

City Council Meeting Minutes – June 10, 2024

City Council Chambers, City Building, 16 West Scribner Avenue, DuBois, Pennsylvania on Monday, June 10, 2024, at 6 p.m.; Council convened at their regular City Council Meeting with Mayor Pat Reasinger in the Chair. Other Council Members present were James Aughenbaugh, Shane Dietz, Elliot Gelfand (by phone) and Jennifer Jackson. Also present were: City Manager, Shawn Arbaugh; City Solicitor, Thomas Breth; Public Works Director/Engineer, Chris Nasuti; Code Enforcement/Zoning Officer, Zac Lawhead; Interim Police Chief Shawn McCleary; City Controller, David Volpe; and Administrative Secretary, Korbi Slocum.

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

Executive Session (legal and personnel issues)

Council met in Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss personnel, police negotiations and pension.

Public Comments on Agenda Items Only

No comments.

Approval of Minutes

City Council Minutes – May 28, 2024

The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Jackson that Council approve the City Council Meeting Minutes of May 28, 2024, as presented. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

Registry of Invoices

The motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Dietz to pay the Auto Draft Check Register by Check ID dated June 6, 2024, in the amount of \$2,737.45. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

The motion was made by Dietz and seconded by Aughenbaugh to pay the General Fund Purchase Order Listing by Vendor Name dated June 6, 2024, in the amount of \$251,161.49. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

The motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Aughenbaugh to pay the Police Allowance Check Register by Check ID dated June 10, 2024, in the amount of \$15,300.00. Reasinger questioned the purpose of the expenses. It is for uniforms. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

Additional Invoices

The motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Aughenbaugh to approve the payment of \$101,407.72 to Highmark Blue Shield. Gelfand questioned why the additional invoices were not part of the General Fund list. Arbaugh explained these four payments, had they not been paid prior to the meeting, would have been late. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

The motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Dietz to approve the payment of \$29,012.62 to Nextier Bank. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Jackson to approve the payment of \$34,571.00 to Selective Insurance Company. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

The motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Aughenbaugh to approve the payment of \$58,085.74 to Waste Management. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Redevelopment Authority Cooperation Agreement

Arbaugh's recommendation is the City does not execute the agreement with the Redevelopment Authority because it causes problems with the management of the employees. "We have the employee split time between the Redevelopment Authority and the City. It is difficult to manage an employee devoted to two different interests because sometimes they compete with each other. We could save money by taking the CDBG back in-house and potentially putting that money out for other projects and for using professional services from Urban Design Ventures or the County Redevelopment Authority for administration of those funds." Aughenbaugh questioned the timing. "I think there are a few loose ends or am I misspeaking?" Arbaugh replied, "We already have a relationship with Urban Designs to do our

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Redevelopment Authority Cooperation Agreement (continued)

annual CDBG application. We do have Redevelopment Authority staff members working on the current CDBG project that should wrap up in about two months.”

NEW BUSINESS

Approval to Auction Municipal Vehicles

The purpose of this item is to request City Council’s approval to auction the five vehicles on the list. “The Vactor and backhoe were recently replaced with new equipment. The recycling truck was previously used by Waste Management and is no longer needed by them. They purchased a new vehicle. The dump truck and light plant are older pieces of equipment that are no longer needed. We would put them on Municipal Bid and award those to the highest bidder with a reserve that would be set.” The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Jackson to approve auctioning the listed equipment. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program – Recreational Facilities

This item is informational. Arbaugh explained, “We have a \$1.2 million RACP grant for recreational facilities. We looked at a couple of different things we could do with the recreational monies that wouldn’t cost the City very much if we could use City land as a match for that grant. Typically, it’s a 50-50 matching grant. We could potentially use it to put in pickleball courts, resurface the playground area, then conduct an evaluation of our playground equipment and update it as necessary. We would have to get approval for our land to be used for that 50% match, so it would be contingent on that. There would be some costs because we have to get an appraisal, and there would be some engineering fees associated with the project.” Reasinger asked, “Around \$100,000 to get a million two?” Arbaugh continued, “Probably less than \$100,000.00. We also evaluated looking at turfing a soccer/football field at the Sandy Recreational Park, and also the softball infield. Unfortunately, the costs were very high and above what we had in funding. If you’d like us to, we could pursue the recreational component of pickleball courts, surfacing for the playground, and new equipment.”

Jackson said, “First, I want to make sure that whatever we do, we’re looking at the legacy cost of what we’re building and what we’re maintaining down the future. I know right now pickleball is a fad, but can we see what else may be more beneficial? I know that was talked about previously, but I’m just wondering if it’s something we can discuss what we want to use the money for. I want to make sure we realize there is a legacy cost associated with what we’re building and maintaining from here on out.” Gelfand asked, “Would we be looking at the skatepark equipment as well?” Arbaugh replied, “We can conduct an evaluation on that. Our plan was to get with our employees at the park facilities to see what their recommendations are also. We have an old restroom facility that has been abandoned. That may be something we want to look at renovating or removing.”

The motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Aughenbaugh to move forward as long as the land can be used as a match, we are looking at the legacy costs associated with it, and seeing if it is updating or replacing something we have at this point rather than building something completely new. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

Conditional Use of 517 Liberty Blvd.

Planning Commission received an application for retail use of 517 Liberty Blvd. for a restaurant (the old Fishel’s Hobby Shop). It is in the industrial zone, so it needs conditional approval for that use. The motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Dietz to accept the Planning Commission’s recommendation to approve the conditional use of 517 Liberty Blvd. for a restaurant. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

Subdivision of Rice Complex Building C on Beaver Drive

Planning Commission received a request to subdivide a portion of the property at 90 Beaver Drive referred to as Building C. It will include the building and parking. The motion was made by Aughenbaugh and seconded by Dietz to accept the Planning Commission’s recommendation to approve the subdivision at 90 Beaver Drive. Gelfand asked, “What is the purpose of the subdivision?” Nasuti replied, “He is selling it to the doctor who is currently in that building.” Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

Assistant Public Works Director Position – Consideration to Eliminate Position

Arbaugh explained, “We took a look at this position and our recommendation is to eliminate this position effective August 30, 2024. Eliminating this position will save us money and potentially could be used for positions that are more needed. We would use the Sandy Township Public Works Director, the Engineer, and the Manager as a backup if something were to happen to the sitting Public Works Director.” The motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Gelfand to eliminate the Assistant Public Works Director

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Assistant Public Works Director Position – Consideration to Eliminate Position (continued)

position effective August 30, 2024. Dietz asked, “What happens to the person holding this position? Is there other work for them to do? What happens there?” Arbaugh replied, “Not at this time. The position will be eliminated, so that person would not have employment unless another position was created.” Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, nay; Aughenbaugh, nay; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 3-2.

REPORTS

- Redevelopment Authority
- Codes/Zoning
- Engineering
- Police Department
- Street Department
- Water Department
- Water Plant
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Information Technology

Reasinger said, “Zac, nice job!” Lawhead replied, “It was a busy month. It slowed down a little bit now with the grass. I still have got a few of them.”

Manager’s Report

“We are continuing to work with the financial consultants on refinancing the three variable interest loans. We made some good headway, had some good conversations and should have some more information for you at the next meeting. We would most likely target early August for the actual Ordinance for you to consider for that bond issue. I also wanted to let you know Scott Farrell did an outstanding job. We had a Pennsylvania DEP inspection at our wastewater plant. A very thorough inspection with compliance at the old and new plants. We got a really good report, and they continue to operate that old, outdated treatment plant to the best of their ability. They do a really nice job down there. I also want to thank Scott Frano and the DuBois Little League. They had a free event in the park this weekend for the community. It was an overall excellent event, lots of turnout, and it was great to see so many people out there. I want to thank the pastors for Church in the Park. I’m not sure if anybody had a chance to attend, but what an excellent event. The message was spot on – Unity in the Community, bringing everyone together. I learned a lot. It was a really good event.”

Public Comments

Kristen Vida – Chestnut Avenue

“Number Ten, the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program. You said the land would be matched. Can you talk a little bit, what land are you referring to?” Arbaugh responded, “It’s a 50-50 grant, so we could receive up to \$1.2 million, but we’d have to match that with \$1.2 million. Instead of having that cash asset, we can potentially use the park land. So, the area where we’ll be conducting the upgrades of the equipment and those kinds of things for the match. We’d have to get an appraisal of the land and they would say the land is worth “X” number of dollars and we could use it for that match.” Vida asked, “So, you’re not selling that?” Arbaugh replied, “No.” Vida continued, “I just want to make sure that is clear. My only suggestion is, I know Scott Frano came a while ago and talked about communication, especially with the Little League and the things they are doing. At one point, pickleball was mentioned, but I would throw out an idea. That T-ball field needs some work. For someone who has a youth that plays there, when it rains the games are cancelled. They can’t be played because it’s not turf. So, maybe you want to make some upgrades to the T-ball field.” Reasinger replied, “Either now or in two weeks, come back with suggestions and stuff. We’re open to all of that.” Aughenbaugh added, “There’s actually been some work done on that before as far as looking at doing that. I believe there is some information...” Reasinger said, “I think the Little League was going to do something with that.” Nasuti said, “We looked at converting the T-ball field into a different type of field.” Aughenbaugh replied, “I know they were talking about doing something different at one point.” Vida added, “I just hope that we get the input from the Little League organization.” Reasinger said, “It’s not something that we’re going to do in two weeks.” Arbaugh added, “No, we just want to bring it to your attention and see if you were interested in it. We’re trying to identify projects.”

