

**WARREN CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 18, 2021 – 7:00 PM**

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Cashman presided over the January 18, 2021, regular meeting of Warren City Council. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all participation was via the Zoom internet meeting platform.

ROLL CALL

Members present and responding to roll call were: Mayor Maurice Cashman, Gregory Fraser, Paul Giannini, Philip Gilbert, Douglas Hearn, John Wortman, and Christian Zavinski. Members of City Staff present were Nancy Freenock, City Manager; Vincent DeJoy, Director of Zoning, Codes, and Economic Development; Michael Holtz, DPW Director; Teena Leary, Assistant City Clerk; Joseph Sproveri, Chief of Police; Donna Risinger, Finance Officer; Rodney Wren, Fire Chief; Chad Yurisc, City Engineer; and Andrea Stapleford, City Solicitor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Wortman made the motion to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2020, Regular Meeting; January 4, 2021, Special Meeting; and the January 11, 2021, Special Meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Zavinski. Council members voted unanimously to approve the stated minutes with one amendment to the January 4, 2021, Special Meeting minutes (see below).

Mr. Wortman made the motion to amend the January 4, 2021, Special Meeting minutes by correcting December 14, 2021, to December 14, 2020, in the final paragraph under Crescent Park Funding. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fraser and carried unanimously.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mayor Cashman welcomed all visitors.

Wendy McCain addressed Council and stated her concerns regarding the proposed hotel development in the vicinity of Breezpoint Landing and urged Council to cease consideration of “giving away valuable waterfront.” Ms. McCain noted that Trestle to Trestle, a group organized by the Warren County Development Association, expects to identify a plan for development of the City’s waterfront.

Kim Turner, a North Warren resident, stated that she “seconds” Ms. McCain’s comments.

Kyle Whitten, a Sheffield resident, stated that he also “seconds” Ms. McCain’s comments and stated that he is most opposed to turning the riverfront into a parking lot and hotel.

Jennifer (no last name given) stated that she resides on the City’s west side and requested that the riverfront area be retained as a park with pedestrian access.

Troy Stewart, a resident of Irvine, stated that he is the Manager at the Days Inn located on Ludlow Street. He stated that the hotel will hold a community open house on January 30.

Jane Dunshie, a resident of the West of Liberty Apartments, stated that 12 units in that building face the riverfront and the residents enjoy the view.

Bonnie Miller, a resident of the West of Liberty Apartments, stated that she previously sent letters to Council members stating that she “does not want to see the park and greenery gone.”

David Snyder, a North Warren resident, stated that he agrees with Ms. McCain's comments and that while he does not believe that a hotel is a bad idea, he is opposed to the proposed location. He later stated that when the West of Liberty Apartments were planned, there was nothing to obstruct the riverfront view and, in his belief, new construction would be a violation of residents' expectations.

Joel VanOrd, who stated that he is a Warren resident, stated that he believes that the park (Breezpoint Landing) is an asset. He noted that residents of West of Liberty Apartments enjoy the view and would not want to look at a hotel, people fish in the Breezpoint Landing area, and he asked that Council consider others who have already invested in developing businesses in the area.

Ray Sturdevant and Sue Burgman (sp), Youngsville residents, stated that they are the owners of Pennwilds, which is located in the HIY Building on Clark Street. Mr. Sturdevant stated that they have observed a great number of young people becoming more involved in fishing and other outdoor activities along the riverfront. He also stated that boat owners desire a place to safely and conveniently launch boats and further stated that he believes such would be compromised at the proposed launch site if a hotel is constructed adjacent to the area.

Deb Anderson, a Water Street resident, stated that she walks in the Breezpoint Landing area daily and enjoys interactions with residents of the West of Liberty Apartments. She further stated that she often sees children at Breezpoint Landing and that she believes that the park is good for the community.

Bob Dilks, a Conewango Avenue resident (within the City), noted that the combination of grant dollars and an interested developer is not one that comes along often. He stated that he supports development of a hotel; however, not necessarily at the proposed location. He further stated that this is an opportunity for the City to take advantage of "aligned stars" and encouraged "creative thinking" so as not to squander the opportunity.

