

CITY OF WILKES-BARRE  
PENNSYLVANIA



# CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

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CITY COUNCIL

APRIL 16, 2020

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

RESOLUTIONS

MINUTES

ORDINANCES

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

CITY COUNCIL  
APRIL 16, 2020

**RESOLUTIONS**

Reappointing Bob Hogan to the General Municipal Authority.

Supporting and adopting resolutions and letters from the Pennsylvania Municipal League and National League of Cities in support of State and Federal Action to support local government during and after the COVID-19 crisis.

Reappointing Christine Jensen to the Housing Authority.

Extending the State of Emergency in the City of Wilkes-Barre for sixty (60) days from the date of this Resolution or until the same is formally lifted by Executive Order of the Mayor.

Designating Mayor George C. Brown and City Controller Darren Snyder as authorized signatories for all contracts and/or grants with the Pennsylvania Department of Health. City Clerk Jim Ryan is authorized to Attest to the above-referenced signatories.

Designating Mayor George C. Brown and City Controller Darren Snyder as authorized signatories for state funded city projects. City Clerk Jim Ryan is authorized to Attest to the above-referenced signatories.

**MINUTES**

Of Zoning Hearing Board of February 19, 2020.

Of the Special Session of City Council of March 20, 2020.

Of the Regular Session of City Council of March 12, 2020.

CITY COUNCIL  
APRIL 16, 2020

**ORDINANCES**

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 13 OF 2019** – AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED “AN ORDINANCE VACATING PORTIONS OF EAST ROSS STREET AND SOUTH PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE IN THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE.” (SECOND AND FINAL READING)

**FILE OF COUNCIL 4 OF 2020** – AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, COUNTY OF LUZENRE, AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING THE 2020 ACTION PLAN ENCOMPASSING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM, COVID-19 CDBG GRANT AND HOME PROGRAM BUDGETS FOR PROGRAM YEAR FORTY-SIX AND APPROPRIATING SPECIFIC SUMS ESTIMATED TO BE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.” (FIRST READING)



CITY COUNCIL

April 16, 2020

The City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre met in Regular Session on April 16, 2020 at 4:19 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  
Butch Frati, Director of Operations/Deputy Administrator  
Tim Henry, City Attorney  
Frank Hershberger, IT Director  
Charles McCormick, City Administrator  
Cathy Payne, Assistant City Clerk  
Hank Radulski, Director of Health Services  
Lisa Sanfilippo, Administrative Assistant  
Darren Snyder, City Controller  
Jim Ryan, City Clerk  
Joyce Zaykowski, Director of OCD

The City Clerk read the following comments (submitted by email) on pending legislation:

***From Charlie Majikes, Chairman, Wilkes-Barre General Municipal Authority:***

*I'm writing this letter to Wilkes-Barre Mayor George Brown and Wilkes-Barre City Council members with regard to the reappointment of Robert Hogan to the Wilkes-Barre Municipal Authority.*

*Mr. Hogan has been such an asset to the Authority over the past few years. His business sense and guidance has allowed the Authority to continue on the road to success. We have hit a lot of roadblocks over the past few years and with Mr. Hogan and the existing board members experience we hope to continue to bring the golf course back to one of the premier courses around.*

*I have known Mr. Hogan personally for 25 years and can tell you that he is a good man who would go out of his way to help anyone in need. He has been responsible for numerous fundraising events involving the children and adults in need in our city. I would also like to say that he has been a true friend to me and this community.*

*I congratulate you on your approval to reappoint Bob to the board.*

**From Robert Hogan, Wilkes-Barre, PA:**

*I would like to thank Mayor Brown for recommending me to Council for reappointment. I have served as Vice-Chairman of this Municipal Authority for the last four years. I have been truly honored and grateful for this opportunity to continue being a part of this great organization. This appointment is beyond important to me, as I have spent my life in Wilkes-Barre, have always been an avid golfer, and care about the people of this city; with all of your support I would love to continue offering my services and guidance alongside these other board members. Together, we can continue to build on the Wilkes-Barre Municipal Golf Course to bring it back to where it once was.*

