

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2019**

Call to Order: Council met in regular session on Wednesday, October 23, 2019 in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Silent Meditation and Pledge of Allegiance: A silent moment was taken followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Barletta-present; Colombo-present; Mope-present; Perry-present; Gavio-present

Minutes of Previous Meetings: The minutes of the October 9, 2019 Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: – Oaths of Office were given to the Incoming Junior Council Members.

Bid Opening: None

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Mark Rabo, 1st Street, Hazleton, spoke of Ordinance 2019-12- An Ordinance Authorizing the Collection of Attorney's Fees and Costs of Collection and Enforcement Matters. Rabo stated he spoke at the last city council meeting regarding the redundancy with Luzerne County collecting "its portion" from the Prothonotary's office. Mope stated Atty. Sean Logsdon will explain this to him. Atty. Sean Logsdon asked Rabo which redundancy he was speaking of. Rabo said it is regarding the \$50.00 fee the Prothonotary collects for real estate transactions and title transfers, etc. He said this fee is collected by the Prothonotary for any liens. He said this was cited in the Claims Act. Atty. Logsdon said the Prothonotary collects their own fees and will not reimburse the City for any legal fees. Rabo said he does not know if they can "add on" to the act. He suggested getting clarification from DCED (Department of Community and Economic Development). Atty. Logsdon said any fee the Prothonotary's office would charge would not apply to any attorney fee for filing a municipal lien. Rabo said the attorney is also citing another fee on top of this for filing a municipal lien for \$150.00. He said he does not know if this is allowable under the state statute. He stated this is why this needs a clarification from the county or DCED.

Mope said the City did not have legal paperwork for this and is why city council will be acting on this. Atty. Logsdon said this is for when a municipal lien is filed on a property, i.e.- grass cutting, and there is nothing "on the books". He said if there is a municipal lien put on a building the City also wants to collect attorney fees and costs. He said, currently, there is no ordinance "on the books". Atty. Logsdon stated this is the City's intention. Gavio stated the City does this now and this is just a formality. Rabo stated there is a citing of the Municipal Claims Act and to get a clarification from DCED on this.

Rabo also spoke of Resolution 2019-A Resolution Requesting LSA Funds for the Purchase of Equipment for the City of Hazleton's Police Department. He wants to know, from Police Chief Speziale, if he is contemplating adding the portables for the digital upgrade which Luzerne County plans, in 2020, for the 911. He said he attended a recent Luzerne County Council meeting and it was stated, by the 911 director, that it would cover the costs of the receivers, but not the portables. He wants to know if the cost of the portables will be covered for the police and fire departments.

Rabo also spoke of Resolution 2019-40-In Memoriam- Grace Darrow Cuozzo. He stated her family is in attendance tonight, and city council and City residents were her "second family". Rabo said everyone loved her very much. He said it will never be the same again. He extended his condolences to her family.

Old Business:

ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2019-12 An Ordinance Authorizing the Collection of Attorney's Fees and Costs in Collection and Enforcement Matters (**2nd READING**)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Gavio.

Roll Call: Barletta- yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 2nd READING

Ordinance 2019-12 An Ordinance Authorizing the Collection of Attorney's Fees and Costs in Collection and Enforcement Matters (**3rd READING**)

Presented by Barletta. Seconded by Gavio.

Roll Call: Barletta- yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Ordinance 2019-15 An Ordinance Approving the Five-Year Consolidated Plan and Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2020 (**2nd READING**)

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Mope.

Roll Call: Barletta- yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES ON 2nd READING

RESOLUTIONS

None

New Business:

ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2019-38

A Resolution Requesting Local Share Account Funds for the Purchase of Equipment for the City of Hazleton's Police Department

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Mope.

On the Question:

Police Chief Jerry Speziale spoke on the portables for 911. He said if the City does not receive a grant, the City will use asset forfeiture funds or drug funds. He said the City has enough money to support the change over to the digital with portables. He stated the money will not come from tax dollars. He said it will come from the asset forfeiture funds. Speziale said as far as the LSA grant, there have been two incidents involving schools. He said one incident involved recovering a gun, and the second was for a threat. He said the LSA grant is nothing more than a critical infrastructure protection plan so the officers are prepared and have the right type of trauma equipment. He said if the police officers need to breach and enter a school, they need to be prepared. He said the police officers were happy with the grant in 2018, but the police department was awarded with something else. He said this is why the police department is trying again.

