

CITY OF WILKES-BARRE
PENNSYLVANIA



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

CITY COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 21, 2023

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

RESOLUTIONS

MINUTES

ORDINANCES

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

ADJOURNMENT

CITY COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 21, 2023

RESOLUTIONS

Authorizing the proper city officials to sign any and all necessary documents related to the transfer of the following three (3) parcels of land, known collectively as 38-46 Carey Avenue, to the Wyoming Valley Habitat for Humanity (or its named designee) for One Dollar (\$1.00): 73-H9SE4-022-013, 73-H9SE4-022-014, 73-H9SE4-022-015.

Authorizing the proper city officials to submit a \$500,000.00 Statewide Local Share Assessment grant application funded by Commonwealth Financing Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be used for the Hazel Street Retaining Wall Repair Project.

Authorizing the proper city officials to submit a \$500,000 Statewide Local Share Assessment grant application funded by Commonwealth Financing Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be used for equipment purchases for the King's College Occupational Therapy Program.

MINUTES

Of the Public Hearing on the 2024 proposed General Fund Budget of November 9, 2023.

Of the Regular Session of City Council of November 9, 2023.

Of the Wilkes-Barre City Planning Commission of October 25, 2023.

ORDINANCE

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 4 OF 2023 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTING THE MAYOR'S PROPOSED GENERAL FUND BUDGET. (SECOND AND FINAL READING)

CITY COUNCIL

November 21, 2023

The City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre met in Regular Session on November 21, 2023, at 5:52 (immediately following the Work Session), in City Council Chambers, City Hall, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, for the purpose of general business.

The meeting was organized with Chairperson Mike Belusko in the Chair.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was given.

Council member Bill Barrett read the opening prayer.

Roll Call:

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

Also Present:

George C. Brown, Mayor
Maureen Collins, Assistant City Attorney
Charles McCormick, City Administrator
Cathy Payne, City Clerk
Lisa Sanfilippo, Administrative Assistant
Tracy Smith, Assistant City Clerk
Brian Swetz, Finance Officer

City Clerk Cathy Payne read a statement relative to Council's rules and procedures.

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

Angel Mathis, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to the Wyoming Valley Habitat for Humanity Resolution, the King's College LSA grant application and the LSA Grant application for the Hazle Street Wall.

Bob Kadluboski, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to the King's College LSA grant application and the 2024 General Fund Budget (Council's healthcare).

Sam Troy, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to the 2024 General Fund Budget (raises and revenues), and the King's College LSA grant application.

John Suchoski, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to City Council's healthcare, the Hazle Street Retaining Wall Repair Project and the King's College LSA grant application.

Mayor Brown explained that a \$250,000 LSA grant was secured last year for the Hazle Street Wall; if this LSA grant application is approved that will take the total to \$750,000 for repairs. The city has engineering studies being done to see which areas should be done first.

Mr. Barrett stated that the colleges have hundreds of people working at their institutions and thousands of students that live here and support businesses in Wilkes-Barre. The colleges are anchors downtown and they aren't going anywhere. The city needs to support them and if they have the opportunity to apply for some funding to assist them with the new program, he agrees with it.

Mr. Belusko agreed with Mr. Barrett and added that he wants to see the money come into the City of Wilkes-Barre.

Ms. Gilbert said that historically she always votes against LSA grant applications from local colleges. She said the reason she is against them is that she knows how much she paid in tuition, and she knows how much some of the administrative position earn. She said the fact that they can call themselves a non-profit has always bothered her. Ms. Gilbert said that it does not mean that she doesn't think the program is worthwhile, but her gut tells her that the program will come to fruition with or without the LSA funding. She applauded the mayor for bringing more focus on city issues, because she has been advocating for them for years.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. R0077-23

Resolved, that the proper city officials are hereby authorized to sign any and all necessary documents related to the transfer of the following three (3) parcels of land, known collectively as 38-46 Carey Avenue, to the Wyoming Valley Habitat for Humanity (or its named designee) for One Dollar (\$1.00):

1. 73-H9SE4-022-013;

2. 73-H9SE4-022-014; and
3. 73-H9SE4-022-015

Mr. Belusko moved to adopt the above Resolution.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Gilbert and adopted by the following yea and nay vote:

Yeas Brooks, Gilbert, Barrett, and Belusko (Chairperson) - 4 - being a majority of the members elected to City Council.

