

**WARREN CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 18, 2023 – 7:00 PM**

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor David Wortman presided over the September 18, 2023, regular meeting of Warren City Council in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

JUNIOR COUNCIL MEMBER PLEDGE

Mayor Wortman introduced Samuel Harvey as the Junior Council member for the 2023-2024 school year and administered the Junior Council Pledge. Mr. Harvey thanked Council members for the opportunity to serve and to represent his peers and their interests.

ROLL CALL

Members present and responding to roll call were: Mayor David Wortman, Maurice Cashman, Danielle Flasher, Philip Gilbert, Wendy McCain, Jared Villella, John Wortman, and Junior Council Member Samuel Harvey. Members of City Staff present were Michael Holtz, City Manager; Jessica Byler, Finance Officer; David Krogler, Fire Chief; Teena Leary, Assistant City Clerk; Randall Rossey, Codes and Planning Director; Joseph Sproveri, Chief of Police; Darren Pike, City Engineer; and Andrea Stapleford, City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Wortman announced that Council met in executive session on August 28 in regard to legal matters pertaining to the Warren Pickleball agreement.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mayor Wortman welcomed all visitors. Present were:

Gregory Austin	Dick Balas	John Barbera
Belinda Brohn	Andy Close	Kelley Coey (via Zoom)
Josh Cotton	Jim Decker	Rachel Harvey
Sam Harvey	Stephanie Hungiville	Kevin Sheldon
David Snyder	Andrew Sokolski	Susan Stout
Thad Turner	Shawn Walker	

The following visitors addressed Council:

- Kevin Sheldon re his opposition to the Hudson Companies' Eagles Crest Project
- Dick Balas re Conewango Avenue Speed Limit

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Upon motion by Mr. Cashman and second by Miss Flasher, Council members voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

Upon motion by Mayor Wortman and second by Mr. Villella, Council members voted unanimously to amend the agenda by the addition of an address to Council by David Snyder regarding the annual Allegheny River Cleanup Project.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. McCain made the motion to further amend the July 17, 2023, regular meeting minutes under "Public Comment" by the addition of "In addition to saying that she made it clear to Hudson that

there is no need for additional housing, particularly for seniors. She also stated that there were currently forty-one vacancies in three of the populations that she looked at, and she also stated that Eagles Crest would pull people from four existing housing units, housing complexes, and those buildings will suffer” following “Tanya Mitchell Weston (Warren County Housing Authority President and CEO).” The motion was seconded by Mr. Gilbert. (See motion to table below)

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to table action regarding the July 17, 2023, regular meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cashman and carried unanimously.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2023, public hearing and regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to come before Council.

ALLEGHENY RIVER CLEANUP

David Snyder addressed Council and provided an overview of the Allegheny River Cleanup Project’s fifteen-year history. Mr. Snyder also reported the results of the 2023 cleanup project including the number of volunteers, the area of the Allegheny River that was cleaned, and the volume of trash removed from the river.

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT IN WARREN COUNTY

Stephanie Hungiville, Nurse Manager of the Mental Health and Detox Unit at Warren General Hospital, provided an overview of mental health services provided at the hospital and the need for mental health awareness throughout Warren County.

WARREN WORX

Andrew Sokolski, Shawn Walker, and Jim Decker addressed Council regarding their proposal to establish an economic development hub to be known as Warren Worx and outlined their vision of a cohesive model and mechanism to be used for development throughout Warren County. Thad Turner expressed his support of the initiative and the need for a collective effort to move the community forward.

AGREEMENT: WARREN PICKLEBALL, INC. – MAINTENANCE FUND

Mr. Holtz noted that an agreement pertaining to funds to be provided by Warren Pickleball, Inc. (WPB) for future maintenance of the courts was approved by Council at the August 21 Council meeting. The agreement was forwarded to Attorney Jon Marti (WPB Board Member) who presented the agreement to WPB for its approval and signature. Mr. Marti advised the City that WPB countered with a proposal that they pay a total of \$22,500 to the City; this is an increase of \$2,500. Under the counter proposal, WPB would make an initial payment of \$12,500 on, or before, September 30, 2023, and payment of the remaining \$10,000 would be made on, or before, August 31, 2024. As previously approved, the City would invest the monies at the highest interest rate offered by a financial institution normally utilized by the City.

Mrs. McCain made the motion to approve the agreement with a correction to the amount to be paid and the addition of “upon completion of its financial obligation” to the last “Whereas” statement. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING DATE: PROPOSED STREET VACATION

Mr. Rossey stated that Jack Wills submitted an application and petition for the vacation of an alley (right-of-way) which runs in an east-west direction between the westerly curb of Eddy Street and the easterly boundary of Parcel No. WN-499-5395. Mr. Wills, along with others whose properties abut the alley, signed the required petition to vacate the alley. The alley is approximately twenty (20) feet in width; therefore, each of the abutting properties would receive approximately ten (10) feet of land for the width of the property.