Deb Mechling – Monroe Street

“I have a question concerning the public notice in the Courier Express on June 4, 2024, the 1,287,710 net board feet of marked sawtimber and 415 cords of pulpwood on City property on our watershed. Is this wood already cut or is this another timber cut that is being done in our watershed?” Arbaugh replied, “This is an advertisement – Chris, correct me if I’m wrong – but this is an advertisement to do a timber cut at the reservoir property.” Mechling continued, “I noticed in the budget that there is a projected income of \$1,000,000.00 for timbering.” Arbaugh replied, “That is correct.” Mechling asked, “How many cuts are

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Deb Mechling – Monroe Street (continued)

we talking?” Arbaugh replied, “I believe we’re talking two cuts.” Aughenbaugh added, “That is what Mr. Kane explained when he was here on those areas, on why they needed to be cut to maintain the growth and health of the watershed.” Mechling said, “I believe the last clear cut was done in the Fall of 2023?” Nasuti replied, “It was bid in the Spring of 2023.” Mechling continued, “But, we didn’t get the money until the end of the year?” Nasuti explained, “We get paid in thirds. So, a third when they started, a third part-way through and...” Mechling said, “OK. So, I know it was mentioned during the February 12th meeting that there were issues concerning turbidity and filters need to be cleaned more frequently at the treatment plant as a result of that clear cut. If you could explain also the \$10,000.00 fee that is required with each bid. How does that work?” Nasuti explained, “It’s a bid surety, so that if we go through all the work the low bidder has to guarantee they’re going to do the project. People who are not awarded get their bid securities back.” Mechling replied, “I was curious.”

“Is there concern by anyone on Council as to the frequent cuttings of timber on City watershed?” Aughenbaugh replied, “Mr. Kane, I think, did an excellent job explaining that and how much better health the watershed is now compared to what it was however many years ago they started that. I think with what’s been going on out there, I’m not concerned. I trust Mr. Kane and what he does. He spends a lot of time and is very, very passionate. If you were here, he is very passionate about what he does and how he does it. It promotes more growth for generations the way it’s done. I think he does a super fantastic job with that, and I’ll take his recommendation as such.” Mechling said, “I heard him speak whenever he was here the last time. I know at the January 8th Council meeting, the \$450,000.00 proceeds from the 2023 cut, which Chris just said was in the spring, that was used to balance the City budget. What is the projected money going to be used for with this cut?” Arbaugh explained, “We did have it to balance the budget and also put into a new building addition here and/or capital reserve for the water system.” Mechling responded, “OK. I, in my opinion, I have concerns about the continued use of timbering to balance the budget. It seems like we’re paying a high price for potentially placing our watershed at risk for future problems on one of our most precious resources in our community which is our water.”

Dave Rupprecht – Sandy Township

“Question. She referenced clear cut. Have they been clear cuts or have they been select cuts around the watershed?” Nasuti answered, “Most of them are select. The one we did at the treatment plant last year was a clear cut.” Rupprecht asked, “And did that affect the turbidity of the water or is it the ones back near the reservoir itself?” Nasuti replied, “The one at the treatment plant did. It’s not in the watershed.” Aughenbaugh added, “It’s on this side of the divide.” Rupprecht said, “At our camp we have a pond, and they did some cutting upstream of us and we had a problem with the pond filling in and needing to get permits and what not to dig back out as a result of upstream, not quite clear cut but damn near.”

Council Member Comments

Councilwoman Jennifer Jackson

“I want to thank Zac. There were pages of citations. It’s amazing how many people don’t cut their grass. Zac was really out pounding the pavement with that. Scott Farrell. I’ll go back to when we did a tour of the plant. It is so clean out there. It is amazing to see, very interesting. If you ever have a chance to tour out there, well worth it. And timbering, I do trust Mr. Kane that was here. Knowing what we came into, unfortunately, we are still using money to balance the budget. With cuts that we’re doing and some other things, hopefully, down the road I would love to see that put back into the watershed for the future.”

Councilman Elliot Gelfand

“I want to echo Shawn. Congrats to the DuBois Little League on a great event this weekend in the park. Everyone had a great time. Especially, I thought the Home Run Derby was well executed and really exciting. A great finish there by the boys at the end. It came down to one swing. Awesome fireworks show.” Gelfand also encouraged residents to support the upcoming events in the park. “DuBois Days this weekend (June 14-16). Please try to stop down and support everybody. They’ve put a lot of time and effort into that, putting it on for the community. There’s also Music in the Park concerts (beginning June 20th). They always have great acts.”

Adjourn

There being no further business to transact, the motion was made by Jackson and seconded by Aughenbaugh that Council adjourn. Roll call was as follows: Jackson, yea; Gelfand, yea; Dietz, yea; Aughenbaugh, yea; Reasinger, yea. Motion passed 5-0.

ATTEST:

Korbi Slacum

APPROVED:

[Signature]