

**WARREN CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
OCTOBER 24, 2022 – 7:00 PM**

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor David Wortman presided over the October 24, 2022, special meeting of Warren City Council in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

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 (via Zoom), and Junior Council Member Lydia Balas. Members of City Staff present were Nancy Freenock, City Manager; Jessica Byler, Finance Officer; Michael Holtz, DPW Director; David Krogler, Fire Chief; Teena Leary, Assistant City Clerk; Randall Rossey, Codes and Planning Director; Joseph Sproveri, Chief of Police; and Andrea Stapleford, City Solicitor.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

Mayor Wortman recognized Nancy Freenock for her “tremendous service on behalf of the City of Warren” and stated that her retirement is “bittersweet.” Mrs. Freenock was presented with a commemorative gift after which she thanked City Council and Staff and expressed that it had been a pleasure to work with all.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mayor Wortman welcomed all visitors. Present were:

- Josh Cotton: Times Observer Reporter
- Andy Close: YourDailyLocal Reporter

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Upon motion by Mr. Cashman and second by Mr. Gilbert, the agenda was unanimously approved as presented.

RESOLUTION NO. 3201: MULTI-MUNICIPAL EMS COMMISSION AGREEMENT

Chief Krogler stated that Warren County municipalities continue to experience a shortage of volunteers to staff 24/7 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) which has resulted in City of Warren ambulances being dispatched to provide EMS outside of the City limits. Third-party reimbursements received for EMS responses are not sufficient to cover overhead and the cost of response.

Cherry Grove Township, Clarendon Borough, Mead Township, Pleasant Township, and Sheffield Township formed the Warren County Multi-Municipal Emergency Services Commission as a means to address their collective EMS staffing concerns in a manner that fairly compensates the City.

A resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement which establishes the covered area, covered hours, obligations of the City, and obligations of the Warren County Multi-Municipal Emergency Services Commission was drafted and was reviewed by the City Solicitor.

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to approve the resolution authorizing execution of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement with the Warren County Multi-Municipal Emergency Services Commission. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 3202: AUTHORIZING DCNR FALL 2022 GRANT APPLICATION

Mrs. Freenock stated that Council member Cashman was absent from the Monday, October 17, regular meeting at which approval of the submission of a Fall 2022 Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant application was considered. Mr. Cashman requested that this matter be revisited. He also requested that the corresponding Letter of Intent pertaining to the Yoder/Susquehanna properties which would be purchased with grant funding be included on the agenda.

The City Solicitor reviewed Roberts Rules of Order and determined that the DCNR grant application may be revisited by way of a Motion to Renew the motion made at the October 17 meeting. Prior to this meeting, Mr. Cashman stated his intent to make the Motion to Renew.

At the October 17 meeting, Mr. Villella made the motion to “Approve as presented” in regard to the resolution authorizing a DCNR Fall 2022 Grant Application and committing \$170,000 of the second tranche of American Rescue Plan funds to be used as the required matching funds for the grant, if awarded. The motion was seconded by Miss Flasher. A roll call vote resulted in a tie vote.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to renew the October 17 motion. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella.

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to table this matter until after adoption of the 2023 Municipal Budget and consideration of the three City unions’ request regarding the use of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. The motion was seconded by Mrs. McCain and failed with three votes in the affirmative and four nay votes cast by Mr. Villella, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Cashman, and Mayor Wortman.

The vote on Mr. Cashman’s motion to renew the October 17 motion carried with four votes in the affirmative and three nay votes cast by Mr. J. Wortman, Miss Flasher, and Mrs. McCain.

LETTER OF INTENT: ACQUISITION OF PROPERTIES FOR RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Freenock stated that the acquisition of a portion of two parcels owned by Robert P. Yoder, Sr. as owner and president of The Landing at Warren, LP, (WN-575-9922) and Geothermal Energy Systems, Inc. (WN-579-124) is a key component of the planned Allegheny Riverfront Redevelopment Project. In accord with Resolution No. 3202 (see above), the City will apply for funding from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources which would be utilized to finance the acquisition of these properties.

A Letter of Intent stating the City’s intent to purchase the two parcels pending the award of DCNR funding was prepared and Mr. Yoder has stated that he agrees with the terms of the Letter.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to authorize the Letter of Intent to Robert P. Yoder. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gilbert and carried with four votes in the affirmative and three nay votes cast by Mr. J. Wortman, Miss Flasher, and Mrs. McCain.

Mrs. Stapleford left the meeting at this point.

RACP FUNDING AWARDS

Mrs. Freenock reviewed a summary spreadsheet regarding the current status of the City’s active Redevelopment Assistance Capital Project (RACP) funding awards. It was noted that the formal application and business plans for the 2019 and 2020 award years are due to the Office of Budget on November 30, 2022.

ALLOCATION OF LOAN PROCEEDS TO RIVERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Mrs. Freenock noted that on January 31 of this year, Council authorized the borrowing of \$3.6 million from KeyBank with the proceeds to be utilized to pay off the outstanding principal balance of two loans and \$2 million to be allocated to the Clark Street Parking Garage Rehabilitation; \$800,000 in loan proceeds remain available.

\$1.5 million in Redevelopment Assistance Capital Project (RACP) funds have been committed to the Riverfront Redevelopment Project and a match of the same amount is required. The City previously committed \$500,000 in matching funds derived from the first tranche of ARPA (American Recovery Plan Act) funds and the General Fund. Warren County committed \$500,000 bringing the total to \$1 million in dedicated matching funds.

Mrs. Freenock requested that Council authorize the use of \$500,000 of the remaining loan proceeds to complete the required match for the RACP funding. This would result in \$3 million in funding being fully available for the City to begin to move forward with the Riverfront Redevelopment Project.

It was noted that \$190,000 of the second tranche of ARPA funds have been committed to match the Fish and Boat Commission grant for the boat launch. In addition, if the DCNR Fall 2022 Grant application is granted and the funding is awarded, \$170,000 in second tranche ARPA funds will be the source of matching funds; thus there will not be sufficient ARPA funds to provide the \$500,000 RACP match.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to approve the request as presented and to allocate \$500,000 from the loan proceeds to be utilized as matching funds. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gilbert.

Mrs. McCain made the motion to table this matter and revisit it at the November 21 regular Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. J. Wortman and carried with five votes in the affirmative and two nay votes cast by Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Cashman.

AUTHORIZATION TO COMMENCE NEGOTIATIONS WITH MANAGER CANDIDATE

Mayor Wortman stated that the Manager Search Committee has narrowed the field of applicants for the position of City Manager to one candidate. Therefore, it was requested that Council authorize the Committee to proceed with negotiations with the candidate to develop an employment agreement. Mayor Wortman indicated that the agreement will be presented to Council for its final approval.

Mr. Cashman made the motion to authorize the Manager Search Committee to engage in negotiations with the Manager candidate. The motion was seconded by Miss Flasher and carried with six votes in the affirmative and one nay vote cast by Mrs. McCain.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CITY MANAGER

Mrs. Freenock stated that Wednesday, October 26, will be her last day as City Manager and recommended that Michael Holtz be appointed to serve as the Acting City Manager commencing October 27 and continuing until a new City Manager begins employment with the City.

Mr. J. Wortman made the motion to appoint Michael Holtz to serve as the Acting City Manager until a new City Manager begins employment with the City. The motion was seconded by Mr. Villella and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

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