

In Re:

SUMMARY TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

The City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre met in Executive Work Session, Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 6:00 p.m., in City Council Chambers, City Hall, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

PRESENT:

Mike Belusko, Vice Chairperson
Bill Barrett, Council member
Beth Gilbert, Council member
Mike Merritt, Council member

ABSENT – Tony Brooks, Chairperson

ALSO PRESENT:

Tim Henry, City Attorney/Deputy Administrator
Cathy Payne, Assistant City Clerk
Hank Radulski, Director Health Services
Jim Ryan, City Clerk
Ted Wampole, City Administrator

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was given.

City Clerk Jim Ryan announced that the Ordinance relative to Amending Chapter 29 of the Code of Ordinances entitled “Traffic and Motor Vehicles” (Truck deliveries), that appeared on City Council’s agenda, is being pulled for further review by the Traffic Committee.

Attorney Henry said he will contact the Traffic Committee regarding this referral.

City Administrator Ted Wampole appeared before Council relative to the following Resolution:

1. Authorizing the proper city officials to enter into an agreement in the amount of \$9,876 with the Pennsylvania Department of Health to provide a tuberculosis program.

Council Presentations

Mr. Barrett said he received several calls about a house in Parsons that was recently acquired by a small church. The house now becomes a not-for-profit part of the church. In this particular case, the church bought it for the purpose of turning it into a transient housing/half-way house/treatment center. He said that he heard that there is profit to be made in this because of the need for this type of facility. He said he heard the residents of this house pay approximately \$500 a week per person. He said he spoke to Amy at the Pennsylvania Municipal League about this situation and she said that some municipalities are beginning to address this in Ordinances. He pointed out that it is a business in a residential neighborhood. They are operating it in a tax-exempt property, because they are operating under being a church. He would like to come up with some way to address this.

Attorney Henry told Mr. Barrett that he believes (and would have to check with Mr. Anstett) it is not who owns the property that determines its tax-exempt status; it is the use of the property.

Mr. Barrett asked how the tax-exempt status can be removed.

Attorney Henry replied that it would be taxable when they buy it and then they would have to file an application for exempt status. After that, Mr. Anstett would have them fill out the appropriate paper work and assuming they answer the questions honestly, he will know what their intentions are for the property and would make the determination whether that use would be allowed to be considered tax-exempt.

Attorney Henry mentioned that a boarding house would need zoning approval under the city’s ordinance.

Ms. Gilbert said that she received a complaint today regarding Jefferson Lane. They said they haven't seen a plow or a salt truck this year. She asked the Administration to make sure they get service when it snows.

Ms. Gilbert said they are also having some issues with sidewalks in the area. She said she wasn't sure if they were city owned, but they have not been cleaned throughout the year.

Attorney Henry said the sidewalks would be the responsibility of the adjoining property owner, so that may fall to the property owners that happened to be on the end closest to the sidewalk.

Mr. Wampole said he will follow up on it.

Mr. Merritt brought up the on-going issue with the water issue on North Main Street at East Chestnut. He said there is still ice there. He said he didn't believe the water company came to fix it yet.

Mr. Wampole said Mr. Frati is working on the issue with the water company as to whose responsibility it is.

Mr. Merritt asked that the Administration make every effort to keep that area salted.

Mr. Wampole said he will keep Mr. Merritt informed on the issue through email.

Mr. Belusko asked Mr. Wampole if Simpson Street is on the list for paving. He said DPW came and filled some potholes the other day, but it is just a temporary fix. He asked Mr. Frati to take a look at.

Mr. Belusko asked Mr. Wampole the status of the city's salt supply.

Mr. Wampole replied that we went through 2,400 ton so far. He said that we just ordered 800 ton, which puts us at 3,200 for the year. He added that the city budgeted for 4,000 ton.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.