Jane, of EMWC, questioned at what percent of capacity existing hotels operate. Mayor Cashman responded that a 2017 hotel feasibility study concluded that another hotel is needed.

Barbara Scott, a Quaker Hill resident, stated that she agrees with Ms. McCain and endorsed following the Strategic Plan and Hotel Feasibility Study. She suggested development of a boutique hotel with retention of Breezpoint Landing with greenspace, restrooms, and walkway.

Piper VanOrd, an Irvine resident and City business owner, stated that she participated in the 2017 Hotel Feasibility Study and is not opposed to a hotel; however, she is concerned that if a hotel is constructed, the land remaining for the proposed boat launch would not support its use for more than small watercraft. She also expressed her concerns regarding traffic congestion if a hotel is constructed. Ms. VanOrd stated that she understands the City's concerns regarding development but asked that there be creative thinking in doing so. She requested that consideration be given to existing businesses prior to "giving away" riverfront property for a hotel as she does not believe that the (hotel) space works for current businesses.

Hank LeMeur, a Fourth Avenue resident, stated that he appreciates the efforts of City Council and Mrs. Freenock to address economic concerns. He stated his belief that experienced downtown retail establishments and recreation are items to build upon.

Mrs. Freenock noted the City's declining tax base which is due, in large part, to real estate tax appeals made by large companies and stated that the key way in which to bolster the tax base is

by promoting new development. She encouraged anyone with knowledge of project developers to contact the City Planner.

Mayor Cashman stated that a public meeting(s) would be held prior to Council taking any action to move forward with hotel development in the Breezepoint Landing area.

INTRODUCTION OF VINCENT DEJOY

Mrs. Freenock introduced Vincent (Vince) DeJoy who joined the City Staff on January 4 and will serve as the Director of the Zoning, Codes, and Economic Development Department. Mr. DeJoy most recently served in the City of Jamestown, NY, and was involved in many economic development projects there. Mr. DeJoy stated that he looks forward to working to identify solutions and to finding the right combination to promote a bright future for the City.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to come before Council.

ORDINANCE NO. 1951: AMENDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

Mrs. Freenock stated that during the year 2020 many changes were made in regard to personnel in the Department of Public Works and the department previously designated as the Codes, Permitting, and Recreation Services Department. As a result, it is necessary to realign some of the functions and responsibilities of the departments as they are prescribed in the City Code.

Upon motion by Mr. Fraser and second by Mr. Zavinski, Council members voted unanimously to adopt the ordinance amending Chapter 5: Administration of Government of the Code of the City of Warren.

ENGAGEMENT OF SPECIAL COUNSEL REGARDING EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Mrs. Freenock stated that the manner in which Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are provided to locales outside of the City limits is an ongoing concern. Given the complexity of laws and mandates governing such, it was recommended that the City retain the services of Page, Wolfberg & Wirth, LLC; the firm has extensive experience and specializes in this area of law. Andrea Stapleford, City Solicitor, supported the retention of outside counsel for EMS matters.

Mr. Wortman made the motion to authorize the retention of Page, Wolfberg & Wirth, LLC, to act as counsel in matters related to Emergency Medical Services with payment for services rendered not to exceed \$6,500. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hearn and carried unanimously.

ORDINANCE NO. 1952: AMENDING THE VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC CODE

Chief Sproveri stated that City Staff recently conducted a review of Chapter 440, Vehicles and Traffic, of the Code of the City of Warren and it was determined that the Code should be amended to reflect the following:

1. The timing of traffic for school drop-offs in the vicinity of Conewango Avenue and Third Avenue necessitates an earlier start time for the prohibition of right turns on red;
2. Public Works operations in regard to leaf pickup and snow clearing have changed over the years and it is no longer necessary for seasonal alternate side parking to be in place on certain streets;
3. Peach Street was renamed to Pool Street;
4. There are no longer parking spaces designated for Meals-on-Wheels deliveries; and
5. Fines related to certain parking regulations need to be established or amended. The PA Motor Vehicle Code provides regulations and fines pertaining to parking facing against the direction of traffic; however, the fine provided for in the MVC is considered excessive for

this area. Therefore, it was recommended that the violation and fine be provided for in the City Code.