Roll Call: Barletta- yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2019-39

A Resolution Declaring that it is Desirable for the Health, Safety and Welfare of the People in the Area Served by Lehigh Valley Network, Inc. and Certain of its Affiliated for the Lehigh County General Purpose Authority to Undertake a Project Involving the Issuance of Lehigh County

General Purpose Authority Hospital Revenue Bonds (Lehigh Valley Health Network) and to Undertake other Projects Involving Lehigh Valley Health Network, Inc. and Certain of its Affiliates; and Repealing all Prior Inconsistent Resolutions

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

John Brodsky, Lehigh Valley Health Network Treasurer, thanked city council for considering this resolution. He said Lehigh Valley is embarking on a fairly substantial financing project to do a number of improvements around the network including upgrades to the Hazleton Lehigh Valley Hospital, both inpatient rooms, and expanding, slightly, the ER (Emergency Room). He said this project has been undergoing. He said, in addition, there are major expansions to the Cedar Crest facility, in Allentown, and building a new hospital in Northampton, PA. He said, in total, Lehigh Valley Health Network will be spending around \$300,000,000 (Three hundred million) for the various projects. Brodsky said this is being done through tax-exempt financing, which is very attractive, and is available to non-profit organizations such as a hospital. He said, as a result, requires special approvals being given by the local authorities in which these projects reside. He said since their hospital is located in Hazleton and is subject to city council's review, he is asking city council to consider this proposal.

Barletta asked if every area which has a location needs to pass this resolution. Brodsky said yes.

Roll Call: Barletta- yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2019-40

In Memoriam-Grace Darrow Cuozzo

Presented by Mope. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Gavio read the resolution out loud. He stated the family will receive certified certificates, when ready. Gavio said he knew Grace all his life. He said she was a good woman and will be sadly missed. Mope handed out a proclamation and roses to the Cuozzo family.

Roll Call: Barletta- yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2019-41

Amending Resolution 2019-32, Awarding a Contract to Upgrade, Furnish and Install A Traffic Signal at 5th and Church Street to Kuharchik Construction, Inc.

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Colombo.

Roll Call: Barletta- yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-yes; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

On the Question:

Barletta asked if this is still the lowest bid due to this being the second vote. Atty. Logsdon said yes. He said he spoke with Alan Wufsus, City of Hazleton Engineering Technician, and he stated this is the actual low bidder. Mr. Wufsus stated the bid amount was a little different, but the City needs a record of this.

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Comments from the Audience: None.

Comments from Mayor: Mayor Cusat congratulated the Junior Council members. He stated he hopes everyone “sticks it out” this year. Mayor Cusat said the students can learn a lot about local government. He stated the recent Recycling Event serviced over 200 residents, collecting a lot of TV’s and electronics that would have “ended up” on the sides of the road. He said there will be a Shredding Event to be held on October 24th from 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. at City View Park. He said Halloween will be observed on October 31st, 2019 at City Hall from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Comments from City Administrator: Dan Lynch said he has been the City Administrator for a little over one year and did not know Ms. Cuzzo. He said it is commendable to put this time and effort in engaging municipal politics. Lynch stated he wished more people did this. He stated he likes when the public comes out and talks to administration and city council. He said the City of Hazleton’s early draft budget, for 2020, was submitted to the City’s plan coordinators, PEL (Pennsylvania Economy League), for plan compliance review. He said city council members have received the early calendar for the 2020 budget steps. He said he is waiting to see how this comes back, plan compliant, and then go “from there”.

Comments from Council: Perry congratulated the new Junior Council members. He stated the Junior Council program started ten years ago. He said he has been an educator for forty years and thought this was a good idea with this program being instituted around the state. Perry said he knew this program needed to be in the City of Hazleton. He said to see the student turnout is amazing. He encouraged the students to get involved and read the city council minutes. He said city council members will “call on them”. He stated if they have any questions, they can contact Eileen Matenkoski, City Clerk, or any city council member. Perry said it is great for the community. He said the students encompass a large part of the community.

Perry extended his condolences to the Cuzzo family.

Colombo congratulated all the new Junior Council members. He welcomed them all. He stated this is a great thing for the City. He also extended his condolences to the family of Grace Cuzzo.

He reminded all City residents of an upcoming event. On November 11th, 2019 at 11:00 a.m., there will be a Veteran’s Day program at City Hall. He said to come out and support all our veterans.

Mope thanked all Junior Council members for applying and coming to this council meeting. She said Grace attended city council meeting for 30 years. She said Grace was very civic minded. Mope said she

hopes some of her spirit “spreads” into the Junior Council members to learn about government. She said a little knowledge is wonderful but when you come as long as Grace did, she has a vast amount of knowledge. She extended her condolences to the Cuozzo family. She also extended her condolences to the Joseph Zola family in the loss of their mother. Mope also extended her condolences to the family of George Hayden. She thanked everyone for coming to participate in city government.

Barletta congratulated all the new members of Junior Council. She welcomed them all. She stated city council has lots of fun. She said she hopes to hear their comments. She stated if they have any comments to let city council know. She spoke to Grace Cuozzo’s family. Barletta said she was a wonderful lady who she met a couple years ago. She stated she will be missed. She also gave condolences to the Joseph Zola family.

Gavio welcomed all new Junior Council members. He is glad to see young people take an interest in city government. He said there will never be another Grace. He said she will be sadly missed. He spoke to the Joseph Zola family. He said she was a wonderful lady and would see her in church every Sunday. He also gave condolences to the George Hayden family, a former council member. He stated city council will be honoring him at the next city council meeting.

Comments from Junior Council: None.

Adjournment: Gavio motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.