

Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.
December 8, 2010

Easton, Pa
Wednesday
December 8, 2010
6:18 p.m.

City Council met in stated session at the above date and time in the 6th Floor Conference Room of City Hall, One S. Third Street, Easton, Pa. to consider any business that may lawfully be brought before the body.

The invocation was given by Mayor Panto followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Present: Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto (7)
Absent: None (0)

Also in attendance were Rita M. Messa, Asst. City Clerk, William Murphy, City Solicitor, Beth Knickerbocker, Assistant City Solicitor and Glenn Steckman, City Administrator. There were sixteen (16) persons present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Panto requested a motion to approve the Agenda.

After this request a discussion was held between Council members and Mr. Steckman regarding items added to the agenda at the last moment.

On motion of Mayor Panto and Mr. Warren the agenda was amended by removing a Resolution approving an agreement with Constellation NewEnergy by the following vote:

Yeas: Panto, Warren, Warner, Vulcano, Ruggles, Fleck, Brown (7)
Nays: None (0)

On motion of Dr. Warner and Mr. Warren the amended agenda was approved by the following vote:

Yeas: Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto (7)
Nays: None (0)

ACTION ON MINUTES

On motion of Dr. Warner and Dr. Ruggles the November 23, 2010 Council Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted by the following vote:

Yeas: Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, (7)

Nays: None (0)

PRESENTATION

Mayor Panto gave a presentation regarding the 2012 Budget (see attached). Various questions were asked and answered during this presentation.

CITIZENS RIGHT TO BE HEARD (Agenda Items Only)

Mr. Carl Faulkner, President of Washington Lodge #17 spoke about the DROP benefit only being extended to one person in the police department when the entire department is a team. Officer Faulkner stated that it was possible that the same goal could have been obtained if the union was given the opportunity to work on another possibility. Mr. Fleck stated that there was two weeks between the ordinance being introduced and voted on and there were no other suggestions that were brought to the Administration.

Mayor Panto stated that one of the major concerns of the union was the impact it would have on the Police Pension Fund. Mayor Panto stated that although he does not like the DROP programs this was a good way to address the pension issue and maintain the stability in the Police Department.

Mr. Brown stated that he felt that this was the best way to proceed in order to keep the leadership in the department. Mr. Brown also stated that if the Chief did retire, the City could name him Director of Public Safety which, in the long run, would cost the City taxpayers.

Mr. Michael Vangelo, Captain of the Easton Police Department, 25 S. Third Street stated that the City should do whatever they needed to do to keep Larry as Police Chief. Captain Vangelo also stated that Chief Palmer is always accessible even after hours and that he still had a lot to learn from Chief Palmer.

Captain Vangelo stated that he agrees with Officer Faulkner regarding the progress that the police department has made in the last several years and that this could not have been done without the entire police force.

Captain Vangelo stated that he would not want to break up the team as it is today.

Dr. Ruggles stated that he would be supporting the DROP benefit tonight but wanted to know what would happen if Chief Palmer could not fulfill the one year commitment. Mr. Steckman stated that the Administration would address that issue if the situation would present itself.

After a lengthy discussion on this matter, all of Council agreed that this DROP Program is in the best interest of the City and the Police Department.

Mrs. Doris Mendisana addressed Council regarding the creation of a new Revenue Clerk III position. Mrs. Mendisana also stated to Council the duties that she performs in her position as Account Payable Clerk and the decision to reduce that position to part time.

Mayor Panto addressed Mrs. Mendisana's concerns and there was some discussion on this issue.

Ms. Missy Corrado, President of AFSCME asked Council if they were aware of the positions that were to be eliminated. Ms. Corrado also stated that she is very aware of the City's financial situation but asked if there were other ways to address this issue besides eliminating positions.

Dr. Warner stated that the positions were unfunded which is different from eliminating them. She stated that no one is being layed-off and there would be no furloughs.

Mr. Warren stated that the changes would affect the employees but that Council needs to be accountable to the taxpayers.

Mr. Brown told Ms. Corrado that it was important for her and the union to know that they could come to him to discuss any matter at any time.

Dr. Ruggles stated that he understands the unions concerns but management decisions have to be made and the entire goal is to make the city better.

Mayor Panto stated that the positions are not being funded but are not being eliminated and that if the economy should change the funding could possibly be reinstated.

There was further discussion on this issue with questions were asked and answered.

Mr. Steckman stated that the restructuring of the employees is the best decision for the City right now. Mr. Steckman also stated that working with the union has been a pleasure.

