

CITY OF WILKES-BARRE
PENNSYLVANIA



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

CITY COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCES

MINUTES

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

ADJOURNMENT

CITY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

RESOLUTIONS

Authorizing the disposition of records from the Tax Office.

Authorizing the Mayor to accept and sign the Winter Services Agreement.

Authorizing the proper city officials to sign any and all necessary documents related to awarding the contract to the lowest responsible bidders for the Police Station Shower & Facility PPE Upgrade Project. (Payment to be made from OECD, CDBG-CV).

Authorizing the proper city officials to sign any and all necessary documents related to awarding the contract to the lowest responsible bidder for the McCarragher & Grove Streets Park Project. (Payment to be made from OECD).

Authorizing the proper city officials to sign any and all necessary documents related to awarding the contract to the lowest responsible bidder for the 2020 CDBG Various Street Paving Project Phase I & Phase 2.

Authorizing the proper city officials to enter into a thirty-nine (39) month agreement with 8X8 for VoIP phone service.

Authorizing the proper city officials to enter into a thirty-six (36) month agreement with Loop Internet, LLC for back-up internet.

Authorizing the proper city officials to submit a \$3 million (\$3,000,000) Multimodal Transportation Fund grant application funded by Commonwealth Financing Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be used for the Scott Street Streetscape Improvements Project.

Authorizing the proper city officials to submit a \$3 million (\$3,000,000) Multimodal Transportation Fund grant application funded by Commonwealth Financing Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be used for the Public Square Streetscape Improvements Project.

ORDINANCES

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 6 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, LUZERNE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, SETTING FORTH ITS INTENT TO ISSUE ONE OR MORE SERIES OF FEDERALLY TAXABLE AND/OR TAX EXEMPT GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE CITY IN AN AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED TWENTY-FOUR MILLION DOLLARS (\$24,000,000)(COLLECTIVELY THE “BONDS”) PURSUANT TO THE ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, PA.C.S. 53, CHAPTERS 80-82, AS AMENDED, KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT DEBT ACT. (SECOND AND FINAL READING)

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 7 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA AMENDING SECTION 19-209 OF CHAPTER 19 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE ENTITLED “OFFENSES, MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.” (SECOND AND FINAL READING)

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 8 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE FIRE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, AS ADOPTED BY THE FIRE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON OCTOBER 26, 1977 AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE ON NOVEMBER 23, 1977. (AGILITY TEST) (FIRST READING)

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 9 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 1 OF 1992, ENTITLED “AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING COUNCIL’S RULES AND PROCEDURES”, AS AMENDED. (MATTERS TO BE PLACED ON AGENDA) (FIRST READING).

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 10 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 1 OF 1992, ENTITLED “AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING COUNCIL’S RULES AND PROCEDURES”, AS AMENDED. (ORDER OF BUSINESS) (FIRST READING)

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 11 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL PREVIOUSLY ENACTED ON MAY 11, 2017, THAT AUTHORIZED THE ISSUANCE OF ITS GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS/AND OR NOTES OF THE CITY, IN THE AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$52,000,000, PURSUANT TO THE ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, KNOWN AS LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT DEBT ACT, ACT 43 P.A.C.S., CHAPTERS 80-82, AS AMENDED TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR AND TOWARD CERTAIN PROJECTS RECITED THEREIN; PROVIDING THAT SAID ORDINANCE BE AMENDED TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROCEEDS OF THE BONDS SHALL BE USED TOWARD ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS OF THE CITY THAT CONSIST OF (1) PLANNING, DESIGNING, ACQUIRING, CONSTRUCTING, INSTALLING, FURNISHING AND EQUIPPING OF ALTERATIONS, RENOVATIONS, ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE FACILITIES OF THE CITY, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO AN ELEVATOR

ORDINANCES (CONTINUED)

REPLACEMENT PROJECT AT CITY HALL AND ROAD REPAIR AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN THE CITY, (2) PURCHASING CAPITAL EQUIPMENT FOR USE IN OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE FACILITIES OF THE CITY, AND (3) ADDITIONAL CAPITAL PROJECTS OF THE CITY TO THE EXTENT APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY; AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING SPECIFIED OFFICERS OF THE CITY TO DO, TAKE AND PERFORM CERTAIN NECESSARY AND/OR APPROPRIATE ACTS AND THINGS RELATING TO SUCH AMENDED ORDINANCE; PROVIDING THAT THE REMAINDER OF SAID ORDINANCE SHALL REMAIN IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT; AND PROVIDING WHEN THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE IN EFFECT. (FIRST READING)

MINUTES

Of the Zoning Hearing Board of July 22, 2020.

