

**LATROBE CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY FEBRUARY 13, 2023
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
LATROBE, PENNSYLVANIA**

Mayor Bartels called to order the Regular Meeting of Latrobe City Council at 6:30 P.M.

Mayor Bartels asked all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Bartels asked all for a moment of silence.

The City Manager read Roll Call:

Deputy Mayor Ralph Jenko –present
Robert Forish– present
Jim Kelley – present
Ann Amatucci – present
Bridget DiVittis – present
William Yuhaniak – present
Mayor Eric Bartels – present

Also present were the following: Lee Demosky, Solicitor; Robert Derk, OIC/Acting Police Chief; John Brasile, Fire Chief; Scott Wajdic, Public Works Director; Terry Carcella, City Manager (absent); Jim Nieuwsma, Code/Zoning Officer; Karen Meholic, Director of Finance & Administration.

Mayor Bartels announced an Executive Session was held before the regular meeting regarding litigation and personnel matters.

Mr. Kelley moved to approve the January 3, 2023 meeting minutes seconded by Mr. Yuhaniak.
Vote 7-0. No discussion.

Mr. Forish moved to approve paid bills/payroll for the January 3, 2023 meeting seconded by Mrs. Amatucci.

CITIZENS' REQUEST (related to agenda) None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee – Bartels, Jenko and Kelley – No report.

Public Safety and Fire Committee – Forish, Kelley - No report.

Public Works Committee – Forish, DiVittis – No report.

Personnel Committee – Bartels and Jenko – Executive session was held before the meeting regarding litigation and personnel matters. Mr. Carcella was authorized to reach out to the 8 applicants to set up interviews in early March for Police Chief.

Renovation Committee – Jenko, Forish – Putting out quotes for electrical boxes.

Events Committee – Mrs. Amatucci – Paper Hearts hosting Murder Mystery dinner soon and Mom and Me luncheon. 512 is having carriage rides.

GLSD Student Showcase Committee – Mayor Bartels – No report.

BOARD AND AUTHORITY REPORTS

LMA – No report.

Library – Moved to postpone meeting until May. Review renovations of library with a new contractor.

Zoning – No report.

Latrobe GLSD Parks and Recreation – Comedy Night was held this past weekend which was very well attended. Craig announced that this is their second biggest fundraiser of year. Dawn Vavick was recognized for her years of service and hard work.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS FROM JANUARY 2023

Treasurer's Report See attachment "A"

Police Report See attachment "B"

Public Works Report See attachment "C"

Fire Report See attachment "D"

Code Report See attachment "E"

Tax Collector's Report See attachment "F"

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Public Works Department

Public Works Director, Scott Wajdic – Courtyard Plaza concrete work is almost finished. Railings are not back from manufacturer. Plowed and salted several times. Salt supply is full. Compactor project is behind due to some engineering flaws. Test run will be tomorrow Tuesday February 14, 2023. Weather permitting the street sweeper will be out. Transfer station revenue was down for the month of February. Mrs. DiVittis inquired about the unused salt as to whether we lose the salt or if it stays good. Mr. Wajdic explained that it does stay good and Public Works used just over four hundred tons.

Police Department

OIC/Acting Police Chief, Robert Derk – OIC Derk asked if council had any questions regarding his report. Department has been busy. OIC Derk gave a summary of an incident that happened on Lincoln Avenue with a DUI driver that was apprehended.

Out of twenty-one possible applicants for Police Officer only eighteen were returned. Thirteen showed up for the physical agility test and eleven passed. Nine applicants passed the written test. The next step is the interview process. Auxiliary police are still down with only one person. Three or four are needed. Police department is down two officers plus the chief's position. Mayor inquired if there are any qualifications that are needed for an auxiliary officer. OIC Derk informed council that the one qualification would be that the person must stand for an hour to direct traffic. OIC Derk explained to council that the department has a records management system which is a requirement for the department. OIC Derk received a letter stating that the current system is reaching it's end of life. The department has been looking at demonstrations for a new replacement system. Mr. Jenko inquired about the procedure for citizens calling 911 to reach an officer. OIC Derk responded by letting council know that if it is an emergency, they need to call 911, if it is not an emergency, and it is between the hours of 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. they can call the station. Mr. Jenko asked if the calls were logged. OIC Derk explained that with the new system they will be able to log all calls.

