

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2019**

Call to Order: Council met in regular session on Wednesday, June 12, 2019 in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 6:10 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 May 22, 2019 Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: Presentation of Certificates of Award to Junior Council.

Bid Opening: None

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, spoke of Ordinance 2019-5. She stated the NO LIEN letter is used at a closing. Deakos said the attorney checks all the utilities, checks if any taxes are owed, and checks at the county courthouse if there are any liens on the property. Deakos said there is no purpose for this letter. She said the resident cannot get a NO LIEN letter in a sheriff or tax sale. She said the money that is owed on the property is then distributed. Deakos said people who have an attorney or title company already perform this procedure. She said this is another way to get \$50.00 from a resident trying to sell a property in the City.

Old Business:

ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2019-5

An Ordinance Requiring Owners of Real Property to Obtain a No-Lien Letter from the City of Hazleton, Prior to the Sale of Real Estate
(2nd READING)

Ordinance 2019-5

An Ordinance Requiring Owners of Real Property to Obtain a No-Lien Letter from the City of Hazleton, Prior to the Sale of Real Estate
(3rd READING)

NO PRESENTATION- ORDINANCE DIES

RESOLUTIONS

None

New Business:

ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2019-6

An Ordinance Approving the Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2019
(1st READING)

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Perry.

On the Question:

Gavio said city council is working in the timeframe for this ordinance. He said this is to get this “on the books.” He said the original ordinance was passed on 1st reading in October, 2018.

Barletta asked if there were increases, in some departments, from the original ordinance voted on in October, 2018. Zeller said yes. Barletta said city council may make amendments, and talk with Zeller in the meantime.

Mope stated city council never gets the City’s budget on time. She said it is passed then the budget is brought back for amendments for more or less money. She said back in October, 2018, when city council voted on the original ordinance the budget was able to be passed. Mope stated it needs to be avoided on voting on an ordinance (1st READING) and spending money that is not approved.

Barletta stated there was an increase in funds (\$24,000) for the recreation improvements at City View Park. She asked Zeller what the reason is for putting more money into City View Park.

Zeller’s response- (*inaudible*).

Roll Call: Barletta-no; Colombo-yes; Mope-no; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

ORDINANCE PASSES 3-2 ON 1st READING

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2019-28

Resolution Approving the 2019-2024 Dues Structure with the
Pennsylvania Municipal League

Presented by Gavio. Seconded by Barletta.

On the Question:

Gavio said there needs to be an amendment made for waiving the first year's membership dues for 2019. Atty. Logsdon said the ordinance states, in the fourth paragraph, that PML is waiving the City's annual membership dues of \$8,108.80.

Gavio asked Matt Domines, Pennsylvania Economy League representative, to enlighten the audience and council members regarding these dues.

Mr. Domines said he is not from the Pennsylvania Municipal League. He said this decision is for city council. He said the Pennsylvania Municipal League (PML) is a lobbying group for cities throughout the commonwealth and other municipalities that are part of it. He said they deal with legislation that would impact cities. They advocate to help cities for any legislation that is "in front" of the general assembly. Domines said PML has courses available, newly elected officials' courses, that members can attend, two-day courses on all aspects of local government. He said there are construction codes academy courses for code enforcement officers. He said this is all included in this fee. There is PERAC (Pennsylvania Employer Relations Advisory Committee). Domines said this is based on collective bargaining for police and fire departments. He stated there is a yearly summit for municipal officials can attend. He said this a two-day summit with courses on labor relations and municipal governments with unions. He said city council members and elected officials may attend. He said any municipality can use their labor counsel to review any agreements that are negotiated to get advice. He said RFP's can be placed on their website to advertise. He said their website also has equipment, from other municipalities, to purchase.

Domines said there is a discount for the City of Hazleton in 2019. He said the \$8,108.80 will be waived for 2019 (80% waiver). In 2020, there will be a 50% waiver, 2021 & 2022 a 25% waiver, 2023 a 10% waiver, and 2024 would be the full amount.

Mope asked Domines if this discount is just for Luzerne County or is it statewide. Domines stated this is statewide.

Domines said there is an annual summit, in October, 2019, for elected officials, in Gettysburg, to "network" with other municipalities elected officials. He said there are some benefits to a membership.

Perry said this also benefits employers and administration. He said the code department employees can get training. Domines said they also offer other classes. He said DCED, in the past, had municipal government training, but, PML has taken this over. He said this includes budgeting, financing, code and public works courses.

