

CITY OF WILKES-BARRE  
PENNSYLVANIA



# CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

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CITY COUNCIL

MAY 28, 2020

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

RESOLUTIONS

MINUTES

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

CITY COUNCIL  
MAY 28, 2020

**RESOLUTIONS**

Approving the disposition of records from the Finance Office as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual.

Approving the disposition of records from the City Clerk's Office as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual.

Approving the disposition of records from the Office of Community Development.

Approving the disposition of records from the City Controller's Office.

Approving the disposition of records from the Administrator's Office.

Requests to use city rights-of-way for outdoor seating purposes for local restaurants shall be processed by the Mayor's Office through its appointed designee(s) for a period of six months.

CITY COUNCIL

May 28, 2020

The City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre met in Regular Session on May 28, 2020, at 4:33 p.m. (immediately following the Work Session), at the Police Station, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania for the purpose of general business. (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  
Frank Hershberger, IT Director  
Charles McCormick, City Administrator  
Cathy Payne, Assistant City Clerk  
Lisa Sanfilippo, Administrative Assistant  
Jim Ryan, City Clerk

The City Clerk announced that Council will now take questions and comments on agenda items from the public by phone. There being no calls the meeting continued with general business.

**RESOLUTIONS**

The following Resolutions appeared on the Consent Agenda (Resolutions):

**RESOLUTION NO. R0036-20**

A Resolution of the City Council, of the City of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania declaring its intent to follow the schedules and procedures for the disposition of records as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual approved December 16, 2008 (as amended March 28, 2019).

Whereas, a Local Government Records Committee was created by Act 428 of 1968 and empowered thereby to make rules and regulations for records disposition; and

Whereas, the Municipal Records Manual was approved by said committee on December 16, 2008; and

Whereas, the City of Wilkes-Barre desires to dispose of records according to statutory requirements;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the City Council of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, that it intends to follow the schedules and procedures for disposition of records as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual approved on December 16, 2008 (as amended March 28, 2019).

Office/Department: Finance Office

<u>Box Number, Record title, dates</u>	<u>Cubic Feet</u>
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Please see the attached documentation list

Total – 34 Boxes	42.84
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**RESOLUTION NO. R0037-20**

A Resolution of the City Council, of the City of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania declaring its intent to follow the schedules and procedures for the disposition of records as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual approved December 16, 2008 (as amended March 28, 2019)

Whereas, a Local Government Records Committee was created by Act 428 of 1968 and empowered thereby to make rules and regulations for records disposition; and

Whereas, the Municipal Records Manual was approved by said committee on December 16, 2008; and

Whereas, the City of Wilkes-Barre desires to dispose of records according to statutory requirements;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the City Council of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, that it intends to follow the schedules and procedures for disposition

of records as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual approved on December 16, 2008 (as amended March 28, 2019).

Office/Department: City Clerk's Office

Box Number, Record title, dates Cubic Feet

Please see the attached documentation list

Total - 25 Boxes 31.5

**RESOLUTION NO. R0038-20**

A Resolution of the City Council, of the City of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania declaring its intent to follow the schedules and procedures for the disposition of records as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual approved December 16, 2008 (as amended March 28, 2019).

Whereas, a Local Government Records Committee was created by Act 428 of 1968 and empowered thereby to make rules and regulations for records disposition; and

Whereas, the Municipal Records Manual was approved by said committee on December 16, 2008; and

Whereas, the City of Wilkes-Barre desires to dispose of records according to statutory requirements;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the City Council of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, that it intends to follow the schedules and procedures for disposition of records as set forth in the municipal Records Manual approved on December 16, 2008 (as amended March 28, 2019).

Office/Department: Office of Community Development

Box Number, Record title, dates Cubic Feet

Please see the attached documentation list

Total - 47 Boxes 59.22

**RESOLUTION NO. R0039-20**

A Resolution of the City Council, of the City of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania declaring its intent to follow the schedules and procedures for the disposition of records as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual approved December 16, 2008 (as amended March 28, 2019).

Whereas, a Local Government Records Committee was created by Act 428 of 1968 and empowered thereby to make rules and regulations for records disposition; and

Whereas, the Municipal Records Manual was approved by said committee on December 16, 2008; and

Whereas, the City of Wilkes-Barre desires to dispose of records according to statutory requirements;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the City Council of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, that it intends to follow the schedules and procedures for disposition of records as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual approved on December 16, 2008 (as amended March 28, 2019).

Office/Department: Controller's Office

Box Number, Record title, dates

Cubic Feet

Please see the attached documentation list

Total – 9 Boxes

**RESOLUTION NO. R0040-20**

A Resolution of the City Council, of the City of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania declaring its intent to follow the schedules and procedures for the disposition of records as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual approved December 16, 2008 (as amended March 28, 2019).

Whereas, a Local Government Records Committee was created by Act 428 of 1968 and empowered thereby to make rules and regulations for records disposition; and

Whereas, the Municipal Records Manual was approved by said committee on December 16, 2008;

Whereas, the City of Wilkes-Barre desires to dispose of records according to statutory requirements;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the City Council of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, that it intends to follow the schedules and procedures for disposition of records as set forth in the Municipal Records Manual approved on December 16, 2008 (as amended March 28, 2019).