**Sam Troy, Wilkes-Barre, PA:**

*I would like to know if the half million dollars that is earmarked for private businesses cannot also be distributed to private citizens to compensate for the loss of work and jobs because of the coronavirus?*

Mrs. Zaykowski responded that the Community Development Block Grant budget for COVID-19 cannot be used for private citizens at this time.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **RESOLUTION NO. R0025-20**

Whereas, Article V, Section 5:08 of the City's Home Rule Charter provides that the Mayor shall appoint, with the advice and consent of City Council, members to Boards and Authorities:

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre hereby accepts the recommendation of Mayor George C. Brown for the following appointments/reappointments:

**General Municipal Authority**

**Term Expiration**

Reappointment  
Bob Hogan  
307 Academy Street  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

December 2024

Mr. Belusko moved to adopt the Resolution.

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

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

Nays - McBride – 1.

**RESOLUTION NO. R0026-20**

Whereas, the Pennsylvania Municipal League (PML) adopted a Resolution on April 2, 2020 in support of State Action to support Local Government during and after the COVID-19 crisis, and;

Whereas, the Resolution was sent to the Governor and all members of the General Assembly, and;

Whereas, the National League of Cities adopted on April 8, 2020 a Resolution to send a letter on behalf of the National League of Cities (NLC) and the 19,000 cities, towns and villages they represent, to President Trump and Congress to urgently request support for additional funding for governments; Municipalities from across the country are concerned about receiving the fiscal relief needed given their falling revenues and the unbudgeted spending necessary to enact extraordinary measures to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre hereby supports and adopts both the PML and NLC Resolutions and letters.

Mr. Barrett moved to adopt the Resolution.

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.

**RESOLUTION NO. R0027-20**

Whereas, Section 5:08 of the City Charter of the City of Wilkes-Barre authorizes the Mayor, with the advice and consent of City Council, to appoint by members of Boards, Commissions and Authorities served by the City;

Whereas, it is the desire of the City of Wilkes-Barre to re-appoint the person referenced below to the Housing Authority of the City of Wilkes-Barre;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the following person is hereby reappointed as a member of the Housing Authority;

Name:	Term Expires:
Christine Jensen 161 Reliance Drive Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702	September 20, 2025

Mr. Marconi moved to adopt the Resolution.

The motion was seconded by Mrs. McBride 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.

**RESOLUTION NO. R0028-20**

A Resolution Extending the State of Emergency in the City of Wilkes-Barre.



Whereas, on March 16, 2020, Mayor George C. Brown issued an Executive Order and Proclamation of State of Emergency in the City of Wilkes-Barre to mitigate the spread of COVID-19;

Whereas, 11 Pa.C.S.A. Sect. 11203 (e) (1) provides that a “state of emergency shall not exceed five (5) days, unless extended by council.”;

Whereas, on March 20, 2020, the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre extended the State of Emergency in the City of Wilkes-Barre for thirty (30) days;

Whereas, the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre believes a second extension of the Executive Order and Proclamation of State of Emergency issued by Mayor Brown is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of city residents, visitors, and people who are employed in the city.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre that the above-referenced *STATE OF EMERGENCY* is hereby extended for a period of sixty (60) days from the date of the Resolution or until the same is formally lifted by Executive Order of the Mayor.

Mr. Barrett moved to adopt the Resolution.

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.

**RESOLUTION NO. R0029-20**

Resolved, that the following Wilkes-Barre City officials are hereby designated as authorized signatories for all contracts and/or grants with the Pennsylvania Department of Health:

1. Mayor George C. Brown, and
2. Darren Snyder, City Controller

Be It Further Resolved that City Clerk Jim Ryan is authorized to Attest to the above-referenced signatories.

Mr. Marconi moved to adopt the Resolution.

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.

**RESOLUTION NO. R0030-20**

Resolved, that the following Wilkes-Barre City officials are hereby designated as authorized signatories for state funded City projects.