Gavio said the municipalities that participated in these conferences stated it is a valuable tool.

Domines stated the annual conferences are good for education and a networking tool for officials. He said this sets up a good line of communication between our City and southwest municipalities. Domines said, ultimately, this is up to city council.

Mope said this maybe "wonderful" for some municipalities, but the City of Hazleton is currently in ACT 47. She stated the PML dues will be waived the first year. She said when employees go to conferences, all over the state, she said there still is an expense to send the employees. She said the City is "supposed" to be sending employees to classes. Mope said when the City was paying dues, in the past to the PML, she stated nothing seemed to come down "the pike" to our end of the county. Mope said the funds went everywhere else. She said there are "benefits and minuses". She said this is what the City needs to weigh. Mope asked if it is more beneficial to join. She asked if people are willing to go across the state to the different conferences and pay out of

pocket. She asked if the City would need to “foot the bill” for the employees to attend these classes. Mope said this may be beneficial for some areas. She said the City may get a “broader range” of RFP’s, but are they willing to come across PA to do a paving job. She said this will be up to council. She said if they think this is beneficial then this would be fine.

Roll Call: Barletta-yes; Colombo-yes; Mope-no; Perry-yes; Gavio-yes.

RESOLUTION PASSES 4-1

Comments from the Audience: Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton, said one of the things the City needs to investigate are the illegal apartments. Deakos stated the City knows how many units a building is because when it is sold it would be advertised as multi-listed as two units. She said if it then becomes four units, and it did not “go through” zoning, then there are two illegal apartments. She said some apartments are being turned into rooming houses, especially in the Heights Terrace. Deakos said another problem is when people are “dumping” off their kids to one adult. She said this is causing a problem in the Hazleton Area School District. Deakos said all these illegal apartments cause a parking problem. She said, now, there is a crime problem. Deakos said each property needs to be evaluated to see if it became multi-unit apartments, and if zoning does not allow this to shut down the extra apartments. Deakos said this would bring in extra income and safety to the City. Deakos said there would not be any “parking wars” in the winter. She said this would also allow the City to know how many residents are in Hazleton. Deakos said this would also bring “control” back to the City instead of the LIEN letter.

Joseph Stanavage, 216 West Birch Street, Hazleton, said he has been living in the City of Hazleton for seventy years. He thanked all the City employees for doing their jobs. He said he is sad to listen to residents talk about Mayor Cusat and Joe Zeller. Stanavage said they are all trying to improve the City. He said they do not have a “blank check” to fix the potholes. He said these residents do not come to the city council meetings to listen. He thanked city council and administration for trying. Stanavage said they need to agree to disagree.

Comments from Mayor: None.

Comments from Council: Mope thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. She congratulated the junior council members for participating and having an interest in learning about government. She also wished all the fathers a Happy Father’s Day.

Barletta also congratulated all junior council members. She stated she is happy they all got involved.

Colombo also thanked the junior council members for doing a great job. He also wished the Hazleton High School girls softball team good luck in the PIAA State Championship game on June 13th, 2019. He stated this can be called “Red-Out Day”. Colombo stated all houses, in the City, should fly their flag on Flag Day. He said there will be a service on June 13th @ 10:30 a.m. at the Dog Park. He stated everyone needs to respect the flag.

He said the ambulance situation is still being “looked into”, and this cannot continue. He said it is “unheard of” for a resident to wait thirty-five minutes for an ambulance.

Perry thanked all junior council members for their service and participation. He said he hopes this continues “long after” he is gone. He asked Mayor Cusat if there is an ordinance for an inter-governmental cooperation act, in the state, to allow officers to participate in arrests outside their municipality in cases of emergency. He said this was adjudicated by the Supreme Court. He said they

“threw out” a case where different municipalities were working. Perry asked where the City is, currently, on this matter.

Mayor Cusat stated the DA has informed him, this week, about putting one together.

He also thanked Dr. Kislak for securing a \$20,000 donation to hire an experienced airport manager at the Hazleton Municipal Airport. He also thanked Mayor Cusat for updating the City of Hazleton’s website. He said this makes public documents more accessible to view. Perry wished the Hazleton High School girls softball team good luck at their PA State Championship game. He said this would be the first PA State team title.

Perry wished everyone a Happy Father’s Day.

Gavio thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He also thanked all the junior council members for their participation and wished them the best in the future. He also wished everyone a Happy Father’s Day.

Comments from Junior Council: None.

Adjournment: Gavio motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.