpoint. So, there's no difference on our end but if someone worked and went on disability pension they could have possibly more benefits, like tax benefits and things, based on disability pension but it's the same dollar amount. They get no more or no less than what they would have gotten.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor.

Bill #9– Introduced by Jamie Brewster-Filotei – An Ordinance of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officers to Enter Into a Contract with the McKeesport Firefighters International Association of Firefighters Local #10, Setting Forth the Terms and Conditions of Employment, Including Compensation, Hours, Working Conditions and Other Benefits.

President Dellapenna asked for questions and comments. Mayor Cherepko said Mr. President I did want to talk about this a few minutes but why don't you save me until the end since we are only going until quarter after. Do your Council Reports and I will base what I say based on how much time I have rather than ramble.

President Dellapenna called for Council Reports.

Council Reports

Mrs. Nesbit – I just wanted to remind everybody that Weatherization is still active and if you are having problems insulating your home you can still apply. It's a year-round program and also the Crisis Program is in effect until the first week in April, where you can get emergency repairs on your furnace or replacement. We don't do anything after you've put the furnace in. A lot of people have called and wanted to know if we could reimburse. You have to call when the furnace first

goes down and call the Program. The number is 412-562-0330 and there is an income limit but they will tell you what it is when you call.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mrs. Nesbit.

Mr. Evans – I just want to say about the Festival of Trees, how nice it was again this year and thanks for doing the Council tree and thanks to all the volunteers, always a great turn out there.

Mr. Barry – Nothing to report.

Mr. Soles – I just have one thing, Mayor I don't know if you are getting calls but I've been getting some calls and I witness it all the time. On Patterson Avenue, right below our home, there's a garage down there and it started out small about a year ago and I guess now it's a junk yard. They must have 20 cars there and it's a real eyesore. I don't know what we can do. Are they allowed to be there? Mayor Cherepko said we are already working on it. As a matter of fact, they are in the process of obtaining an Occupancy Permit because, for whatever reason when they came in whatever it is they did or what they are doing differently now, is all being addressed. So, there are in the process of obtaining an Occupancy Permit. We will make sure that in order to occupy the premises and to operate that business that they do so within the Code, within the Zoning. It's definitely an issue. So, we are working on it. Mr. Soles said they have trucks there with flashing lights all night long. Mayor Cherepko said they are going through it now and being in that particular, is that one that we are probably going to have to look at with restrictions? Yea. That will be one that we will have restrictions because they will have to end up going in front of the Planning or Zoning to be able to operate there. So, it has always been a business and that's fine, but like you just said they are going to have to operate with restrictions and respect to the neighborhood that they are in which is pretty much in the same vicinity. So, we are going through the process now. He was just in last week or two weeks ago. Mr. Soles said that's all I have. Council President Dellapenna said thank you Mr. Soles.

Mr. Brown – Mr. President, I just wanted everyone to know that we have our mentoring basketball league starting this Thursday at the High School and probably have about 65-70 kids participating. They are going to have age groups

from 8-10 and 11-14. So, we will be at the High School at 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. for the games. President Dellapenna said thank you Mr. Brown.

Mrs. Brewster-Filotei – Nothing.

President Dellapenna said that concludes the Work Session portion of the meeting but Mayor Cherepko spoke up and said, I just want to touch base on this Bill.

Bill #9, to simplify that, is a new Contract with the Fire Department. So, through negotiations I really believe this is a fair contract on both sides. Both sides really had to, there were concessions let's say on both sides. I think both understood the situation of the City of McKeesport. I want to commend the Fire Department for understanding. They were on a longer contract than a lot of the other departments so, I mean this is a contract where a manning clause of 20 firefighters they've accepted at being at 16. Part-time firefighters up to this point, and I know the Chief is here, the way they were utilized was very, very restricted. We now have a lot of flexibility. The Chief has a lot of flexibility for scheduling which is really going to save the City a lot of money on overtime and issues like that. We are also allowed to add more firefighters, more part-time firefighters to our Department than we had prior to this as well. So, between that benefit package they realized that they will be paying deductibles on healthcare which is what we've tried to do for quite sometime here in the City. When we came into office 8 years ago nobody was paying any deductibles, the City was covering everything. This is the last and final bargaining unit to understand the situation of the City, the financial obligation of the City, and for us, things that some people might say well there's a couple thousand of dollars for deductibles, that's a lot to families that aren't used to paying that and I realize that is the real world but I don't want to take that for granted and belittle the fact that it is something they realize the City could no longer do. But, when you get into those types of things, it's changed, no question, but I am very happy with this under the given circumstances. It will be a 4-year contract. To give you an idea a lot of increases in prior contracts, which is public knowledge, have all been 3-1/2, 4% increases each year. This year is like a 3-2-2-1. So, and that's in addition to them taking on the benefits. The one thing that a lot of people don't understand is that when you have a deductible, not that we want people that are sick or people that are