Fire Department

Fire Chief, John Brasile – Chief Brasile asked if there were any questions regarding this report. Calls were lower than normal which is good. Tuesday the 21st of February the department will be starting the classes Essentials of Fire Fighting for entry level fire fighters. Classes will be held on Tuesdays and Sundays with 188-200 hours of training. The department implemented the breathing apparatus which is now in service. Fire inspections were done at Phoenix Rehab and the Senior Center. Chief Brasile talked with the Mayor with in regard to renewing the fire department read-outs. Mr. Jenko asked for an explanation of the term read-outs, Chief Brasile responded by telling council that the city is broken down into six wards. For every fire response, depending on the ward also depends on the which equipment will be dispatched.

Code/Zoning Department

Code Enforcement Officer, James Nieuwsma – Mr. Nieuwsma asked council if they had any questions regarding his report. Made progress on some of the bigger issues. Mr. Jenko requested updates on the following issues:

1. Ruth Kester – Large truck that is parked behind her home. Mr. Nieuwsma reported that he needs to go look at that. Mr. Jenko advised that the truck is there at 6 a.m. and after 5 p.m.
2. Mozart House has unpainted plywood on window openings. Mr. Nieuwsma replied that the owners have until next week before they are cited. Mr. Jenko spoke about fireproof paint, and whether property owners should be using it. The paint is marginally effective, but highly expensive. Chief Brasile added that it is better to use the fire-retardant supplies than the paint.
3. 720 Walnut Street – There is a new owner and they have started to clean out the house. Roll off boxes have been delivered to the home per Scott Wajdic.
4. Valley Graphics – Regarding a leaking roof, Mr. Nieuwsma informed council that the initial leak is no longer showing signs of leaking, however, Mr. Strehle is hearing leaking in the roof. Mr. Nieuwsma said that progress is being made although he has never spoken to her directly, but she gets things moving when she is called. Mr. Strehle voiced his concerns about the roof and what other issues have been addressed, going on to say that the rental property is riddled with issues, and he was curious as to how the city expects businesses to thrive downtown when there are structural issues. Mr. Strehle went on to say that he is concerned about the sprinklers because he rents about 1,200 sq. ft. The electrical panels are also in bad shape. Mr. Strehle took occupancy in June of 2022 and he has been arguing with the landlord to get his rental fixed. He mentioned that he had a severe leak in the roof and was embarrassed when his clients would come in, because he had to use buckets to catch the water. Another issue was mentioned by Mr. Strehle regarding the lack of heat, and that it is hard for him to control the humidity so that he can store his vinyl. Mr. Strehle commented that he has been trying to get Mr. Nieuwsma to hit her with a violation and expressed that people should not be living on the third floor. Mr. Strehle feels that he was swindled because he is paying a premium rent to be on Main Street. According to Mr. Strehle, a plumber did show up once and all he did was put buckets down and said that that is the progress that is being made. Mr. Strehle would like to keep his business in town, he feels that downtown Latrobe has so much potential and hopes that we do a better job to shape up the city.

Mr. Kelley pointed out to Mr. Nieuwsma that it sounded like we are taking an inch worm approach and that reasonable progress needs to be happening. Mr. Nieuwsma said that he would revisit the property to see what progress was made, and if sub-standard, he can then give her a violation. Mr. Nieuwsma responded by telling council that if there is something in addition, that is the only way to fine her. Mr. Strehle commented that while he has been waiting for Jim Nieuwsma to get back to him, he read section 136 and 117 of the code and he questioned why she was getting more that the thirty days to fix the problems since it has already been 7 months. Mr. Nieuwsma commented that there has been progress made, but not quickly.

