

City OF MCKEESPORT
WORKSHOP MEETING

MONDAY

6:15 P.M.

MARCH 4, 2020

The Work Session portion of the Council Meeting was called to order on the above-stated date by President of Council Richard Dellapenna.

Secretary James read the following proposed Bills:

Bill #12 - Introduced by Keith Soles – An Ordinance of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Approving the Editing and Inclusion of Certain Ordinances as Parts of the Various Component Codes of the Codified Ordinances of McKeesport, Pennsylvania.

President Dellapenna asked for any questions or comments on Bill 12 and Mayor Cherepko said that’s just getting all the Ordinances in the book, right? Secretary James said yes.

Bill #13– Introduced by Jamie Brewster-Filotei – An Ordinance of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Take Any Actions Necessary to Waive Any and All Taxes, Tax Claims and Municipal Claims Due and Owing on Lot & Blocks 464-C-48 and 381-H-287 Pursuant to the Municipal Claim and Tax Lien Law and Sections 2109(h) and 2117 of the Land Bank Act.

Mayor Cherepko said this is the COG, Steel Rivers COG Land Bank that we are part of, two hours that they are taking one is at 2616 Milburn and the other one is at 1616 Williams, not William, it’s actually Williams Street. So, we are just looking to abide by the Land Bank and exonerate all the back taxes on that.

President Dellapenna asked for questions or comments on Bill 13 but there were none.

Bill #14– Introduced by Timothy Brown – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Enter into a Contract with Kraken Chemicals for Weed & Vegetation Control for a One Year Term.

Mayor Cherepko said these are the gentlemen we have had for a couple years; they are holding their prices. They are the ones that pretty much spray the vacant lots and a lot of times we are addressing complaints, complaints that come to my office, the Community, at the Public Works Department, a lot of times our kids, we will send our kids out to cut the lot first and then when they get it low they come out and spray it. So, this is just to renew their contract.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor and asked for any questions or comments on Bill 14 and there were none.

Bill #15– Introduced by Brian Evans – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Enter into a Contract with DTI Development Incorporated for a One Year Term for Grant Applications.

Mayor Cherepko said this is a consulting firm that we've been working with for a little bit now and I wanted to just get a good fill. They really were part of securing a lot of our funding matches for the MVP. They did help identify a few and helped execute them so this will just bring them all and they will help us with future funding as well and they've been around for a while.

President Dellapenna asked for any questions or comments on Bill 15 and there were none.

Bill #16– Introduced by Jamie Brewster-Filotei – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Amending the Fiscal Year 2018 CDBG Program.

Mayor Cherepko said yea, A.J. is here, go ahead. Mr. Tedesco said there was a change in leadership at the field level in HUD and some discrepancies of how they wanted to fund code enforcement so they wanted us to remove the previous two years. We are looking to try to get it back in for 2020 Budget. Hopefully that does get approved. There is a new permanent Field Director so we did as we were allocated to paving and the saturation patrols that the Chief uses.

Mayor Cherepko said so we figured if we had to move the money, but we definitely made strides, I feel very, very confident that we will get the code enforcement back into the CD Budget in 2020 but because decisions were made at the time we agreed to just pull it off for these two years and we put it where

we can use them. Obviously, we have streets that we know we need paving so we will have some extra paving to do within the Community Development Budget which pretty much covers to be honest the vast majority of the City. You know, there's not too many areas in the City, outside of Hailer Heights and a few others, that they really can't use CD money for and obviously our crime suppression, our saturation patrols, our community policing efforts, any types of details like that. The Chief assigns and we get reimbursed through CD so we've been using that as well for the last couple years and they have been working that really doesn't need. So, it's disappointing on one hand I think Code Enforcement it definitely should be funded and that was the argument we took. I don't understand how you talk about making neighborhoods a better neighborhood and keeping them in good condition, why code enforcement would not fit in when it did for all these years, but it is what it is and we will make the best of it. We are moving in two other areas that we can definitely utilize the funds.

Mr. Tedesco said there was an Interim Director before they finalized the permanent one and I have talked to the permanent one and we do feel good about trying to get it in for the 2020 Budget that will be passed here in May.

President Dellapenna asked for any other questions for Bill 16 and there were none.

Bill #17– Introduced by Timothy Brown – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Amending the Fiscal Year 2019 CDBG Program.

Mayor Cherepko said that's what we were talking about they are both the same, just two different years.

President Dellapenna asked for any questions for Bill 17 and there were none.

Bill #18– Introduced by Luethel Nesbit – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Awarding the Bid for Fair Housing Services to the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh, Inc. and Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Execute All Documents Necessary to Enter Into an Agreement with the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh, Inc. for an Amount Not to Exceed \$20,000.