Of the Regular Session of City Council of August 13, 2020.

CITY COUNCIL

September 10, 2020

The City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre met in Regular Session on September 10, 2020, at 6:25 p.m. (immediately following the Work Session), at the Innovation Center, 7 S. Main Street, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania for the purpose of general business. (The meeting was conducted and streamed on YouTube for public viewing due to COVID-19 and issues with the City Hall elevator.)

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
Joe Coffay, Police Chief
Maureen Collins, Deputy City Attorney
Frank Hershberger, IT Director
Brett Kittrick, Finance Director
Charles McCormick, City Administrator
Cathy Payne, Assistant City Clerk
Jim Ryan, City Clerk
Lisa Sanfilippo, Administrative Assistant

The City Clerk asked if there was anyone wishing to address Council on pending legislation.

Sam Troy, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to File of Council No. 11 of 2020 (bond issue), No. 6 of 2020 (bond issue) and the Resolution regarding the streetscape project on Scott Street.

Mayor Brown explained that part of Scott Street is owned by the State and part is owned by the city. PennDOT has notified the City that they are going to come in and totally redo their section of Scott Street. The three million the city is applying for is to do the city's section of Scott Street.

Mayor Brown told Mr. Troy that the bond issues are existing loans. They are loans that were taken out during the prior Administration. He explained that because of the COVID virus, interest rates have dropped dramatically. The city is not doing anything other than (with the 24 million) then rewriting the interest rate from 4% to 2 %. The city will see a roughly \$770,000 savings. The Mayor stressed that it is not new debt and the time of maturity will not change. Mayor Brown added that the \$52 million bond issue is also not a new loan.

Brian Koscelansky, Stevens and Lee, appeared before Council to explain the bond issues. He said the \$52,000,000 Ordinance approved budget refunding of existing debt along with the Solomon Creek Project. That was the only new money project that was authorized. All tonight's Ordinance is doing is amending that provision to allow those proceeds to be used for additional projects. He said it is not a new borrow, it is just substituting that project definition. This is the way the state requires it be done. There needs to be a preadoption ad before the second and final reading of the Ordinance. The Ordinance will be adopted amending that and a second ad goes in the paper when we file it with the state.

John Suchoski, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to the Resolutions regarding the park on McCarragher and Grove Streets, Loop Internet (backup internet), the streetscape projects and the \$52 million bond issue Ordinance.

Brian Koscelansky, Stevens and Lee told Mr. Suchoski that the Commonwealth Finance Authority issues their own bonds to fund projects, such as the streetscape projects.

Frank Hershberger, IT Director, appeared before Council relative to the backup internet provider. Mr. Hershberger explained that the backup internet issue is that Loop Internet is a fairly new internet company. They have only been building infrastructure in the city over the past five years or so. The current provider the city has now is well established and has good infrastructure.

City Council took the following phone calls on pending legislation:

Jason Carr, Saylorsburg, PA phoned in relative to File of Council No. 11 of 2020 and the cost of the Solomon Creek Wall.

Mr. Kittrick explained that the remaining funds from the Solomon Creek Project is an estimate of \$1 million dollars. The City won't know how much is left until the project is complete.

Mr. Kittrick said that two of the grants were disaster recovery grants, directly tied to the storms from 2011 and the city needed to be able to substantiate the expenditures and prove that they were directly tied to the storms. The city only had a little over a million dollars in such expenditures, so the rest of the money was not returned, it was just retained by the state.

Mr. Barrett told Mr. Carr that subsequent to the last meeting, Mr. Kittrick and his staff did provide a breakdown of the Solomon Creek Project to Council's satisfaction.