Mrs. DiVittis thanked Mr. Strehle for coming to the meeting and for opening a business in Latrobe.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Wajdic informed council that Mr. Carcella instructed Scott to seek quotes for the Municipal Complex upgrades, going on to say that the garage doors for the police are in bad shape. Mayor Bartels inquired if this was a non-budgeted item. Mr. Demosky advised council that this was not on the agenda and posted twenty-four hours in advance per the new Sunshine Act, also saying that council cannot act on this tonight. Mr. Kelley asked if they could schedule a special meeting before the next agenda session. Mr. Jenko was concerned that there was no explanation under the Municipal Complex upgrades. Mr. Demosky agreed with Mr. Kelley to schedule a special meeting for the 27th of February at 6:30 with the agenda session to follow. Mr. Demosky advised council to include all three upgrades together on the agenda for the special meeting.

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

MOTION

Motion to Approve Justifacts Agreement for Employment Screening. Mr. Jenko confirmed that this was only going to be utilized when the police department is unavailable to perform the screening. Mr. Jenko made a motion seconded by Mr. Kelley. Vote 7-0.

RESOLUTION 2023-11

Approving Dissolution of Latrobe Fire Police and Disbursement of Funds. Mr. Demosky explained the process that will take place to have the dissolution finalized. No discussion. Mr. Yuhaniak made a motion seconded by Mrs. DiVittis. Vote 7-0.

MOTION

Motion to Direct Solicitor to prepare a one-year Lease with Mutual Aid Ambulance Service. No discussion. Mr. Jenko made a motion seconded by Mr. Kelley. Vote 7-0.

RESOLUTION 2023-12

Resolution to Approve a Three-Year Contract for City Auditors. Mr. Demosky explained that Mr. Carcella's recommendation was Opst and Associates from Greensburg, PA. Mr. Kelley asked if either party could terminate participation. Mr. Demosky will read the contract to determine if that was agreed upon by both the city and Opst and Associates. Mr. Kelley made a motion seconded by Mr. Forish. Vote 7-0.

RESOLUTION 2023-13

Approving City of Latrobe to Establish Auto Debit Accounts. This item was not posted twenty-four hours in advance, so this will be voted on at the special meeting.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

A request was made by Joe Lanatovich of Rideman Services asking to lease 6 reserved spaces in the parking garage at \$20/space. Mr. Demosky informed council on Mr. Carcella's behalf, that he would like to take the approach of all customers be treated the same. Mr. Demosky called Mr. Carcella at home to clarify some things for council. Mr. Carcella verified that this was an offer that the previous city manager gave Mr. Lanatovich verbally and according to Mr. Lanatovich it was also because he moved his business into Latrobe. Mr. Kelley introduced an idea of giving customers some kind of reduction if several spaces are purchased. Mr. Kelley

made a motion to table seconded by Mr. Yuhaniak. Vote 7-0.

RESOLUTION 2023-14

Approving Settlement of Municipal Liens. No discussion. Mr. Jenko made a motion seconded by Mrs. Amatucci. Vote 7-0.

MOTION

Motion to Approve Amendments to Employee Manual. Mr. Carcella has approved the changes and is asking for amendments to be approved. Mr. Carcella's plan is to proceed with training for all employees and provisions. Mr. Kelley made a motion seconded by Mr. Forish. Mr. Jenko asked other members of council if they have seen the manual before the meeting. Mr. Demosky advised council to table the motion since it is an important document. A subsidiary motion to table was made by Mr. Jenko seconded by Mr. Yuhaniak. Vote 7-0.

MOTION

Motion to Approve Land Development / Replot of Parcels. St. Joseph's Mission would like to combine 4 parcels in to one parcel. Mr. Jenko announced that this was recommended by the Planning Commission. Mr. Nieuwsma showed a map to all of council the involved parcels and where they are located. Mr. Jenko made a motion seconded by Mr. Forish. Vote 7-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Adelphoi Alley Vacation Petition Proposal. Mr. Demosky met at the Adelphoi site with consulting engineers on January 31, 2023. He is preparing paperwork and asked for more time to do so and to move this item to next month's agenda meeting.

Mr. Kelley told council that he spoke to Richard Stadler, previous City Manager, who told Mr. Kelley that this year is the 25th anniversary of the City of Latrobe going from a Borough to a Home Rule Charter. Mr. Kelley had an idea that maybe we should commemorate the anniversary with a plaque or to bury a time capsule or to form a committee. Mayor Bartels talked about the history teacher in him sees this as an opportunity to make a commemoration for a significant historical milestone for the city as well as to educate the public that we are a Home Rule Charter and how that differs from neighboring municipalities. Mayor Bartels, along with Mr. Kelley, Mr. Stadler and Mr. Yuhaniak are willing to be on the committee. Mayor Bartels reminded all that this is the 250th anniversary for Westmoreland County.