Mr. Rossey indicated that, prior to Council taking action on the ordinance authorizing vacation of the alley, it is required that Council conduct a public hearing, that notice of the hearing be published, and that a notice be posted upon the alley.

Mr. Villella made the motion to establish October 16, 2023, at 7:00 PM as the date and time for a public hearing regarding Jack Will’s application to vacate an unnamed alley. The motion was seconded by Mrs. McCain and carried unanimously.

PROPOSED ORDINANCE: NO PARKING ON A PORTION OF SOUTH IRVINE STREET

Mr. Holtz reported that South Irvine Street, between Pennsylvania Avenue East and Lexington Avenue underwent a complete street rebuild that was funded through the Community Development Block Grant Program. As a result of the construction, some minor street modifications were made as part of the project and, therefore, it is now necessary to amend the “No Parking” zone on the west side of South Irvine Street as it approaches Lexington Avenue. Mr. Holtz indicated that the No Parking zone would be extended by approximately six feet.

Following discussion, Miss Flasher made the motion to table the proposed ordinance regarding No Parking on a portion of South Irvine Street. The motion was seconded by Mrs. McCain and carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 3238: AUTHORIZING FFY 2023 CDBG FUNDING APPLICATION

Mrs. Byler indicated that the City of Warren is an entitlement community through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development under the Small Communities Program (SCP) and, therefore, entitled to Community Development Block Grant Funding (CDBG) annually as long as all requirements are met and an application is submitted. The City’s 2023 entitlement allocation is \$310,893.00. The City has, for a number of years, used these funds to complete the full restoration of a qualifying street.

As required, City staff held two public hearings to gather comments regarding use of the funds allocated to the City for the 2023 application. Additionally, City staff gathered income surveys from individuals currently residing on Glenwood Street and verified that more than 51% of the households are at, or below, the HUD threshold. Therefore, it was proposed that the 2023 CDBG application be submitted and the funding be distributed to the Glenwood Street Improvement Project under the Street/Road Improvements Activity in the amount of \$290,893.00 and to Administration in the amount of \$20,000.00.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to approve the resolution authorizing submission of the FFY 2023 Community Development Block Grant application in the amount of \$310,893.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. J. Wortman. The motion carried with six votes in the affirmative and one nay vote cast by Mrs. McCain.

Mrs. McCain made the motion to table action on the proposed resolution authorizing submission of the FFY 2023 Community Development Block Grant Application in the amount of \$310,893.00. There was no second to the motion.

RESOLUTION NO. 3239: FAIR HOUSING

Mrs. Byler stated that, since the City is an entitlement community under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) requires annual adoption of a Fair Housing Resolution to demonstrate the City’s dedication to Fair Housing practices. The annual resolution is posted on the City of Warren website and the public notices bulletin board in the Municipal Building.

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to approve the Fair Housing resolution. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 3240: COUNCIL MEETING VIDEO RECORDINGS

Mrs. Leary stated that the Marketing Committee conducted research regarding the retention of online videos of Council meetings. Based on the desire for transparency, efforts to increase public engagement, in consideration of public commentary on the topic, and on data collected, the Committee made recommendations which are reflected in the proposed resolution.

In addition to those items contained within the resolution, the Committee recommended the following:

1. The Committee will review metrics for the most recent month’s video immediately prior to the next regular meeting of Council; and
2. Prior to its deletion at the end of the 12-month posting period, the view metrics, by month, for the entire time that the video was live are to be captured; and
3. The Marketing Committee is to conduct an in-depth review of the view metrics for July, 2023 to July, 2024 for discussion and possible action at the September, 2024, regular Council meeting.

Mrs. McCain made the motion to approve the resolution pertaining to retention of video recordings with “regular and special meetings” to be replaced with “each public meeting of Council.” The motion was seconded by Mr. Cashman and carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS – AUGUST, 2023

The following reports were provided for Council’s review:

- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Department of Public Works
- Codes, Planning, and Zoning Department

APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Council acknowledged receipt of the following approved minutes:

Blighted Property Review Committee	– July 20, 2023	Regular Meeting
Parks, Recreation & Landscape Commission	– July 25, 2023	Regular Meeting
Redevelopment Authority	– July 26, 2023	Regular Meeting

MISCELLANEOUS

Miss Flasher requested that an update regarding the Riverfront Development Project be included on the October agenda.

Chief Sproveri reported that he contacted PennDOT in regard to the speed limit on Conewango Avenue (see 8-21-2023 Council minutes) and a traffic study is expected to be completed in the next sixty days.

ADJOURNMENT

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