

CITY OF NANTICOKE



WORK SESSION and COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 4, 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 via telephone, Mike Marcella, Joseph Nalepa, via telephone, Interim City Manager, Donna Wall, Finance Director/City Clerk, Jennifer W. Polito and Solicitor, Attorney Lapsansky filling in for Attorney Finnegan via telephone.

WORK SESSION-

President Brown announced that prior to the meeting, Council held an executive session to set a spending limit for Donna Wall to acquire blight properties at the Judicial Tax Sale on August 12, 2021.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 8 of 2021, (Second 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 #15 of 2021, a Resolution of City Council of the City of Nanticoke designating Donna Wall as the authorized representative of the City of Nanticoke to bid on properties at the Luzerne County Judicial Sale on August 12, 2021.

A Motion to approve the purchase of a 2022 Ford F-550 Dump Truck from Gibbons Ford in the amount of \$82,563.62, fully upfitted from the Highway Aid account. COSTARS Pricing. President Brown informed residents that Council has decided to table this purchase to obtain one more quote from Rottet Motors/Kovatch.

A Motion to award the 2020 Sewer and Storm Water improvement bid to M&J Excavating, Inc. in the amount of \$96,000.00 (Lowest Bidder). (Noble Storm Water @ \$24,000 and Sewer on W. Green St. Alley @ \$72,000.

Administrative Updates-

Donna Wall updated Council and residents on the following:

Donna gave an update on the following blight properties that a resident brought to Council's attention at the last meeting:

- 521 Maple Street, permits have been issued and it is under construction. The owner wants to do things right and has been very cooperative.

- 102 W. Ridge Street, letters were sent to owner on record and returned to the City as “Return to Sender” undeliverable and unable to forward to different address. The City is going to look into this property more to see if they can find the owner.
- 451 Hanover Street, the City is still looking into who owns this property.
- 3 properties on the Corner of W. Ridge Street, property on the corner is under construction and plans have been submitted to the City and we are in the process of issuing a building permit. The double block home, the owner’s attorney has contacted the City and stated they are still in litigation with the property and are unable to do anything at this time.

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

REGULAR MEETING Comments from the Public agenda items only.

Mr. Ron Knapp asked if the topic discussed in the executive session was added to the agenda since the agenda was posted on the City’s website on July 30, 2021. Donna Wall replied no because acquisition of property is not discussed in a Council meeting.

Old Business

None

New Business

A Motion to approve the July 21, 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 \$203,498.77 (Payroll(s) \$98,163.19 and Payables \$105,335.58) was made by Councilmember Butczynski seconded by Councilmember Nalepa.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to approve Ordinance # 8 of 2021, (Second 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 Telencho seconded by Councilmember Marcella.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to approve Resolution #15 of 2021, a Resolution of City Council of the City of Nanticoke designating Donna Wall as the authorized representative of the City of Nanticoke to bid on properties at the Luzerne County Judicial Sale on August 12, 2021 was made by Councilmember Telencho seconded by Councilmember Marcella.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to table the purchase of a 2022 Ford F-550 Dump Truck from Gibbons Ford in the amount of \$82,563.62, fully upfitted from the Highway Aid account. COSTARS Pricing. President Brown informed residents that Council has decided to table this purchase to obtain one more quote from Rottet Motors/Kovatxh was made by President Brown seconded by Vice President Telencho.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion to award the 2020 Sewer and Storm Water improvement bid to M&J Excavating, Inc. in the amount of \$96,000.00 (Lowest Bidder). (Noble Storm Water @ \$24,000 and Sewer on W.

Green St. Alley @ \$72,000 was made by Councilmember Marcella seconded by Councilmember Telencho.

Motion carried unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC –

Mr. Alex McNitt asked Council to disclose which properties the City is looking to acquire at the Judicial Tax Sale because he is interested in a few on the list. President Brown stated the City attends these sales like any other individual. The City would like to see if we can acquire blight properties that are causing issues and violating code ordinances that are unsafe to the community and at this time, we cannot disclose that information.