Nays none.

Absent - Marconi - 1.

RESOLUTION NO. R0078-23

Be It Resolved, that the City of Wilkes-Barre of Luzerne County hereby requests a Statewide Local Share Assessment grant of \$500,000.00 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the Hazle Street Retaining Wall Repair 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 \$500,000.00 Statewide Local Share Assessment grant application funded by Commonwealth Financing Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be used for the Hazle Street Retaining Wall Repair Project.

I, Cathy Payne, 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 November 21, 2023, 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 above Resolution.

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

Yeas Brooks, Gilbert, Barrett, and Belusko (Chairperson) - 4 - being a majority of the members elected to City Council.

Nays none.

Absent - Marconi - 1.

RESOLUTION NO. R0079-23

Be It Resolved, that the City of Wilkes-Barre of Luzerne County hereby request a Statewide Local Share Assessment grant of \$250,000.00 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for equipment purchases for the King's College Occupational Therapy Program.

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 \$250,000.00 Statewide Local Share Assessment grant application funded by Commonwealth Financing Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be used for equipment purchases for the King's College Occupational Therapy Program

I, Cathy Payne, 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 November 21, 2023, and said Resolution has been recorded in the Minutes of the City of Wilkes-Barre and remains in effect as of this date.

In Witness Hereof, I affix my hand and attached the seal of the City of Wilkes-Barre, this 21st day of November 2023.

Mr. Belusko moved to adopt the above Resolution.

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

Yeas Brooks, Barrett, and Belusko (Chairperson) - 3 - being a majority of the members elected to City Council.

Nays - Gilbert - 1.

Absent - Marconi - 1.

MINUTES

Of the Public Hearing on the 2023 proposed General Fund Budget of November 9, 2023.

Of the Regular Session of City Council of November 9, 2023.

Of the Wilkes-Barre City Planning Commission of October 25, 2023.

Mr. Brooks moved to adopt the Minutes.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Gilbert and adopted by the following yeas and nays vote:

Yeas Brooks, Gilbert, Barrett, and Belusko (Chairperson) – 4 – being a majority of the members elected to City Council.

Nays none.

Absent – Marconi – 1.

ORDINANCE

FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 4 OF 2023 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA ADOPTING THE MAYOR’S PROPOSED GENERAL FUND BUDGET. (SECOND AND FINAL READING)

Mr. Belusko moved to adopt the Ordinance.

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

Yeas Brooks, Gilbert, Barrett, and Belusko (Chairperson) – 4 – being a majority of the members elected to City Council.

Nays none.

Absent – Marconi – 1.

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr. Belusko wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Sam Troy, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to the salary increases in the 2024 budget, Finance Officer’s salary, ARP money to balance the budget, energy audit.

litter, the former Barnes & Nobles, the former Coughlin High School, a plastic bag ordinance and the Coal Street ice rink (bid for equipment).

Mayor Brown explained that the city used the Salary Data Survey to determine Finance Officer Brian Swetz salary.

Bob Kadluboski, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to the Finance Officer's salary, King's College LSA grant application, Council's healthcare, the City Clerk's salary, the Mines lawsuit (Tom Greco) and elected officials' pensions.

John Suchoski, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to the Times Leader Building, King's College LSA grant application, and blighted properties.

Mayor Brown said that the city put together a blight property report the first year he was mayor and the Administration has been working through that report at addressing properties. The city has also become a member of the South Valley Landbank. The Administration looks at properties that could be rehabilitated through this landbank. Mayor Brown added that twenty-four properties have been demolished in the four years he has been mayor.

Angel Mathis, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to using eminent domain for parking spaces or community gardens, parking on South Franklin Street, affordable housing and rent control.

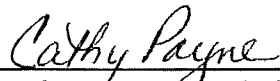
Eugene Francis Wallace, Wilkes-Barre, PA appeared before Council relative to the need for more trash cans in the city and federal infrastructure money.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.



Mike Belusko, Chairperson

ATTEST:



Cathy Payne, City Clerk