

City Council Meeting Minutes – October 23, 2023

City Council Chambers, City Building, 16 West Scribner Avenue, DuBois, Pennsylvania on Monday, October 9, 2023, at 6 p.m.; Council convened at their regular City Council Meeting with Mayor Walsh in the Chair. Other Council Members present were James Aughenbaugh, Shane Dietz, and Pat Reasinger. Also present were City Solicitor, Toni Cherry; Police Chief, Blaine Clark; Public Works Superintendent, Scott Farrell; Tax Collector, Lisa LaBrasca Becker; Code Enforcement/Zoning Officer, Zac Lawhead; Finance Officer, DeLean Shepherd; and City Controller, David Volpe.

Absent: Councilman Diane Bernardo.

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Walsh.

Additions to Agenda

Mayor Walsh called for a motion to excuse Councilwoman Diane Bernardo from the meeting. The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Reasinger to excuse Bernardo. Roll call as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

Mayor Walsh stated we have an agenda item addition so Solicitor Cherry can read a deed that we need to vote on. The motion was made by Reasinger and seconded by Dietz to add the item to the agenda. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

Miss Cherry explained the Redevelopment Authority of the City of DuBois has approved the sale of property to CO.3, LLC to repair and develop the building (which formerly housed Tommy D's). The Redevelopment Authority believes the transaction will be valuable to the City. Attorney Paula Cherry and Attorney Chris Mohny together have reviewed these matters, and an agreement of sale and contract has been prepared and signed by the prospective buyers. Cherry recommends Council approve the sale that has been agreed upon by the Redevelopment Authority stating that it meets all the City's requirements. Once the City approves it, Mayor Walsh will sign it and turn it over to the Redevelopment Authority to proceed with the sale.

The motion was made by Reasinger and seconded by Dietz to approve the transfer of deed. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of Minutes

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The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Reasinger that Council approve the City Council Meeting Minutes of October 9, 2023, as presented. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, abstain; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 3-0.

Registry of Invoices

The motion was made by Dietz and seconded by Aughenbaugh that Council approve the Auto Draft Check Register by Check ID dated October 19, 2023, in the amount of \$16,582.19; the General Fund Purchase Order Listing by Vendor Name dated October 19, 2023, in the amount of \$422,050.89; and the Pennvest Check Register by Check ID List in the amount of \$2,626,432.26. The motion was made by Dietz and seconded by Aughenbaugh to approve the Registry of Invoices as presented. Roll call as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

Public Comments

Shirley Dahrough - Downtown DuBois, Inc.

Advocating for downtown, Shirley asked Council to not sell the Scribner lot and provided signatures of support from several business owners. They believe the property is an asset to our community and the space will be needed after the merger (with Sandy Township). Councilman Reasinger agreed and asked Tom Nowak to share his idea for the property. Nowak feels the building on the property would be an asset to the city because it can house the Treasurer's Office and be used as a drive-thru for residents to come and pay their taxes and utility bills and have some parking. Shirley supports the idea saying it is 'fabulous' and will benefit the elderly and handicapped who cannot easily access the City building.

Lisa LaBrasca Becker thinks it will be a great idea for the citizens of our community because there are people who do have trouble getting in our doors. It also will be more convenient for residents. She also added that there is a safe in-house and maybe she will be able to have an office of her own. She thanked Council for considering this idea.

Mayor Walsh stated the reason we did this is we had someone approach us to buy the property and build on it. Council had to put it out for bids. We have the right to accept or reject all bids.

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Steve Way agreed it is a great idea. “We are always constantly trying to engage with people in our community and tourists coming into the area. Don’t sell the assets when there are other buildings and property that private entities want to add or develop the downtown area.

Clearfield County Commissioner, Dave Glass, who has had several business owners approach him, said, “I understand sometimes we don’t always have all the facts. It kind of seems this has been hurried. If there is a good solid reason that we need to communicate better so they understand it. Maybe have more of a round-table discussion about their concerns and make sure the positives outweigh the negatives. Again, I don’t know what you guys are looking at either. I don’t think there should be any hurry for it.” Councilman Aughenbaugh agreed he felt it was rushed. “That is why it was tabled. To get more information and get a chance to hear from more people. I thought it was too quick myself so that’s why I asked for it to be tabled at the last meeting.”