NEW BUSINESS

Parks and Recreation set a date for the 4th of July race for Saturday, July 1, 2023.

Solicitor's Report

RESOLUTION 2023-15

Resolution for the Purchase of 1701 Jefferson Street, Latrobe, PA 15650. Mr. Demosky reported to council on Mr. Carcella's behalf that the appraisal for this property was completed. Terms have been proposed for the installation of the Stormwater Infrastructure as part of the department. Purchase price for the property was \$35,000.00. Mr. Wajdic described where the property is located. Mr. Yuhaniak made a motion seconded by Mr. Forish. Vote 7-0.

MOTION

Motion to Accept the Agree Shelf, LLC Settlement. No discussion. Mr. Kelley made a motion seconded by Mrs. Amatucci. Vote 7-0.

MOTION

Motion to Extend 2021 CDBG Funding Agreement of six months. Mr. Demosky explained the process of the steps as to how this will be processed, and when completed, the Mayor will sign in triplicate. Mr. Yuhaniak made a motion seconded by Mr. Forish. Vote 7-0.

RESOLUTION 2023-16

Approving Settlement with Enviro 21, LLC. They were the involved party and generator of the waste hauling agreement. \$40,507.00 will be paid to Enviro 21 with no lawsuit able to be filed. No discussion. Mr. Kelley made a motion seconded by Mr. Jenko. Vote 7-0.

CITIZEN'S REQUEST – None.

City Manager's Report

None.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Bartels said that he has been approached by three different church organizations within the community that are interested in helping all members of our community. For example, raking leaves, shoveling sidewalks, cleaning gutters etc. Mr. Wajdic said that he would be willing to come out on a Saturday with a group of people and help with whatever needs done. Mr. Jenko added that Revitalization was granted \$150K to fix up five properties this summer and part of the grant work is a requirement that the owners of the property also have some equity at 50% in some way. Not all owners are able to do that because of financial burden or physical limitations. Part of the fund includes money for a Project Manager which would provide over-sight. Mr. Kelley had an idea to maybe have an office where Jarod is located to direct calls and answer questions on what agency could best help. Mrs. DiVittis said that St. Vincent College students are always looking for certain projects.

Mayor Bartels also expressed that he would like to reach out and have a sit down with our neighboring communities on future projects with two other council members joining to see what their vision is, and to use this as an opportunity for greater cooperation. Mrs. Amatucci and Mr. Forish volunteered.

John Brasile added that the Fire Department is getting new software that will allow residents to join and input whether their house is two story or how many people and pets are living in the house. This will be up and running in six months.

Mr. Jenko asked if this is the odd election year, which it is, and the Mayor reminded Mr. Yuhaniak that he will need to go to the election office for his petition and to solicit ten signatures from his same party.

Mayor Bartels represented the City of Latrobe at Cupid's Race held by Community Options that work with disabled adults. He extended his appreciation to the Police and Fire departments for volunteering and keeping the intersections safe. Steven Hall who coordinates the race was please that more people pre-registered which is a good sign that people in the community are not only willing to run in thirty degree weather, but also to do so for a worthy cause.

Mr. Jenko was asked regarding the "Be My Neighbor" project if there was anything to report. Mr. Jenko

responded that the committee is focused on working with RK Mellon, and they are going through the planning stages and will be wrapping up in June or July in order to present the plan to RK Mellon showing how St. Vincent, the City of Latrobe and the School District are working together increasing their ability to do things. The plan that is going forward is dealing with housing, blight issues, transportation, and recreation. If the plan is approved, RK Mellon will give a significant amount of funding to all three entities making sure that projects get done.

Regular Meeting of Council adjourned at 8:19 P.M with a motion by Mr. Kelley seconded by Mr. Yuhaniak. All in favor. Approved 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted,



Karen Meholic, City Secretary