1. Mayor George C. Brown and
2. Darren Snyder, City Controller

Be It Further Resolved that City Clerk Jim Ryan is authorized to Attest to the above-referenced signatories.

Mr. Belusko moved to adopt the Resolution.

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.

**RESOLUTION NO. R0031-20**

A Resolution Extending the State of Emergency in the City of Wilkes-Barre

Whereas, on April 13, 2020, Mayor George C. Brown issued an Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency in the City of Wilkes-Barre related to an unnamed weather event (the “storm”) which took place on that date;

Whereas, 11 Pa.C.S.A. sect. 11203 (e)(1) provides that a “state of emergency shall not exceed five (5) days, unless extended by council.”;

Whereas, the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre believes an extension of the Executive Order declaring a State of Emergency issued by Mayor Brown is necessary while the City continues to assess the damage caused by the storm;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Wilkes-Barre that the above-referenced *STATE OF EMERGENCY* is hereby extended for a period of thirty (30) days or until the same is formally lifted by Executive Order of the Mayor.

Mr. Barrett moved to adopt the Resolution.

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 February 19, 2020.

Of the Special Session of City Council of March 20, 2020.

Of the Regular Session of City Council of March 12, 2020.

Mr. Barrett moved to adopt the minutes.

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.

#### **ORDINANCES**

**FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 13 OF 2019** – AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED “AN ORDINANCE VACATING PORTIONS OF EAST ROSS STREET AND SOUTH PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE IN THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE.” (SECOND AND FINAL READING)

Mr. Belusko moved to adopt the Ordinance.

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.

**FILE OF COUNCIL 4 OF 2020 – AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WILKES-BARRE, COUNTY OF LUZERNE, AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, ADOPTING THE 2020 ACTION PLAN ENCOMPASSING THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM COVID-19 CDBG GRANT AND HOME PROGRAM BUDGETS FOR PROGRAM YEAR FORTY-SIX AND APPROPRIATING SPECIFIC SUMS ESTIMATED TO BE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE PROGRAM ACTIVITES.” (FIRST READING)**

Mr. Barrett 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.

#### **PRESENTATIONS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Mr. Belusko recognized the Department of Public Works and Butch Frati for all their hard work after Monday’s storm.

Mr. Barrett said he was amazed by how quickly DPW workers were out cutting trees up in the streets.

Mr. Marconi thanked the Administration for their handling of COVID-19 and the storm. He said the Mayor’s updates on social media have been very helpful. He also thanked all city employees, especially the DPW crew and Butch Frati.

Mrs. McBride also thanked the first responders for everything they’ve done during the pandemic and gave a special thank you to Officer Shane Smith who has been called to active duty to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Brooks also thanked the Department of Public Works and the Health Department for their hard work after the storm. He said Ross Street was a disaster and they cleaned up every scrap of paper. Also, there were two enormous trees that came down on West River Street and one on Jefferson Lane that were cleaned up quickly.

Mr. Brooks thanked the Mayor for keeping everyone informed through the media, tv, radio, newspaper and social media.

Mr. Barrett thanked the IT Director, Frank Hershberger for all his help with setting up the Council meeting and all of the Mayor's staff for their support.

### **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

The City Clerk read the following comments that were submitted via e-mail to the City Clerk's Office:

***Jason Carr, Saylorsburg, PA:***

*Mayor Brown, not only are we in a medical and economic pandemic, as well, City Hall has been rendered disabled from a natural disaster and as of today, not a single person has been asked to voluntarily accept a furlough nor has anyone been directed to be laid off or furloughed from the city. How can the city afford these expenses when revenues will be delayed or stunted? Is it possible for you to contact Mayor Paige Cagnetti and ask her advice on how she successfully furloughed 24 positions in her city hall and temporarily closed a fire station? How are the taxpayers of Wilkes-Barre to afford your decisions when they are not allowed to work?*

*When will the rest of City Council follow the lead of Councilwoman Beth Gilbert and accept a salary reduction considering the financial state of the city and its residents?*

Mayor Brown replied that as of Monday ten people have been furloughed.

