



CITY OF NANTICOKE

WORK SESSION and COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Work Session/Council Meeting 7:00 pm

Call to Order: President of Council, William Brown

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation: City Clerk, Jennifer W. Polito

The following were present: Council Members, William Brown, John Telencho, Lesley Butczynski, Mike Marcella, Joseph Nalepa, Interim City Manager, Donna Wall, Finance Director/City Clerk, Jennifer W. Polito and Solicitor, Attorney Finnegan.

WORK SESSION-

President Brown turned the meeting over to Attorney Finnegan to re-explain ordinance numbers 4 through 7 for anyone who was not present at the last meeting.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 4 of 2021, (Second Reading) an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Nanticoke to place a question on the November 2021 General Election Ballot to amend Section 2.04 of the City of Nanticoke Home Rule Charter to change the minimum age qualification for Council Members from 21 to 18.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 5 of 2021, (Second Reading) an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Nanticoke to place a question on the November 2021 General Election Ballot to amend Section 2.12 of the City of Nanticoke Home Rule Charter to provide that all regular meetings of Council must occur at or after 6:00 pm and attendance of Council Members shall be defined by Pennsylvania Law.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 6 of 2021, (Second Reading) an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Nanticoke to place a question on the November 2021 General Election Ballot to amend Section 3.06 of the City of Nanticoke Home Rule Charter to provide that the Mayor shall not hold any other elected public office or be employed by the City in any other capacity.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 7 of 2021, (Second Reading) an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Nanticoke to place a question on the November 2021 General Election Ballot to amend Section 4.02.A of the City of Nanticoke Home Rule Charter to provide an alternative to Manager education and experience requirements of 10 years experience with Associate's Degree.

President Brown thanked Attorney Finnegan for his explanations.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 8 of 2021, (First Reading) an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Nanticoke amending Section 210-12 of the City of Nanticoke Code of Ordinances to

provide for additional penalties for any person commencing regulated construction work without first obtaining the required permit to pay a penalty equal to one hundred percent (100%) of the applicable permit fee.

A Motion to approve Resolution # 12 of 2021, a Resolution of City Council of the City of Nanticoke designating Construction Consultants Services, Inc. to administrate the Uniform Construction Codes contingent upon finalization of the fee schedule and final Solicitor approval.

A Motion to approve Resolution # 13 of 2021, a Resolution of City Council of the City of Nanticoke approving the re-appointment of Thomas Wall to the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority Board of Directors.

A Motion to approve Resolution # 14 of 2021, a Resolution of City Council of the City of Nanticoke amending the residential and commercial permit fee schedule for the City of Nanticoke.

Administrative Updates-

-Mayor Kevin Coughlin has submitted the June 2021 Department Reports for Council's review and Jennifer Polito has posted them on the City's website.

-Mayor Kevin Coughlin executed Executive Order #18 of 2021, appointing Nicole Pulju as the City's 504 Officer in light of Mr. Jack Minsavage retiring effective July 23, 2021.

-Mayor Kevin Coughlin executed Executive Order #19 of 2021, re-appointing Thomas Wall to the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority Board of Directors for a 5-year term expiring December 31, 2025

Donna Wall updated Council and residents on the following:

- Donna informed Council and Residents that she and the Mayor have requested a meeting with WVSA regarding all the issues that occurred during the last scheduled street sweeping. The City received numerous complaints on this issue and we hope a meeting would better coordinate the next street sweeping.
- Donna informed Council that the City was awarded a 2020 LSA Grant in the amount of \$500,000 to demolish the former Ellis building and the City is in the process of securing more funds so we can finally demolish this building. The City also received a 2020 LSA Grant in the amount of \$650,000 on behalf of the Greater Nanticoke Area School District for the construction of a turf field and artificial track.

A Motion was made by Councilmember Butczynski seconded by Councilmember Telencho to adjourn the work session. Motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR MEETING Comments from the Public agenda items only.