Sandy Township Supervisor, Mark Sullivan renewed his objections to the sale of the West Scribner lot until after consolidation to be sure additional parking is not needed for staff at the municipal building.

Don Neubert – Randall Court

Don said there is a lot of traffic – 3,4 and 5 vehicles - running red lights in the community making these intersections unsafe. He asked if we could get traffic cameras that can be used to ticket offenders. Mayor Walsh said we have looked into it. It is illegal in Pennsylvania to use cameras to issue tickets. They are used more for information like when there is a vehicle accident. Walsh asked Chief Clark to speak more on the subject. Chief Clark confirmed that it is illegal to use cameras for law enforcement. It is only allowed in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Aughenbaugh added that cameras could be used at intersections to activate traffic lights so people aren’t sitting at a red light when there is no traffic. There is one by the Sheetz on Brady Street. We are looking to add more but they are quite expensive.

Michael Clement

Thanked Council for the big victory for the taxpayers today by pulling out of fighting the injunction.

Proclamation – “Change Your Clock/Change Your Battery Day” – November 5, 2023

Read in its entirety by Mayor Walsh



PROCLAMATION

“CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR BATTERY DAY”

Sunday, November 5, 2023

WHEREAS, every year fires occur in the City of DuBois, sometimes resulting in injury or death; and

WHEREAS, three (3) out of four (4) homes have at least one (1) smoke detector, but an estimated one-half are inoperative because of worn or missing batteries; and

WHEREAS, working smoke detectors double the chances of surviving a fire; and

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WHEREAS, the designation of a special day to remind residents of DuBois to change the batteries in their smoke detectors and flashlights, timed to coincide with the fall ritual of changing clocks, would greatly diminish this human tragedy; and

WHEREAS, November 5, 2023, is the day Americans change their clocks from daylight savings time.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and City Council of the City of DuBois, Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2023**, as **“CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR BATTERY DAY”** in DuBois and urge all area residents to join in this observance so we may all live safer lives.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have set our hands and caused the Official Seal of the City of DuBois, Pennsylvania, to be affixed this 23rd day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-three.

The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Reasinger to approve the proclamation. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

Proclamation – “Veteran’s Day” – November 11, 2023
Read in its entirety by Mayor Walsh



PROCLAMATION

“VETERAN’S DAY”
November 11, 2023

WHEREAS, the men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America have made major contributions toward the preservation of the freedom of this Nation and her people; and

WHEREAS, the services performed by these millions of gallant Americans have demonstrated the willingness of our Nation to meet the challenge of those forces wishing to subjugate individual determination through armed conflict; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States of America has designated the eleventh day of November of each year as Veteran’s Day; and

WHEREAS, Veteran’s Day has become a significant part of our national heritage as we recognize the important contributions of the millions of our citizens whose military service has had a profound effect on history; and

WHEREAS, Veteran’s Day offers the Nation an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to Abraham Lincoln’s call to Congress and the American People to “care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans”; and

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WHEREAS, the Nation and the free world are eternally grateful for the contributions of American Veterans – men and women – to the advancement of the cause of an honorable world peace.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and City Council of the City of DuBois, Pennsylvania, on behalf of George D. Montgomery American Legion Post 17, the James J. Patterson V.F.W. Post 813 and the Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 65, do hereby call upon all citizens to observe SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2023, as “VETERAN’S DAY”, and ask that the day be observed with appropriate ceremonies in honor of those who have served the national purpose to preserve the principles of Justice, Freedom, and Democracy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have set our hands and caused the Official Seal of the City of DuBois, Pennsylvania, to be affixed this 23rd day of October, in our year of our Lord two thousand twenty-three.