Mrs. McBride asked if the city knows that they will have \$24 million left over from the Solomon Creek Project.

Mr. Kittrick explained that the \$24 million is a not to exceed amount that will issue debt, it will end up being less than that most likely. The city will borrow at a lower rate and pay off the existing debt. That's where the savings will come from. The Solomon Creek Project is tied to the \$52 million issue that was done in 2017. The majority of that \$52 million with the exception of the \$4.4 million in net proceeds that we got for Solomon's Creek was for a refinancing and the remaining \$4.4. is what we have for the project. The city does not anticipate spending all of it, so that's where the additional money for projects will come from.

Mrs. McBride asked when the Administration will know if there is any money left over to use for capital projects.

Mr. McCormick said it is the Administrations' understanding that there is a small piece of the project left, involving the placement of the pumps, which was delayed because the manufacturer couldn't get them out. The Administration anticipates the project being finished in approximately 4 - 6 weeks; however, then you have to double check the numbers. This is all assuming that there are no problems, or overruns.

Mrs. McBride asked if Council is voting on this Ordinance now because the elevator needs to be fixed instead of waiting until the project is complete to see exactly how much is left.

Mr. Koscelansky explained that we wanted to start the process because it does take a little while. There's first reading, then we have to advertise it, the second reading, another ad and then it goes down to the state. So, this process with multiple readings and the ads and the filing is going to take a month, so we wanted to make sure that we started that process.

Mr. Koscelansky said the way that Ordinance was originally drafted it just provided for the Solomon Creek Project. Many times it will say other projects, as it does in this Ordinance. This was just limited to Solomon Creek, so we are just expanding that. If there are funds available, the city can do other projects.

Mrs. McBride asked if Council will need to vote on any other project that comes out of this money.

Mr. Koscelansky said it will be the same process that is always used for the expenditure of funds.

Mr. McCormick said it would be a contract, so Council would have to vote on it.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. R0070-20 to R0078-20 appeared on the Consent Agenda (Resolutions):

RESOLUTION NO. R0070-20

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: Tax Office

Box Number, Record title, dates

Cubic Feet

#1 – 2012 Permits

#2 – 2012 Permits

#3 – 2012 Permits

2012 Permits/Violations

2012 Permits/1994 Violations

2012-2014 Permits

2014 Permits

2017 – Business Licenses

8 Total boxes

10.08

RESOLUTION NO. R0071-20

Be It Resolved, by authority of Wilkes-Barre City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, and it is hereby resolved by authority of the same, that the Mayor of said Municipality is authorized and directed to accept and sign the attached 2020-2021 Winter Services Agreement and Exhibits on its behalf. (Contract #3900038250, Year 4 of 5)

RESOLUTION NO. R0072-20

Whereas, the City of Wilkes-Barre will advertise for bid each specific trade for the project called the Police Station Shower & Facility PPE Upgrade (to prevent the spread of COVID-19) (the "Project");

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre that the proper City officials are hereby authorized to sign any and all necessary documents related to awarding the contract to the lowest responsible bidders from the Project.

Payment to be made from OECD, CDBG-CV.

RESOLUTION NO. R0073-20

Whereas, the City of Wilkes-Barre advertised for bids for a Park project called McCarragher & Grove Streets Park Project, (project coincides with the 2018 street paving and neighborhood park project) (the "Project").

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre that the proper City officials are hereby authorized to sign any and all necessary documents related to awarding the contract to the lowest responsible bidder for the Project.

Payment to be made from OECD.

RESOLUTION NO. R0074-20

Whereas, the City of Wilkes-Barre will advertise for bids for a paving project called the 2020 Various Street Paving Project Phase II (the "Project");

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre that the proper City officials are hereby authorized to sign any and all necessary documents related to awarding the contract to the lowest responsible bidder for the Project.

RESOLUTION NO. R0075-20

That, the proper city officials are hereby authorized to enter a thirty-nine (39) month agreement with 8 x 8 for VoIP phone service.

RESOLUTION NO. R0076-20

That, the proper city officials are hereby authorized to enter a thirty-six (36) month agreement with Loop Internet, LLC for back-up internet service.