Mayor Cherepko said this is part of an obligation through Community Development money that we put this on. This is the organization we use. They

usually come out and do a presentation and some other things as well but it's to make sure we stay in compliance with our CDBG Funding.

President Dellapenna asked for any question on Bill 18 and there were none.

Secretary James then read the following amendments:

Bill #19– Introduced by Brian Evans – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Take All Actions and Execute All Documents Necessary to Apply for the 2020 COPS Hiring Program (CHP) Grant Through the U.S. Department of Justice, COPS Program; and Appointing Mayor Michael Cherepko the City's Authorized Representative for Same.

Mayor Cherepko said this is to get the authorization. With this funding for Bill 19, as we've done all along we will continue to do everything we can in our power, utilize all the resources available to us, to help make McKeesport a better place to live, a safer place in this particular situation to live, work, etc. This particular Grant is an opportunity, we are applying to secure the initial implementation of Shot Spotter. There's no guarantee that we get it. Shot Spotter would help us identify when there are shots fired called, for the most part it will come out in a matter of seconds. Our officers will be able to know within a few hundred feet for the most part where a gun was fired and people don't realize when there are shots fired then there's a delay, someone calls 9-1-1 and there's a delay between dispatch. I mean sometimes our officers are not going to be notified until 4-5 minutes later, and that's a part of 9-1-1 that people don't realize. So, what this will do is for shots fired, and it's the technology that will literally be able to identify the difference with about, I don't ever say numbers that aren't accurate, but I believe 90% or higher. It's almost like I want to say 95% or higher accuracy the difference between a firework or a gun shot. I mean I forgot the number that they have. I didn't look at it directly and I didn't have a conversation about this for probably about a year. But it comes with the accuracy and to let them dispatch them. It comes with, I met the Chief, we've met with them, there will be an ongoing fee going forward, that's a concern of mine, it's not a little fee so we are trying to secure funding for that as well. A subscription going forward for the most part. So, we are applying for everything to see if we can utilize all the resources, that will be in addition to you know, we will be close, what did we say

Chief, almost 20 intersections probably over the next couple months. We are going to have 20 of your intersections throughout town with several cameras, lpr's - the license plate readers, identifying cars, you can't get in and out of town now via the side streets as well, including one on Jenny Lind and a few on Versailles. So, we are getting up into the neighborhoods as well. I can't begin to tell you, not to speak for the Chief, technology in our men and women in blue are utilizing, our police are using this information, they have it handy, to have the camera system. I can't tell you how many crimes have been solved, not just crimes in McKeesport, but crimes that are committed outside of McKeesport because these cameras are tied in all throughout Allegheny County. So, I know many of you may have heard me say this, not to be repetitive, but if something happens in Penn Hills and they identify a car and they have the license plate and they follow that car and that car comes into McKeesport and it doesn't leave McKeesport, they now know it's in McKeesport and we are able to make arrests. So, even if something happened, the same thing goes that if someone did something in McKeesport and went outside of McKeesport and they fall into the camera system because it will come up on the license plate readers. So, in addition to these lpr's and virtual check points as we like to call them, the Shot Spotter could be an absolute tremendous asset as well. I definitely prefer the cameras over top of the Shot Spotter and that's why we went that route. Not only do I think it's better, they are better, but they are also more affordable, believe it or not. But, we are looking at the Shot Spotter in hopes of getting these Grants. We are also looking at another thing, and we will probably do a Release on it so I don't want to get into it now. So, I hope our media will keep it out but I will tell you that it's in addition it will be like virtual blocks so to say. Maybe using like the doorbell cameras and things. So, we are partnered with a couple different entities right now to start getting that. So, now you take a few hot spots in the City, you guys can use your imagination. My point is we are utilizing all of our resources we can and then our police officers would be able to, cause we do this now, our police officers walk around and you can see the houses that have these doorbell cameras. We ask them for footage and the nice part about that is you are just getting footage off someone's camera. So, for those that are out there that are still worried about the no snitch, there's no snitching involved. There's no, unfortunately that's a real issue we face, people don't want to cooperate. This particular situation you have the camera, check the camera,

whatever footage you get, you get. You know, there's no snitching. So, that's one aspect of it that we can put these throughout blocks and things. But we are going to come out with a big strategy. So, I ask my friends here from the media to hold off on that. We are going to do a release on that, probably before the next Council meeting, would be my guess, so we are partnering with a couple different entities for this but we are excited about that as well. I didn't plan on getting into that obviously but we are working every day, covering every angle we can to try to make McKeesport a safer place and contrary to what the news likes to show, I don't even want to say, but crime is on the decline, contrary to what you read. It truly is. We have the statistics to back it up.

We all know something will happen now tonight because any time I open my mouth, but let's just pray it doesn't.