The motion was made by Dietz and seconded by Reasinger that the City of DuBois recognize November 11 as Veteran’s Day. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

Crime Stoppers – Jeremy Ruffner

Jeremy who is 911 Coordinator of Clearfield County and sits on the board of Crime Stoppers, gave a presentation. The District Attorney has provided drug forfeiture money to purchase signs. He distributed samples of the signs. Jeremy is here to talk about Crime Stoppers and get Council’s blessing to put up signs around DuBois, and to make everyone aware there is another avenue to report crime. People want to be part of the solution but remain anonymous. Anonymous reports lead to a lot of arrests. Anyone who wants to participate can join us. We are always looking for new members.

Mayor Walsh asked Chief Farrell if this is something our guys do or does Crime Stoppers install them? Farrell replied, “Either way.” Jeremy explained that Crime Stoppers provides the signs and bolts to install them. They are numbered and labeled so we know where they are located. The signs can be moved around if there is an area of town where there is a problem, they will move them. When the calls come in, there is no caller ID, no name asked. They just take the information about the crime and pass it on.

Mayor Walsh asked if Crime Stoppers would be willing to meet with the City to determine the best locations for the signs. Jeremy said they would.

If businesses want to get involved, signs will be available to put inside businesses. He gave his contact information to all Council members. When asked if the signs will have lighting on them, Jeremy said they are open to suggestions. We are a small committee right now and are just re-launching this.

The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Dietz to approve Crime Stoppers putting up signs in the City of DuBois. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

Proposals to purchase the West Scribner Avenue Parking Lot

The motion was made by Reasinger and seconded by Aughenbaugh to reject all bids. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea, Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

There was a round of applause from the audience.

2023 Park Improvements

DeLean shared the recommendation from Chris Nasuti to table the park improvements until after the forensic audit has been completed before committing the city to additional debt. The motion was made by Reasinger and seconded by Dietz to accept the recommendation to table the matter until after the audit. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0. Motion passed 4-0.

The audience again responded with a round of applause.

Aughenbaugh mentioned that there is the grant, and we still have time with that.

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Award Dam Evaluations to HRG

- a. Juniata Lake - \$15,000
- b. Anderson Creek - \$211,000

DeLean explained the PA Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) inspected two dams in the area and found deficiencies. We need to do studies to figure out what we want to do with them and how we're going to pay for it. Aughenbaugh explained that the DEP mandated this. They changed the requirement back in 2009. He stressed this is to evaluate the dams. Mayor Walsh said the two awards will be handled individually.

The motion was made by Reasinger and seconded by Dietz to award the dam evaluation at Juniata Lake in the amount of \$15,000 to HRG. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Dietz to award the dam evaluation at Anderson Creek (better known as the DuBois Reservoir) in the amount of \$211,000 to HRG. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, unfortunately yea. Motion passed 4-0.

Lisa LaBrasca Becker

Next week is November. Get your taxes paid.

Councilman Shane Dietz

Thanked Mr. Ruffner for his work. It is very interesting.

Solicitor Cherry – Executive Session Clarification

Miss Cherry wanted to discuss a housekeeping matter. There was no action taken at the Executive Session held after the last Council meeting. It was informational. She requests Council confirm its approval of the decision not to present any defense to the Sandy Township suit and to approve the temporary injunction and request that it be made permanent without further action.

The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Reasinger to confirm approval of Miss Cherry's handling of the Sandy Township lawsuit. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

The motion was made by Reasinger and seconded by Dietz to confirm approval of Miss Cherry's handling of the temporary injunction. Roll call was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

Councilman Jim Aughenbaugh

Aughenbaugh asked Mayor Walsh to introduce the new City secretary. Walsh asked DeLean if she would take the pleasure. DeLean introduced Korbi Slocum as the new Administrative Secretary. "She will be at the front desk. Just be nice. She is trying to figure everything out with zero training." Walsh welcomed Slocum to the 'humble city of DuBois'.

Chief Clark

Be careful during Trick or Treat next Tuesday. There is a parade at 5:00 p.m. so Long Avenue will be shut down for about an hour. Trick or Treat will follow from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. They hope to have officers patrolling in every ward. Turn your lights on to help the kids out.

Adjourn

There being no further business to transact, the motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Dietz that Council adjourn. Roll call vote was as follows: Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea; Dietz, yea; Walsh, yea. Motion passed 4-0.

ATTEST: Korbi Slocum APPROVED: CASW