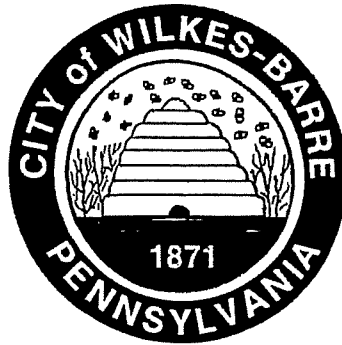


CITY OF WILKES-BARRE  
PENNSYLVANIA



# CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

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CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING

DECEMBER 29, 2020

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

ORDINANCES (FOR SECOND READING)

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

ADJOURNMENT

CITY COUNCIL  
DECEMBER 29, 2020

**ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING**

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 16 OF 2020** – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 30 OF THE WILKES-BARRE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES ENTITLED “UTILITIES”. (ANNUAL SEWER RENTAL AND MAINTENANCE FEE)

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 17 OF 2020** – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 12-27 OF ARTICLE II OF CHAPTER 12 OF THE WILKES-BARRE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES ENTITLED “GARBAGE AND REFUSE”. (RECYCLING FEE)

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 18 OF 2020** – AN ORDINANCE SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT CONSOLIDATED PLAN FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2020.

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 19 OF 2020** – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SEC. 7-230 OF CHAPTER 7 OF THE WILKES-BARRE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES ENTITLED “FEES”. (RENTAL INSPECTIONS)

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 20 OF 2020** – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTING THE AMENDED 2021 GENERAL FUND BUDGET.

CITY COUNCIL

SPECIAL SESSION

DECEMBER 29, 2020

The City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre met in Special Session on December 29, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., in City Council Chambers, City Hall, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania for the purpose of Council's consideration of the Second Reading of the five (5) new Ordinances proposed by Council and passed at the City Council Combined Session on December 17, 2020. (The meeting was conducted and streamed on YouTube for public viewing due to COVID-19)

The meeting was organized with Chairperson Bill Barrett in the Chair.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was given.

Roll Call:

Belusko	- present
Marconi	- present
Gilbert McBride	- present
Brooks, Vice Chairperson	- present
Barrett, Chairperson	- present

Also Present:

George Brown, Mayor  
Maureen Collins, Assistant City Attorney  
Tim Henry, City Attorney  
Frank Hershberger, IT Director  
Charles McCormick, City Administrator  
Cathy Payne, Assistant City Clerk  
Jim Ryan, City Clerk  
Lisa Sanfilippo, Administrative Assistant

The City Clerk announced that the phone lines were opened for anyone wishing to address Council on pending legislation.

Victoria, Wilkes-Barre, PA phoned in regarding the increase in the sewer maintenance and recycling fee.

Bob Kadluboski, Wilkes-Barre, PA phoned in regarding the 2021 budget and increase in fees.

Mark Rabo, Hazleton, PA phoned in regarding the 2021 budget and the fee increases.

Jason Carr, Saylorsburg, PA phoned in regarding the 2021 budget and the fee increases.

Mrs. McBride said that this is the first fee increase she has voted for. She said it was a tough decision because she knows how people in the community are suffering. She said after speaking with her colleagues and the situation they were dealing with and the lack of resources available to amend the budget, raising each fee \$25 was the best that could have been done. She hopes in the future, if Council can implement the structural changes that they have been discussing, we might get to a point where fees won't need to be raised or maybe the fees can be brought back to where they are currently. Mrs. McBride asked the Administration, that if they do get any money from the federal government, she would like to see it reimbursed to the residents who do pay the increased fees this year (if allowed to do so by the federal government).

Mr. Ryan said for the record he would just like to point out to Council, contrary to what Mr. Carr and others stated, there are deductions and copayments in 2020 for city unions.

Sam Troy, Wilkes-Barre, PA phoned in regarding the 2021 budget and the fee increases.

Mr. Barrett explained the difference in the fees to the residents, between what is being voted on today and the Mayor's last proposal, is \$15.00 a year, but we are also contemplating decreasing the budgeted overtime and workers compensation by \$200,000 each. Mr. Barrett said he has a lot of concerns about this and doesn't want to find the city looking at a significant shortfall at the end of the year.

## **ORDINANCES**

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 16 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 30 OF THE WILKES-BARRE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES ENTITLED “UTILITIES”. (ANNUAL SEWER RENTAL AND MAINTENANCE FEE) (SECOND AND FINAL READING).**

Mr. Brooks moved to adopt the Ordinance.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Marconi and adopted by the following yea and nay vote:

Yeas Marconi, McBride and Brooks – 3 – being a majority of members elected to City Council.

Nays Belusko and Barrett (Chairperson) – 2.

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 17 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 12-27 OF ARTICLE II OF CHAPTER 12 OF THE WILKES-BARRE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES ENTITLED “GARBAGE AND REFUSE”. (RECYCLING FEE) (SECOND AND FINAL READING)**

Mr. Brooks moved to adopt the Ordinance.

