

**MINUTES
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2022**

Call to Order: Council met in a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, August 9, 2022 in Council Chambers and via ZOOM Teleconferencing. The meeting was called to order at 6:13 p.m.

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

Roll Call: Colombo-present; Mundie-present; Ondishin-present; Sacco-present; Perry-present

Minutes of Previous Meetings: The minutes of the July 12, 2022 Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: None

Bid Opening: None

Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): Dee Deakos, 43 West Mine Street, Hazleton, Spoke of the City Street lights. She stated the streetlights have been out, for a while, on Broad and Laurel Street and between Chestnut and Mine Streets. She said it should not have taken one year for the lights to be fixed. She stated the City should not be dark.

Deakos spoke, also, of the City potholes. She asked if the City has a working "roller". Sacco stated that the DPW employees work "ahead" of the other DPW workers, and then level the hole.

Deakos, also, spoke of the City noise caused by cars. She said there are a lot of cars with loud mufflers driving recklessly. She asked how they are passing inspections.

Deakos spoke of driving in the City. She said that there are problems with pedestrians crossing at intersections. Overall, the City is not a safe place.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

ORDINANCES:

(1ST READING)

Ordinance 2022-7

An Ordinance Amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Hazleton, Part II, Chapter 490, Taxation, Article IV Earned Income and New Profits, Providing for Assessment Levy, and Collection of a Tax for Earned Income, Earned or Received, and to Net Profits, Earned or Received for Both Residents and Non-Residents of the City of Hazleton for General Municipal Purposes and to be Paid Pursuant to Act 205, known as the Municipal Pension Plan Funding Standard and Recovery Act,

Beginning July 1, 2022 and Continuing in Force on a Calendar year basis
(1st READING)

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Sacco.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes

ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

(2ND AND 3RD READINGS)

None

RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution 2022-46 Approving and Hiring Police Officer in Accordance with
Police Civil Service Rules- Nicholas Petruzzi

Presented by Colombo. Seconded by Mundie.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2022-47 Approving and Hiring Police Officer in Accordance with
Police Civil Service Rules- Brianna Mandak

Presented by Sacco. Seconded by Ondishin.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2022-48

Resolution Authorizing the City Administration to Retire Certain City Debts

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2022-49

A Resolution Awarding the Contract for the 12th Ward Park Phase I Improvements Project

Presented by Sacco. Seconded by Ondishin.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution 2022-50

A Resolution Awarding the Contract for the City View Park Improvements Project

Presented by Sacco. Seconded by Ondishin.

Roll Call: Colombo-yes; Mundie-yes; Ondishin-yes; Sacco-yes; Perry-yes

RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

New Business: None

Old Business: None

Comments from the Audience: Cindy DeLuca, Hazleton, spoke of the City's towing contract. She said Police Chief Brian Schoonmaker stated any towing contract approval needs to go through City council. Atty. Logsdon stated most of these documents are, currently, going through litigation. DeLuca asked about the towing contract's fee schedule. Atty. Logsdon stated, currently, the lawsuit is part of the litigation. DeLuca stated the Request for Proposals (RFP) has been started until the contract was issued. She stated the fee schedule is for the RFP, was issued three different times, and the fees did not change. DeLuca said overcharging should be an issue. She stated the towing contractor needs to accept either cash, credit card or a business check as payment. She stated the towing contractor is charging \$50.00 more. She said they cannot overcharge a customer. DeLuca stated the towing contractor states they charge a flat fee.

Atty. Logsdon stated he has reviewed these documents. DeLuca said the RFP is done and the contract is "in place". Atty. Logsdon stated he will bring this to the towing company to see if there are any discrepancies.

John Edwards, Hazleton, asked why the City is fixing a parking lot instead of patching potholes.