Office/Department: Administration

Box Number, Record title, dates

Cubic Feet

Please see the attached documentation list

Total - 16 Boxes

20.16

**RESOLUTION NO. R0041-20**

Whereas, permission for restaurants to use city rights-of-way for outdoor seating purposes is a function of Wilkes-Barre City Council;

Whereas, it is anticipated that more eating establishments will be considering this option when the city moves from the "red" phase of the current pandemic to the "yellow" phase;

Whereas, City Council believes these types of requests need to be processed as quickly as possible for the benefit of local restaurants;

Whereas, accordingly, for a period of six (6) months from the date of this resolution, City Council believes it is appropriate for these types of requests to be processed by the Mayor's Office;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre that requests to use city rights-of-way for outdoor seating purposes for local restaurants shall be processed by the Mayor's Office through his appointed designee(s).

Be It Further Resolved that all requirements historically required for permission (e.g., Indemnity Agreements, Insurance, etc.) shall remain the same.

Mr. Marconi moved to adopt the Consent Agenda (Resolutions).

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.

## **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

John Suchoski, Wilkes-Barre, PA phoned in relative to having in-person meetings again, enforcing open container laws (people drinking by the River Commons area/police not writing tickets) and police parking in random spots.

### Administration/Council responses:

Mr. Barrett said that Council is looking forward to getting back to meetings in person as well. He said he is not sure if Council meetings will be back to normal for June. The Operations Department is working on some physical changes to Council Chambers.

Mr. Barrett asked the Mayor to speak to the Police Chief about the open container issue and have him address that with a little more enforcement along those line.

Jason Carr, Saylorsburg, PA phoned in relative to presenting Council with an application for a grant for a street sweeper, why should people move to Wilkes-Barre, pension fund ratio and what impact it will have on the budget, tax increases, sewer system (committed to not selling the sewer system to fund the pension and/or budget) and how will you make up the budget shortfalls at the end of the year.

### Administration/Council responses:

Mayor Brown told Mr. Carr that he has spoke with the city's grant writer and the Administration and have decided to start going after LSA Grants for the betterment of the city. The city will start applying for LSA grants for things that are required and needed to provide a clean and safe city. He told Mr. Carr if he has suggestions on where the city can get money for a streetsweeper he would be glad to listen to him.

Mr. Brooks said seventeen years ago when he came back home, he looked around and thought about how beautiful Wilkes-Barre, particularly downtown Wilkes-Barre was and still is today. He said he looks for absolutely wonderful historical architecture. He said downtown and our neighborhoods are almost like a senior citizens village in the making. Look at all the new apartments downtown, that have empty nesters, retired people or millennials moving in. The two things that both age groups are looking for is walkability. Wilkes-Barre is a wonderful walkable, affordable city.



Mr. Barrett added the abundant array of city services available to the residents that are unmatched anywhere else, such as our fire, police, DPW and Health Department.

Mrs. McBride said that she thinks Wilkes-Barre is a great place to raise a family in, but with that being said we still have a lot to work on. We need to focus on our problems in order to fix them. She thanked Mayor Brown for doing what other Administrations should have done with LSA Grants. The city has great potential, but we have to improve a lot in our neighborhoods. She hopes that Mayor Brown intends to focus on the neighborhoods as well as the downtown.

Mr. Ryan questioned whether Mr. Carr, in his scenario, was talking about private ownership, people coming into purchase homes or is he talking about more rental properties for Section 8 people.

Mayor Brown said no city is perfect, everybody has problems. A lot of the problems we have are common problems. We have crime, we have potholes, we have other things, but what we have in Wilkes-Barre is a city coming back. We have a city that is going to be reenergized. We are addressing the neighborhoods. We created an anti-graffiti task force and are remediating a lot of it in the neighborhoods. We have a committed Administration and our goal is to bring back Wilkes-Barre. He said Wilkes-Barre is going to be clean neighborhoods, clean parks, and places people can go and enjoy their free time with their kids.

Mayor Brown discussed the pension funds and the pension ratio. He said that when they had the Aggregated Pension Fund meeting a few months ago, it was in the mid 50% tile. That won't be reevaluated until 2021. We did lose money during the pandemic, but until they do a new analysis, we will not have a new percentage to say what our funding ratio is at. The Mayor pointed out that if the city goes below 50% it does not indicate that we will be taken over by the State and be an Act 47 City. The way that would work is if we miss our Minimum Obligation payments, and we have been making our payments.

The Mayor told Mr. Carr that whether it is a sale or a lease of the sewer system, his intention was never to take that windfall and pump it into the pension plans. That was the prior Administration. He said he is looking at keeping the rates as low as possible for the as long as possible. He said he has not made a decision and it has been put on the backburner right now.

Mayor Brown informed Mr. Carr that the Administration has been in contact with the Governor's Office relative to the city's budget shortfall. He said there was money given to the Governor to help out cities. He has spoken with the Governor's taskforce and let them know what the city's shortfalls may be. The Mayor said he thought originally it would be around 4 or 5 million, but with what's happened recently with the projects starting up

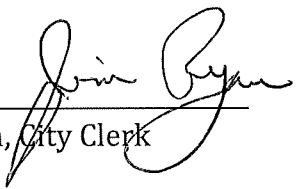
and the city getting the revenue sources that we were not counting on that number will be different. He said he hopes that the city will be getting some revenue reinforcement from the Governor to help us with the shortfalls that we are probably going to see.

Mayor Brown mentioned that the Administration is working with advisors and looking at ways to save some money through financial investments. It is an active ongoing situation to make sure the city is going to continue this drive even through the pandemic.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

  
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Bill Barrett, Chairperson

ATTEST:

  
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Jim Ryan, City Clerk