Mr. Ron Knapp stated that back when WVSA did their first street sweeping in 2020 that was a total unorganized event, he suggested that the Mayor and Donna meet with WVSA to coordinate the next scheduled street sweeping. Mr. Knapp stated this last round of street sweeping was just as bad as the first and residents are very unhappy. In 2020, Mr. Knapp suggested purchasing speed monitoring machines to control the speeding on certain roads in town and the City acted on his suggestion and the purchase of the sign has proven to be beneficial. Mr. Knapp wanted to make it clear that he is not for defunding the City's police department but he thinks the City should consider the option to save hundreds and thousand of dollars by eliminating the third shift and moving them to the first and second shifts instead of hiring more officers. Mr. Knapp stated let the PA State Police cover our third shift. Mr. Knapp stated he has good ideas and when the City takes his advice, we can be a safer community. In the past, Mr. Knapp said he brought up the idea of putting out an RFP for a towing company to service Nanticoke and Council said there was no need for that. Mr. Knapp feels that there is a need because the RFP will specify that the towing company must clean up all debris off the road after an accident. Mr. Knapp said it was just last week that an accident occurred and the towing company did not clean up the debris and this is a safety issue and makes the town look bad. President Brown thanked Mr. Knapp for his comments.

Mr. Hank Marks commented on why the Taxpayer Association is mad as hell. Mr. Marks stated that there is no money to remove blight or make necessary improvements in town because the City's budget is mostly made up of salaries and benefits for its employees. Mr. Marks stated the budget has doubled over the years between 2014-2021 and the increases are due to salaries and benefits. Mr. Marks stated that the City Officials need to address the needs of the 10,000 residents, not the 50 City employees. Mr. Marks says he agrees with Mr. Knapp to eliminate the third shift in the police department to save money.

Correspondence-

None

Announcements-

The City of Nanticoke will be holding their **City-Wide Yard Sale** on Saturday, September 11, 2021 and the rain Date is Sunday, September 12, 2021. Any resident who would like to participate and have your address on the list prepared by the City, please call 570-735-2800 Ext. 101 by Wednesday, September 8, 2021. The list will be posted on the City's website or a copy can be picked up at City Hall on Friday, September 10, 2021.

Councilmember Comments-

Vice President Telencho gave an update on the Villa property by saying it passed its Geotechnical test and they are just waiting for the Asbestos test and it then can come down. Vice President Telencho stated there are 7 units in the new building and 2 are taken and maybe

a possible 3rd one before it is even built. Mr. Marks asked why the MA is paying to take the Villa down since it was sold to a developer and Vice President Telencho stated the developer is paying for the demolition, not the MA. Vice President Telencho commented on getting a commission together to get appraisals to see if developers are interested in purchasing Concrete City that is 20% owned by Nanticoke and 80% owned by Hanover Township.

Councilmembers Butczynski and Marcella had no further comments

Councilmember Nalepa wanted to comment about eliminating the third shift in the police department by saying that idea is absurd and ridiculous. Councilmember Nalepa said we have a very good police department. Councilmember Nalepa asked why would we open up the City to more crime in an area where the crime is rising? Councilmember Nalepa stated that the State Police are so widespread that the response time could be a half hour or more. Councilmember Nalepa stated he does not support this idea.

President Brown stated he agrees with Councilmember Nalepa that eliminating the third shift would not be good for the City and that the City provides 24/7 police protection in an area where it is needed. President Brown also stated that in the past, the State Police had two officers per shift to patrol very large areas and the response time will decrease versus having 24/7 protection. President Brown stated he also does not support the idea of eliminating the third shift in the police department.

Meeting Adjournment-

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 pm.

Next Meeting, Wed, Aug 18, 2021 @ 7:00 pm.

City Clerk, Jennifer W. Polito