hurt to go in to their doctors, but when you have a deductible you are less likely to have a person go to a doctor or to an emergency room when they probably really didn't need to and what that does for us is when your utilization costs come down that's less likely to have dramatic increases in our healthcare plans. We had dramatic increases in our healthcare plan years ago and since then we really haven't and part of that reason has been good negotiating but in addition to that has truly been you know a large part of it is because utilization is not as out of control as what it was. At one time we had insurance companies that didn't even want to quote us. That's how bad our utilization was. So, but uh, I think with a 4-year contract with a lot of the other incentives that we had for the firemen that they got within the contract, little things, I think at the end of the day, they are happy, we are happy, it was very fair. I wouldn't feel right without noting and commending them for their understanding and that goes with all of the other employees in the City through our contract negotiations prior to this. They realize we are not a City that is just affluent and flourishing with money. That's not the reality. It's far from reality. We realize, we sold the Authority, we realize the Authority only bought us time and we all know that. We are trying to fill some voids. Pick some things as we move forward so that we can always avoid the worst-case scenario which we talked about so many times with Act 47 and we are standing clear of that. We are not in jeopardy of that at all right now but we still, and I am just going to touch base on this and that will really take my Mayor's Report to be honest with you, you know, you win a term for elections for 4 years and I never really thought about it until the other day when I ran into someone and they said aw you are good for 4 more years you have nothing to worry about. I couldn't help but look at that individual and say well just so you know sir we have a lot to worry about, because we have a job here, and no one is getting complacent. I can tell you right now my wife looked at me the night of election and said just try to relax for a couple hours, enjoy it with friends and family, at the celebration after and I tried to do that but I can tell you the minute I got home my wheels were turning because we have a job to do here. We have a lot of things to fix. We have an uphill battle but a lot of good things are happening in the City right now. To our Council people, and I've said this numerous times, and I will say it again, to have the four re-elected and the three that already sit on there, these are individuals that have the best interest of the City at heart. These are individuals that bring concerns to this administration all the time. We just don't

come out here in a public meeting and air our dirty laundry. I mean that's just not the way we operate because that doesn't help anyone. I can tell you right now when it comes to bringing businesses and recruiting and things like that, if you don't think these businesses like a community or it's much more appealing to have a community where they see there's no fighting, there's no bickering, when it comes, I am going to tell you I've had people call and say, and I don't want to throw anybody under the bus, I've just bought a building in another community and I got to get out of there, I want to come to your City and they came. They bought a building here because they don't want that bickering. So, I appreciate the hard work of this Council. I appreciate us handling everything respectfully, behind closed doors, on an individual basis when we have concerns. Just for the record, I don't think there's any violation of the Sunshine Act, we don't meet as a group ever. But, individually they come with their concerns and we address it and sometimes we just very respectfully agree to disagree and there's nothing wrong with that because the one thing I can tell about this Council is that we don't always have to feel the same way about things but I know when we don't that there's a reason and it's not that they have some ulterior motive or another agenda, it's because they want to get to the same goal which is the best interest of the City. They are just kind of looking at a different pathway that may be better and I can respect that. But I thank this Council for their hard efforts and the people should know, without question, you re-elected four Council people and a Mayor with, that has an administration working exhaustively as well and just know that there's no time off for us. We have a lot of work to do and that means in-house too, there's going to be a lot of changes and when I say changes, maybe a lot that the public won't see but even within our Departments there's been things that certain Departments have been doing for 40 years, 50 years, and we are changing some things because it's about accountability and it's about efficiency and we've been working on that and we've taken baby steps. You have to crawl before you walk and walk before you run but I can tell you in this third term we are going to be jogging.

So, other than that, we are conclude this and get started and I will just say one very brief thing in the meeting and that's it. So, we are good.

ADJOURNMENT:

President Dellapenna said that concludes the Work Session portion of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette James
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

APPROVED:

Richard Dellapenna
President of Council

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