Ricky DeLuca, Hazleton, asked Sacco if she writes contracts. Sacco asked DeLuca what the "real source of the problem is". DeLuca said the problem is overcharging. Sacco stated DeLuca should have solved this problem. Sacco said there are always a problem, no matter what City administration and city council does, this including current City hiring positions. She said the City is "here" paying off their debt. She asked DeLuca what his solution is. She stated there are two city council seats coming up for vote in January, 2023. Atty. Logsdon asked DeLuca, "what do you want done?" DeLuca said Police Chief Schoonmaker could arrest Paul's Towing. Atty. Logsdon said if people have complaints, they need to bring them to City Hall. He said City Hall will look into the matter. Ondishin asked DeLuca who is being overcharged. DeLuca stated the fee schedule needs to be followed. Ondishin stated city council is not the "law". Atty. Logsdon asked if there is any criminal action. Police Chief Schoonmaker said if a customer is over charged to come see me. If they have a complaint about the contract to see Sean. Dan Lynch, City Administrator, said the matter needs to be solved with the contractor. DeLuca stated Paul's Towing broke their contract. He stated Paul's Towing has numerous violations. DeLuca said the City could have used five other towing companies.

Eugene Babula, Hazleton, asked why the City is "basing" everything on what the City of Wilkes-Barre is doing. Mayor Cusat stated he researches what goes on in that city. Babula stated there is a lot of money being wasted instead of fixing the City roads. He said the City should not worry about funding pickleball courts. Mayor Cusat stated, currently, pickleball is very popular. Babula said there are a lot of drugs throughout the City. Mayor Cusat said the City has paved 30% of the City roads in 2021. Lynch said, in the past, the City's road materials line item, in their budgets, was about \$250,000. He said, in past years, the City did about 10% of what needed to be done with the roads. Mayor Cusat said the City's road materials funding has increased 200%. He said the City spend \$4,000,000 to pave the southside of the City. Perry said the City is doing the best they could. He stated the City has done a parking study. He said, also, the City has received grant money to improve City Hall.

Babula spoke of the attorney (attorney Sernak) business sign on the corner of Church and Spring Streets. He asked if this sign will be moved lower, as it restricts and blocks the drivers view, when turning onto Church from Spring Street. Mayor Cusat stated the City's Zoning Department determined the sign does meet zoning requirements.

Babula asked all City administration and City Council members, “do you realize you are public representatives?”

Comments from Mayor: Mayor Cusat responded to Deakos comment when she spoke at the Courtesy of the Floor. Mayor Cusat stated PP&L had turned out the lights in this area one year ago. He said the City has been trying to get the lights turned on again, but PP&L has not responded to this request.

Mayor Cusat spoke of the upcoming September 11th events and Funfest.

Mayor Cusat said the City’s dumpster issues has been addressed for the last six weeks.

Mayor Cusat said the next Police Civil Service testing will take place on August 21, 2022. He said the Hazleton Police Department is, currently, “short” eight officers.

Comments from City Administrator: None

Comments from Council: Colombo welcomed Police Officer Nicholas Petruzzi and Brianna Mandak. He said all City departments- fire, police and DPW are under a lot of stress. He stated the City Parking Ticket Department is working hard, also.

Colombo, also, spoke of two City “icons” who passed away recently, Carmen Delese and Atty. _____.

Colombo reminded everyone to check on their loved ones in the recent heat wave.

Colombo said there is a traveling 9/11 Tower tribute/memorial to be in the City on September 10th & 11th, courtesy of CAN DO and the Hazleton Chamber of Commerce.

Colombo asked Atty. Logsdon if the No Parking on Dietrich Avenue Ordinance will be on the August 23 meeting agenda. Atty. Logsdon said yes.

Mundie welcomed the two new police officers. He stated the Hazleton City Police Department has a great police force.

Mundie spoke of the recent passing of Sam Monticello. He said he was a City Financial Manager for many years.

Perry stated City Council will have a resolution/proclamation honoring Carmen DeLese at the next City Council meeting on August 23, 2022. Perry, also, congratulated Sam Galski, Standard Speaker reporter, on his recent award.

Perry spoke of the recent Pennsylvania ATV laws. Atty. Logsdon stated he and City Council need to sit down to discuss the changes.

Atty. Logsdon spoke of trailers on City streets. He said he will prepare an ordinance to update this issue.

Comments from Junior Council: None

Adjournment: Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