***Sam Troy, Wilkes-Barre, PA:***

*Regarding the general comment portion of the meeting, I would like to know what the function of the Health Department is during the crisis? There was a recent article in the paper claiming that all the employees of that department, including three nurses, are working virtually around the clock to confront the pandemic crisis. I would like to know what exactly they are doing in that regard, because when I have called to ask where someone could get tested for the virus, all they could tell me is to go see my family doctor. I don't think this department is doing its job and I don't think it's essential to have these people on salary if they are not doing anything to mitigate this crisis.*

Mayor Brown said that the paper did not say that all of the Health Department is working 24/7. It said some staff members are working 24/7. He said some of our nurses are engaged in doing that.

Mr. Radulski replied that the mission statement of the Health Department is to protect the health and safety of the residents of Wilkes-Barre. He explained that during a crisis the Health Department is an informational center. We receive approximately 60 – 70 calls a day on anything pandemic related. He said Mr. Troy has called several times and the people that spoke to him asked if he had symptoms and he did not. Mr. Radulski said the Health Department follows the CDC's credentials and criteria for testing. The Health Department fields calls from laboratories, shelters, long-term facilities, day cares and many people all hours of the day and night. He said the Health Departments emphasis is to control the spread of the disease. Our nurses do that by investigation; they want to find the origin of the disease, they want to isolate the disease and then they want to trace it to make sure it has not spread. He said the main goal in this pandemic with COVID-19 is to prevent the spread of the disease and with the team the Mayor has put together, we have actually made an effort in succeeding and flattening the curve in Wilkes-Barre.

Mr. Barrett said that we see the numbers every day across the country, around the world and across the state. The state numbers are broken down by county and Luzerne County's numbers are pretty high. He asked Mr. Radulski if there is a breakdown of where those numbers are coming from across the county (by city). He said he is curious to know if Wilkes-Barre has a significant number of those cases.

Mr. Radulski replied that the Wilkes-Barre City Health Department is responsible for everything in the City of Wilkes-Barre. He said we see numbers for the state and the county. The Health Departments' investigations are focused on people within the city who tested COVID-19 positive. We compile those numbers and compare the city, to the county, to the state and focus on that.

Mr. Barrett said so the numbers aren't broken down by sections or areas.

Mr. Radulski said they only see the direct numbers for the City of Wilkes-Barre. The Health Department will plot every COVID positive person on a map and analyze any outbreaks, at any type of facilities, neighborhoods etc. We are all interconnected with one another, because a positive case for someone **working** in Hazleton or Pittston, that becomes our investigation because they live in Wilkes-Barre.

Mr. Brooks thanked Mr. Radulski, the Health Department and the frontline nurses.

Mayor Brown said the Health Department is doing an outstanding job. They deal with people on a daily basis and anyone that feels that they are not doing the job, he would

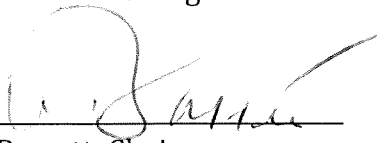
be glad to talk to and convince them differently. If someone doesn't understand what this department and other departments are going through with the pandemic, I think they have to be educated because they are working hard, and they are doing things that are out of the norm just to keep our residents safe.

Mayor Brown told the residents of the city that they need to see their physician for a test, not the Health Department.

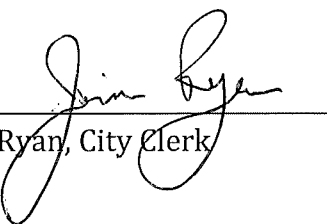
Mr. Belusko thanked the Mayor, Mr. Radulski and Health Department for all of their hard work.

Mr. Belusko thanked his fellow colleagues that voted to reappoint Bob Hogan to the General Municipal Authority.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

  
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Bill Barrett, Chairperson

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Ryan, City Clerk