Mr. Ron Knapp thanked Donna for her update on the street sweeping issue. Mr. Knapp asked Council to explain the time limit rule and who sets the limit. President Brown stated during the section of "Comments from the Public" there is a five minute per person wishing to address Council and that he sets the limit. President Brown stated the time limit does apply to any inquiries or comments on items listed in the work session. Mr. Knapp commented on

Ordinance #4 of 2021 by stating that he has changed his position of not in favor of the age requirement to sit on Council to be changed to 18 from 21; he is now for it. President Brown stated other communities have their age set at 18 and he feels this is a good decision for the City. Mr. Knapp commented on Ordinance #7 of 2021 by stating it is clear to him on why the City is proposing to change the education requirement to be the City Manager; it appeases Donna Wall so she can be the Manager Mr Knapp replied. Attorney Finnegan stated Donna Wall has been employed by the City for two decades and is the City Manager. Attorney Finnegan stated by lowering the education requirement for people who have years of experience as a manager will benefit the City in the future when Donna retires by possibly getting more applicants to choose from. President Brown stated that Donna Wall has more experience over education and that qualifies her to be the City Manager. Mr. Knapp commented on Resolution #12 of 2021 and asked is it because the new Code Officer does not have the qualifications to do her job, is why the City is hiring Construction Consultant Services, Inc. Donna stated no, Nicole is qualified to do what Jack was doing and she is training to become a BCO. Andy Kratz is also retiring and he was our BCO Officer. This company is being hired to do everything that Andy did replied Donna. President Brown stated as of Friday, Jack is retired and Nicole will now be our Code Officer. Mr. Knapp commented on Executive Order #19 of 2021, the re-appointment of Thomas Wall to the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority's Board of Directors by stating he hopes that Mr. Wall can accomplish getting the City annual reports from the WVSA and open the lines of communication. Mr. Knapp feels WVSA does not communicate well with the City. Donna Wall stated that at the last meeting she read off a report of what work WVSA has performed and completed in the City. Mr. Knapp asked if the update is posted and Jennifer Polito stated the update that Donna read at the last meeting is in the July 7, 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. Knapp asked for Attorney Finnegan to explain Resolution #14 of 2021 and Attorney Finnegan stated that Resolution #14 updates an existing fee schedule on residential and commercial permit fees; some fees have changed per this resolution replied Attorney Finnegan. Mr. Knapp thanked Attorney Finnegan for his explanation and thanked Council for their time.

Old Business

None

New Business

A Motion to approve the July 7, 2021 minutes was made by Councilmember Marcella seconded by Councilmember Butczynski.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to approve the payment of the bills in the amount of \$391,157.83 (Payroll(s) \$111,200.72 and Payables \$279,957.11) was made by Councilmember Marcella seconded by Councilmember Butczynski.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 4 of 2021, (Second Reading) an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Nanticoke to place a question on the November 2021 General Election Ballot to amend Section 2.04 of the City of Nanticoke Home Rule Charter to change the minimum age

qualification for Council Members from 21 to 18 was made by Councilmember Marcella seconded by Councilmember Telencho.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 5 of 2021, (Second Reading) an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Nanticoke to place a question on the November 2021 General Election Ballot to amend Section 2.12 of the City of Nanticoke Home Rule Charter to provide that all regular meetings of Council must occur at or after 6:00 pm and attendance of Council Members shall be defined by Pennsylvania Law was made by Councilmember Nalepa seconded by Councilmember Butczynski.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 7 of 2021, (Second) an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Nanticoke to place a question on the November 2021 General Election Ballot to amend Section 4.02.A of the City of Nanticoke Home Rule Charter to provide an alternative to Manager education and experience requirements of 10 years experience with Associate's Degree was made by Councilmember Nalepa seconded by Councilmember Marcella.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 8 of 2021, (First Reading) an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Nanticoke amending Section 210-12 of the City of Nanticoke Code of Ordinances to provide for additional penalties for any person commencing regulated construction work without first obtaining the required permit to pay a penalty equal to one hundred percent (100%) of the applicable permit fee was made by Councilmember Butczynski seconded by Councilmember Marcella.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to approve Resolution # 12 of 2021, a Resolution of City Council of the City of Nanticoke designating Construction Consultants Services, Inc. to administrate the Uniform Construction Codes contingent upon finalization of the fee schedule and final Solicitor approval was made by Councilmember Telencho seconded by Councilmember Butczynski.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to approve Resolution # 13 of 2021, a Resolution of City Council of the City of Nanticoke approving the re-appointment of Thomas Wall to the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority Board of Directors was made by Councilmember Marcella seconded by Councilmember Nalepa.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to approve Resolution # 14 of 2021, a Resolution of City Council of the City of Nanticoke amending the residential and commercial permit fee schedule for the City of Nanticoke was made by Councilmember Butczynski seconded by Councilmember Nalepa.