The motion was seconded by Mrs. McBride and adopted by the following yea and nay vote:

Yeas Marconi, McBride and Brooks – 3 – being a majority of the members elected to City Council.

Nays Belusko and Barrett (Chairperson) – 2.

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 18 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE FOR SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT CONSOLIDATED PLAN FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2020. (SECOND AND FINAL READING)**

Mr. Belusko moved to adopt the Ordinance.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Marconi and adopted by the following yea and nay vote:

Yeas Belusko, Marconi, McBride, Brooks and Barrett (Chairperson) – 5 – being all of the members elected to City Council.

Nays none.

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 19 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SEC. 7-230 OF CHAPTER 7 OF THE WILKES-BARRE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES ENTITLED “FEES”. (RENTAL INSPECTIONS)(SECOND AND FINAL READING)**

Mr. Marconi moved to adopt the Ordinance.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Brooks and adopted by the following yea and nay vote:

Yeas Belusko, Marconi, McBride, Brooks and Barrett (Chairperson) – 5 – being all of the members elected to City Council.

Nays none.

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 20 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTING THE AMENDED 2021 GENERAL FUND BUDGET. (SECOND AND FINAL READING)**

Mr. Brooks moved to adopt the Ordinance.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Marconi and adopted by the following yea and nay vote:

Yeas Marconi, McBride and Brooks – 3 – being a majority of the members elected to City Council.

Nays Belusko and Barrett (Chairperson) – 2.

**PRESENTATIONS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Mr. Belusko commented that some of the legislation Council just voted on is speculation of expenses and that is why he voted no.

Mr. Belusko asked the Administration to please keep up on the potholes this year.

Mr. Belusko wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mr. Marconi agreed with Mr. Belusko on the potholes; he has already had a few residents reach out to him about them.

Mr. Marconi thanked Chairperson Bill Barrett for navigating Council through a very difficult year.

Mr. Marconi wished the residents, colleagues and the Administration a happy, safe and healthy New Year.

Mrs. McBride said the reason some Council members chose to cut the overtime budget and workers' compensation budget was because we agreed that the city needs to tighten its belts. The City needs to start being more financially responsible.

Mrs. McBride asked about the building permit revenue that is budgeted for 3.1 million dollars. She asked how certain the Administration is that these projects will at least be started in 2021.

Mayor Brown said he is optimistic that the projects that have been outlined will be taking place in the first quarter of 2021.

Mr. Brooks read the following statement:

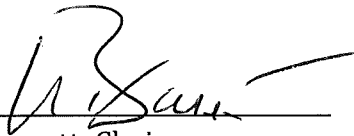
The definition of a budget is an estimate of income and expenditure for a set period of time. And I am pleased that we have offered a taxpayers' budget for 2021 that met the Mayor half-way with a compromise for our taxpayers. I understand the city has a structural debt problem, a debt problem, a pension problem, an overtime problem, a worker comp problem, a healthcare cost problem and a sewer problem, just to name a few. It saddens me that the current reality of our tax base is not strong enough to support the level and type of services the city government currently provides, and I fully understand the city will have some –(inaudible)—in the factors that drive cost for employees. In reviewing previous minutes of our meetings, I came across my statement back in 2016 in regard to our long-time low-income senior citizen homeowners. In staying true to my word, I sincerely hope that we all keep an eye out for the most vulnerable among us. And it's not just low-income seniors, but I have also had conversations recently with two recent widows who now find themselves with only one income to keep their single parent household going. We all know that there are many, many among us who are also suffering from the economic impact of COVID. It greatly pains me that we have increased the fees by a dollar a week, but again, I was sincere when I said I will meet the Mayor halfway. As I stated at the last Council meeting, I trust the Administration will be particularly mindful of our low-income senior citizen homeowners who received a miniscule cost of living adjustment, with a discount program based on the Pennsylvania Tax Rebate Programs Household Income Schedule. In closing, I want to thank you, thank the Mayor, my City Council colleagues and the City Administrative Services for 2020. It has been a year like no other. We all want an economically, viable and safe city. Economic growth is the key. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Administration to achieve a better future in 2021. I also want to commend and thank Chairman Bill Barrett, in an exceptionally hard year, keeping us all together and –(inaudible)—whether it was here in

person, behind plexiglass, or on-line and all the work that our IT has done. I thank them all and I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year.

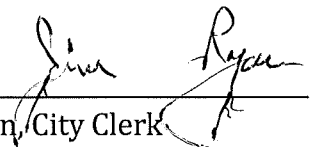
Mr. Barrett said he has been through many budget cycles during his years on Council. He said this year has been unlike any he has ever seen before. He said it is not Council's budget or the Mayor's budget, it is the City of Wilkes-Barre's budget. He commended the Administration for sitting down with Council at a moment's notice over the past two months, to talk about how we can come up with a budget. Mr. Barrett said he is hopeful that we can make this budget work.

Mr. Barrett wished everyone a Happy New Year.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

  
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Bill Barrett, Chairperson

ATTEST:

  
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Jim Ryan, City Clerk