RESOLUTION NO. R0077-20

Be It Resolved, that the City of Wilkes-Barre of Luzerne County hereby requests a Multimodal Transportation Fund grant of \$3,000,000.00 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the Scott Street Streetscape Improvements Project.

Be It Further Resolved, that the Applicant does hereby designate George C. Brown, Mayor and Darren Snyder, City Controller, as the officials to execute all documents and agreements between the City of Wilkes-Barre and the Commonwealth Financing Authority to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested grant along with any or all project documents if the application is approved.

Now, Therefore Be It Further Resolved by the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre to authorize the appropriate city officials to submit a \$3,000,000 Multimodal Transportation Fund grant application funded by Commonwealth Financing Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be used for the Scott Street Streetscape Improvement Project.

I, Jim Ryan, duly qualified City Clerk of the City of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, PA, hereby certify that the forgoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution duly adopted by a majority vote of the Wilkes-Barre City Council at a regular meeting held September 10, 2020 and said Resolution has been recorded in the Minutes of the City of Wilkes-Barre and remains in effect as of this date.

RESOLUTION NO. R0078-20

Be It Resolved, that the City of Wilkes-Barre of Luzerne County hereby requests a Multimodal Transportation Fund grant of \$3,000,000.00 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the Public Square Street Streetscape Improvements Project.

Be It Further Resolved, that the Applicant does hereby designate George C. Brown, Mayor and Darren Snyder, City Controller, as the officials to execute all documents and agreements between the City of Wilkes-Barre and the Commonwealth Financing Authority to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested grant along with any or all project documents if the application is approved.

Now, Therefore Be It Further Resolved by the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre to authorize the appropriate city officials to submit a \$3,000,000 Multimodal Transportation Fund grant application funded by Commonwealth Financing Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be used for the Public Square Street Streetscape Improvement Project.

I, Jim Ryan, duly qualified City Clerk of the City of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, PA, hereby certify that the forgoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution duly adopted by a majority vote of the Wilkes-Barre City Council at a regular meeting held September 10, 2020 and said Resolution has been recorded in the Minutes of the City of Wilkes-Barre and remains in effect as of this date.

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

The motion was seconded by Mr. Belusko and adopted by the following yeas and nays vote:

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

Nays none.

ORDINANCES

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

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 6 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, LUZERNE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, SETTING FORTH ITS INTENT TO ISSUE ONE OR MORE SERIES OF FEDERALLY TAXABLE AND/OR TAX EXEMPT GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE CITY IN AN AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED TWENTY-FOUR MILLION DOLLARS (\$24,000,000)(COLLECTIVELY THE “BONDS”) PURSUANT TO THE ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, PA.C.S. 53, (CHAPTERS 80-82, AS AMENDED, KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT DEBT ACT. (SECOND AND FINAL READING)

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 7 OF 2020 -AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING SECTION 19-209 OF CHAPTER 19 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, ENTITLED “OFFENSES, MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.” (SECOND AND FINAL READING)

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 8 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE FIRE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, AS ADOPTED BY THE FIRE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON OCTOBER 26, 1977 AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE ON NOVEMBER 23, 1977. (AGILITY TEST) (FIRST READING)

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 9 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 1 OF 1992, ENTITLED “AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING COUNCIL’S RULES AND PROCEDURES”, AS AMENDED. (MATTERS TO BE PLACED ON AGENDA) (FIRST READING)

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 10 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE AMENDING FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 1 OF 1992, ENTITLED “AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING COUNCIL’S RULES AND PROCEDURES”, AS AMENDED. (ORDER OF BUSINESS) (FIRST READING)

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Mr. Barrett moved to adopt the Consent Agenda (Ordinances).

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.

MINUTES

Of the Zoning Hearing Board of July 22, 2020.

Of the Regular Session of City Council of August 13, 2020.

Mr. Belusko moved to adopt the minutes.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Barrett 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.

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr. Belusko thanked the City Clerk's Office, Lisa Sanfilippo and Frank Hershberger for getting the City Council meeting together.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Mr. Ryan read the following emails:

From Jane Rinkevich, Hanover Township, PA:

I am writing to voice my support for the Historic Preservation Ordinance to be proposed as an addition to the City of Wilkes-Barre Zoning Ordinance at the September 10 City Council meeting and planned for a final vote at the October 8 session.