President Dellapenna asked for any question on Bill 19 and there were none.

Bill #20– Introduced by Keith Soles – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Take All Actions and Execute All Documents Necessary to Apply for the 2020 Community Policing Development (CPD) Grant Through the U.S. Department of Justice, COPS Program, and Appointing Mayor Michael Cherepko the City's Authorized Representative for Same.

Mayor Cherepko said this one is just slightly different. This one is just to hire a few police officers. If we are able to secure this Grant this would be an opportunity to bring in, to apply to hire three full-time police officers. It would be a Grant that would go, 3 year Grant, and the nice part of that is, believe because we watch our manpower, we are doing what we can, doing more with less as we continue to do that in every possible situation we can. The nice part about this is if we were fortunate enough to secure this Grant and bring in 3 police officers, there's a good chance within those 3 years we'd have at least 3 officers retire anyway. So, it's not like we'd incur that cost going forward. So, we could actually have more manpower with it not being at the cost of the City for those few years and then by the time those 3 years are up we will have a few more that will be retiring for sure.

President Dellapenna asked for any question on Bill 20 and there were none.

President Dellapenna called for Council Reports.

Council Reports

Mrs. Nesbit – I don't have any report at this time but I would like to thank everyone who came out to the NAACP Pancake Breakfast. It was a great success and I appreciate the Mayor and Mr. Filotei for their donations, they were much appreciated. We had a great time, everybody had fellowship and thank you all for coming out.

I also would like to take a minute to, as you know we just missed Black History Month, which passed in February, and now it's Women's History Month and since I represent both of them I thought I'd give you a little history.

The reason we celebrate these things is because they came hard to us. They weren't easy. I have two teachers here, probably more, but what I learned, my first taste of Black History was in 3rd Grade. We opened a book and we were going to study the Civil War and in the Civil War the first thing we see are black people on ships with chains and jumping overboard. Imagine how a young child feels, a young black child feels when they see that and they are told that's their history. Imagine how your child would feel, it's very demoralizing. Cause where to you go from these? The history was not complete by any shape or in any imagination. They didn't come back to where we came from as Kings and Queens or where we were taken from, the shores we were taken from and against our will, because I am going to make this brief, if you all will bear with me, slavery back in the day was just the powerful taking over the weak. It was not an economic situation. It became something new here and black people have spent a lot of time trying to overcome all the things that come with it and we still haven't overcome it. You might say it's the longest flashbacks you will ever hear or have. We didn't get the right to vote, I know about the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendment, but the actual right to vote didn't come until 1965. There were many things blocking us from actually voting and they are back in place now trying to keep people from voting. That's why I get very upset when young black people say they don't want to vote, they are not going to vote, they don't care about voting. People died so we could vote, have a right to vote. Women didn't just get the right to vote. We are celebrating 100 years for them finally being able

to have a right to vote. For European History, it's always been European History people, he who has the power writes the history. But we've come a long way and I would like us to continue to come a long way. McKeesport is unique because we have all grown up together and we are all friends. But we sometimes bring baggage with us of those before us and there was a point we've come a long way and we have made it, we've arrived and we neglected to teach our children our history and you all know the old saying those who forget their history are going to repeat it and lo and behold we are going to repeat it. So, I felt it remiss if I didn't make a comment and say, because I feel strongly about this, and I am not chastising anybody in this room, I am not saying anybody in this room feels this way but I want us to be mindful of what we say. Because, until you've walked in my shoes, or another woman's shoes and the struggle that women face or minorities face, you really can't comment or make inane statements about things. You just don't know. Ask before you know. Internet is a wonderful and powerful thing, research. So, forgive me for going off on my little diatribe, I would not have rested unless I said that. So, forgive me but I hope you all understand and if you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them. But in this Black History and Women's History it didn't just come to us, people died, so women can vote, so everybody else can vote, and we do celebrate Irish American Heritage. We have Hispanic Heritage Day. It's not just Black folks. Everybody gets their day and I don't care that our days are only 28. Anything at this point at least it's being acknowledged, so forgive me.

Mr. Evans – nothing

Mr. Barry – nothing

Mr. Soles – nothing.

Mr. Brown – I just want to bring up the Mentoring Program that we have. We service 55 kids in McKeesport School District, Founders Hall, we have 25, Twin Rivers we have 15 and McClure we have 15. Just finished up the Basketball Season. The kids had a great time. We had more parents getting more involved. We are going to continue with a teen program, teen basketball program in the next couple weeks, keep your eyes open for that. We are on social media, Facebook, or any information you guys need talk to me about it and I am willing to give it out to you guys.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mr. Brown.

Mrs. Brewster-Filotei – I have nothing.

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

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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