Mr. Fraser made the motion to adopt the ordinance amending Chapter 440: Vehicles and Traffic of the Code of the City of Warren. The motion was seconded by Mr. Zavinski and carried unanimously.

AGREEMENTS: PENSION PAYMENT SERVICES

Mrs. Risinger stated that in July of 2020, Definiti, LLC, acquired Boetger Retirement Plan Services. Boetger had been the servicing company for each of the City's three pension plans and had provided pension payment services which included the management of retiree benefits; responding to retiree inquiries and implementing the necessary updates; reconciling and reporting monthly distributions; 1099R coding for tax purposes, transmittal of income tax withholdings and 945's to the IRS, and preparation of 1099R's for retirees, and fulfilling fund requests on individual disbursements.

As a result of the acquisition, Definiti requested that the City enter into a new agreement for each of the pension plans. The provided services will remain the same under the new agreements with Definiti and it is the City's understanding that the same personnel will service the accounts.

Mr. Fraser made the motion to approve agreements with Definiti, LLC, for Pension Payment Services for the City's three employee pension plans with the understanding that the City Manager will negotiate for an amendment to language in Section 5.b. The motion was seconded by Mr. Zavinski and carried unanimously.

TRANSFER OF 423 RANKIN STREET PROPERTY TO REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Mrs. Freenock stated that there are a number of delinquent sewer accounts which are in arrears for substantial amounts. The City continues to pursue collections; however, there are accounts for which it has become evident that the property owner has no intention of making payments. She further stated that the City purchased one such property, which is located at 423 Rankin Street, during the September, 2020 tax sale. It was suggested that this property be transferred to the City Redevelopment Authority as the Authority is best positioned to negotiate terms of sale and/or agreements with contractors to rehabilitate the property.

Mr. Wortman made the motion to authorize the transfer of the property at 423 Rankin Street to the City of Warren Redevelopment Authority contingent upon payment to the City in the amount of delinquent sewer charges (upon any subsequent sale of the property). The motion was seconded by Mr. Gilbert and carried unanimously.

NOTICE OF ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDING

Mr. DeJoy stated that the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) recently notified the City that DCED recalculated 2020 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocations and, as a result, the City will receive a slightly larger amount based on that calculation. Additionally, another city withdrew its application and, therefore, additional funds became available to other Pennsylvania cities.

Mr. DeJoy stated that provision of this information would serve as the City's public notification to Council that the City of Warren will receive an additional \$11,443 in CDBG funding which will be applied to the South Irvine Street Project under the Street/Road Improvement Activity. The total CDBG funding awarded under the 2020 application is \$317,492.

AGREEMENT: REIMBURSEMENT FOR GLADE RUN CAMERA INSPECTION

Mr. Yurisc stated that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requires that pipes running through the Glade Run Levee be inspected every five years. The next camera inspection is due to be completed in the first half of 2021 and it is required that the inspection be conducted by a third party.

The DEP provides a grant of up to \$3,000 to offset the cost of the inspection. The City received a quote in the amount of \$3,900 from State Pipe Services, Inc.; therefore, the City will be responsible for \$900 of the inspection cost. Such costs are provided for in the 2021 budget.

Mr. Fraser made the motion to authorize a \$3000 grant agreement with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection regarding the Glade Run Levee Inspection. The motion was seconded by Mr. Zavinski and carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS – DECEMBER, 2020

The following reports were presented for Council's review:

- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Department of Public Works
- Building Codes Department

APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Council acknowledged receipt of the following approved minutes:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Redevelopment Authority | – July 22, 2020 | Regular Meeting |
| Board of Health | – January 6, 2020 | Regular Meeting |

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before Council, Mayor Cashman declared the meeting adjourned.