More than 2,300 communities in the United States with active historic preservation ordinances have recognized that existing building contribute to the texture, integrity, and economic vibrance of their regions. Yet Wilkes-Barre is one of the only cities of its size in Pennsylvania that still does not provide local protections for its historic structures. How many irreplaceable buildings could have been saved in the past two decades? Or even, as the case of Frank Clark Jewelers, in the past two months? Instead, rare and uncommon treasures in our community are torn down for surface parking or allowed to decay beyond repair. I ask you to remember that our Historic Preservation Ordinance will protect not only historic structures, but also adjacent homes and businesses against the devaluing effects of proper deterioration.

We are told that historic preservation impedes development. But what thriving communities across this country have long since recognized is that architectural heritage is not only a cultural asset, but also an economic one. Through contemporary developmental strategies such as adaptive reuse, the best way to build our future is often to preserve our past.

From M. Parks, Wilkes-Barre, PA:

I am writing to voice my support for the Historic Preservation Ordinance to be proposed as an addition to the City of Wilkes-Barre Zoning Ordinance at the September 10 City Council meeting and planned for a final vote at the October 8 session.

More than 2,300 communities in the United States with active historic preservation ordinances have recognized that existing building contribute to the texture, integrity, and economic vibrance of their regions. Yet Wilkes-Barre is one of the only cities of its size in

Pennsylvania that still does not provide local protections for its historic structures. How many irreplaceable buildings could have been saved in the past two decades? Or even, as the case of Frank Clark Jewelers, in the past two months? Instead, rare and uncommon treasures in our community are torn down for surface parking or allowed to decay beyond repair. I ask you to remember that our Historic Preservation Ordinance will protect not only historic structures, but also adjacent homes and businesses against the devaluing effects of proper deterioration.

We are told that historic preservation impedes development. But what thriving communities across this country have long since recognized is that architectural heritage is not only a cultural asset, but also an economic one. Through contemporary developmental strategies such as adaptive reuse, the best way to build our future is often to preserve our past.

From Patricia Parks, Wilkes-Barre, PA:

I am writing to voice my support for the Historic Preservation Ordinance to be proposed as an addition to the City of Wilkes-Barre Zoning Ordinance at the September 10 City Council meeting and planned for a final vote at the October 8 session.

More than 2,300 communities in the United States with active historic preservation ordinances have recognized that existing building contribute to the texture, integrity, and economic vibrance of their regions. Yet Wilkes-Barre is one of the only cities of its size in Pennsylvania that still does not provide local protections for its historic structures. How many irreplaceable buildings could have been saved in the past two decades? Or even, as the case of Frank Clark Jewelers, in the past two months? Instead, rare and uncommon treasures in our community are torn down for surface parking or allowed to decay beyond repair. I ask you to remember that our Historic Preservation Ordinance will protect not only historic structures, but also adjacent homes and businesses against the devaluing effects of proper deterioration.

We are told that historic preservation impedes development. But what thriving communities across this country have long since recognized is that architectural heritage is not only a cultural asset, but also an economic one. Through contemporary developmental strategies such as adaptive reuse, the best way to build our future is often to preserve our past.

Mr. Brooks said that he will be introducing the Ordinance on October 8, 2020. He said he wants to sit down with the Mayor and Mr. Harris to discuss it first.

From Joe Ferdinand, Wilkes-Barre, PA:

I am writing in support of Mayor Brown's Citizen Advisory Committee rather than the Civilian Review Board that was proposed.

It is irresponsible for our local government to support the investigation of a police officer's actions when that review is led by a politically motivated group. We have a court system in place to address criminal activity on the part of a police officer.

A police officer's job is to "protect and serve." This is difficult enough without the added concern of how his/her actions may be immediately perceived, sensationalized or used in order to advance a political agenda.

Mayor Brown's Citizen Advisory Committee is a proactive approach to address a sensitive and complicated issue without being divisive.