Motion carried unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC –

Ms. Marylee Conway of 65. West Noble Street submitted pictures of blighted properties in very bad shape and dangerous to the residents. One property is behind her home, one is in front of her home and the other is behind St. Faustina's Church. Ms. Conway stated these properties have been condemned by the City for years, why is nothing being done. These properties are dilapidated, weeds are over grown, windows and doors are falling off or taken off the structures, infested with rodents and snakes and an eye sore to look at each day. Ms. Conway stated she loves her home and loves living in Nanticoke but the City needs to take care of the blight. She asked how long will it take to take down these structures, what can be done to make property owners clean up their properties and why are the owners not being held accountable for keeping up their properties. Ms. Conway stated she does not understand how these properties are allowed to get this bad. She asked if there is a way to find out who the owners are and put liens on the properties? President Brown thanked her for sharing her concerns and he agrees the properties she is concerned about are very bad. President Brown asked Donna Wall to follow up with Code Enforcement on the properties that Ms. Conway submitted photos and shared her concerns. Donna Wall stated the property on 102-104 W. Ridge has been a problem for the City and we have tried to get ownership so it can be demolished but every time it goes up for tax sale, the owner pays the necessary amount to take it off the list and then does nothing to clean up the property. Donna stated the owners are cited but do not show up for their hearings. Mayor Kevin Coughlin stated we are trying our best to clean up the City. Attorney Finnegan states the process of taking ownership of a property could take a year or more because of the process in place. Donna Wall stated the County has a policy where people can pay a minimum amount to have their properties taken off the tax sale list and then the process start all over again. Ms. Conway's last comment was on the Villa property as you enter town; it's a mess she replied. Vice President Telencho stated he will have an update on the Villa later in the meeting.

Mr. Ron Knapp asked President Brown for an update on the delinquent garbage fees and President Brown replied that we have collected \$58,000 from January to June of this year in delinquent fees. Mr. Knapp asked if President Brown had a list of who and how much is owed and President Brown stated he does not have that information and that Mr. Knapp did not asked for that at the last meeting. Mr. Knapp replied that should have been assumed and he will file another right-to-know request with Patty. Mr. Knapp is convinced that the refuse fees will go up in the 2022 budget and it is because of the delinquent accounts. Mr. Knapp stated as taxes and fees go up in the City, so does the blight. Mr. Knapp stated the City must do a better job in holding the property owners responsible in order to control blight. President Brown stated taking ownership of the properties and demolishing them costs money. We can raise taxes sky high to try to control blight but that is not what we want to do to our residents replied President Brown. Mr. Knapp stated the refuse fees should be billed like Hanover Twp and President Brown and Vice President Telencho responded that is not a fair way to charge the residents with multi units in one structure. Mr. Knapp asked for the update on the Villa and Vice President Telencho responded that Sara Hailstone has filed the corrected papers with the IRS, changes have been accepted and made by the IRS so they can close on the loan, 7/19/2021

the engineers are doing the necessary inspections, 7/26/2021 an asbestos removal has been scheduled and after that is all done, the building can come down.

Mr. Hank Marks commented on the new Code Enforcement Officer and asked if she had the qualifications to do the job. Donna stated she is qualified to do inspections and quality of life citations. She is also training to be a BCO to do permits Donna replied. Mr. Marks asked Donna Wall if her comingled garbage was finally pick up and she replied yes. Mr. Marks replied, well mine were not. Donna asked why he did not call her. He said he took care of it himself by stopping the garbage truck and asking them why they did not take his comingles. The garbage men replied we do not pick them up this week, that was last week. Mr. Marks said he replied these are last weeks that you missed, you will pick them up this week or he will drive them to Mascaro's and dump them in front of the building, so the garbage men took them. Donna Wall stated she will call Mascaro's tomorrow and put in a complaint. Mr. Marks commented that the bight in town is so bad because the City's budget is mostly made up of salaries and benefits for its employees.

Correspondence-

None

Announcements-

None

Councilmember Comments-

All Council members had no further comments

Meeting Adjournment-

Councilmember Nalepa made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Butczynski, roll call.

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Next Meeting, Wed, Aug 4, 2021 @ 7:00 pm.

City Clerk, Jennifer W. Polito