I do not support the Citizens Review Board and believe that Mayor Brown is doing the right thing for all parties involved.

From Bridget Ferdinand, Wilkes-Barre, PA:

I am writing in support of Mayor Brown's Citizen Advisory Committee versus the Civilian Review Board that was voted down, but still seems to be an issue.

I believe the Advisory Committee would further improve and enhance the community relations with our police department which already does a tremendous job of being involved in the community with their programs and community policing.

Our police department is very responsive to the community and does not need an untrained special interest group interfering with processes that are already in place. Why fix something that isn't broken?

A Civilian Review Board as proposed would only service to inhibit how they protect and serve the community.

Our Police Department under the leadership of Mayor Brown and Chief Coffay does a great job, I see no reason to change processes that already work. It is a waste of time and resources better spent somewhere else.

City Council heard from the following people in attendance (general discussion):

Jacob Morris, Marshall's Creek, PA appeared before Council relative to flu shots and renaming the Christopher Columbus statue on Public Square after Amerigo Vespucci.

Mrs. McBride thanked Mr. Morris for coming to Council to speak on both issues. She said she has been vocally opposed to the Christopher Columbus statue; she said she doesn't believe it belongs on Public Square. She thanked Mr. Morris for his research on the subject and presenting Council with an alternative.

Amanda Zellner, Volunteers of America, appeared before Council to thank the city Health Department, Office of Community Development and Officer Boyle and to give agency updates.

Mr. Brooks asked where the 20 new jobs will be.

Ms. Zellner said that will be throughout the community, but VOA's headquarters is on North River Street, Wilkes-Barre.

John Suchoski, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to historic preservation and to support the Civilian Review Board (Civilians not familiar with police procedures judging police officers).

Mrs. McBride told Mr. Suchoski that there is a section in the Ordinance for the Civilian Review Board that provides a guideline for extensive training for anyone who would be appointed to the board.

City Council took the following phone calls (general discussion):

Ayisha Pearson, Nanticoke, PA, phoned in relative to the Citizens Review Board.

Jason Carr, Saylorsburg, PA, phoned in relative to the proposed cellphone tower on Caitlin Avenue, \$4.5 million deficit, police pensions, City Council's compensation (3rd highest), changes that were made by Ordinance (today) relative to Council procedures, and to support the Civilian Review Board.

Mr. Barrett explained that the changes to Council procedures were just general housekeeping procedures, relative to getting items on the agenda in a timely manner.

Mr. Barrett said that Council has addressed City Council's compensation with Mr. Carr previously. Mr. Barrett said he does not take any of the benefits, but it is Council's prerogative. He mentioned that Council is one year into this term, he said he doesn't see anything changing until, the earliest, the next term of Council.

Mr. Barrett said that the Police benefits are part of the Pension Reform Package, which is being looked at by the State Legislature. He said he agrees that the overtime, and other benefits should not be used in calculations for pensions. The State Legislature is looking at making it a statewide change, so that those monies are not included in pension determinations.

Mr. Ryan told Mr. Carr that there are no changes to Council meeting procedures. The Ordinances just formalize what has been past practice for many years.

Mayor Brown said that he is not in favor of the cellphone tower on Caitlin Avenue and he does not support it.

Mayor Brown responded to Mr. Carr's questions about the deficit. He said the refinancing of the bonds saves the city over a \$700,000. He said they are expecting additional permit fees to be collected for this year. The \$4/\$4.4 million-dollar deficit is hypothetical. Mayor Brown said the Administration continues to look at ways to get more revenue and cut expenses.

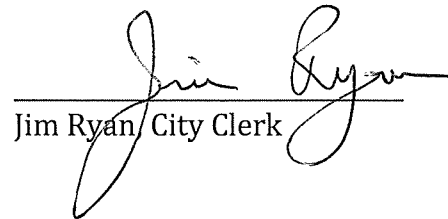
Sophie Goodfellow, Luzerne County, phoned in relative to the Citizens Police Review Board.

Omar, Wilkes-Barre, PA, phoned in relative to the Citizens Police Review Board.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.


Bill Barrett, Chairperson

ATTEST:


Jim Ryan, City Clerk