REPORTS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL

There were no reports received by Council.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Brown, Chairman of the Finance Committee spoke regarding the legislation that would be before Council later in the meeting.

Mrs. Vulcano, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee spoke regarding the legislation that would be before Council later in the meeting.

Mrs. Vulcano also stated that she was disappointed that the Victory Pub would not be moving into the location of the old Weller Center but hoped that it would move in somewhere else in the City.

Dr. Ruggles, Chairman of the Planning Committee had no legislation for tonight's meeting, however, he wanted to inform Council that a small group will be meeting on the Tourism Study and will report the outcome to Council at a later date.

Mr. Warren, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee spoke regarding the legislation that would be before Council later in the meeting.

Dr. Warner, Chairman of the Public Works Committee had no legislation for tonight's meeting, but wanted to let everyone know that Riverside Park is almost done. Dr. Warner also stated that she attended the Environmental Advisory Council pot luck meeting and that there will be some exciting things happening for 2011.

Mr. Fleck, Chairperson of the Administration Committee had no legislation for tonight's meeting.

Mr. Fleck stated that there were two topics that would be discussed at the January Administration Meeting. The first topic would be to re-overhaul the Charter and the Codified Ordinances. The second topic would be same sex benefits (the cost, and the positives and negatives of the benefits). Mr. Fleck asked Mr. Murphy to request that Mr. Scheer be present for the meeting.

Mr. Murphy, City Solicitor stated that there was an executive session was held prior to tonight's meeting to discuss personnel issues, pending litigations and labor issues.

Mayor Panto reported that the City has recently received two awards. The first one was from the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor and the second one was from the Arts Council of Easton.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No. 39, (Ordinance No. 5281) Approving the 2011 State Highway Aid Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Fleck by the following vote:

Yeas: Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5281 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 State Highway Fund Budget

Bill No. 40, (Ordinance No. 5282) Approving the 2011 Short Term Capital Fund Budget on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown (7)
Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5282 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 Short Term Capital Fund Budget

Bill No. 41, (Ordinance No. 5283) Approving the 2011 Alpha Building Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Warren by the following vote:

Yeas: Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck (7)
Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5283 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 Alpha Building Fund Budget

Bill No. 42 (Ordinance No. 5284) Approving the 2011 Health Benefits Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles (7)
Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5284 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 Health Benefits Fund Budget

Bill No. 43 (Ordinance No. 5285) Approving the 2011 General Insurance Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Warren by the following vote:

Yeas: Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano (7)
Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5285 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 General Insurance Fund Budget

Bill No. 44 (Ordinance No.5286 Approving the 2011 Unemployment Insurance Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Mrs. Vulcano by the following vote:

Yeas: Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner (7)
Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5286 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 Unemployment Fund Budget

Bill No. 45 (Ordinance No.5287) Approving the 2011 Workers Compensation Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5287 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 Workers Compensation Fund Budget

Bill No. 46 (Ordinance No. 5288) Approving the 2011 Wastewater Treatment Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Warren by the following vote:

Yeas: Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5288 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 Wastewater Treatment Fund Budget

Bill No. 47 (Ordinance No. 5289) Approving the 2011 Debt Service Fund was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5289 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 Debt Service Fund Budget

Bill No. 48 (Ordinance No. 5290) Approving the 2011 Recreation Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Warren by the following vote:

Yeas: Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5290 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 Recreation Fund Budget

Bill No. 49 (Ordinance No. 5291) Approving the 2011 General Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5291 will set the Revenues and Expenditures for the 2011 General Fund Budget

Bill No. 50 (Ordinance No. 5292) Approving the 2011 Tax Rate was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5292 will set the Tax Rate for 2011

Bill No. 54 (Ordinance No. 5293) Approving a DROP Benefit Incentive for the Chief of Police was adopted on motion of Mayor Panto and Mr. Fleck by the following vote:

Yeas: Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5293 will approve a DROP Benefit Incentive for Chief of Police, Lawrence Palmer

Bill No. 55 (Ordinance No. 5294) Amending the 2010 Alpha Building Fund Budget was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance No. 5294 will approve an amendment to the 2010 Alpha Building Fund Budget

CORRESPONDENCE

A memorandum was received from Doris Mendisana regarding the Accounts Payable position.

NEW BUSINESS

Bill No. 56, Amending Article III, Traffic Control Map of Chapter 560 was introduced by Mr. Warren and ordered processed for adoption.

This Bill will authorize the removal of Load/Unload signs.

Bill No. 57, Approving a Tower Site Option and Ground Lease Agreement with Pegasus Tower Company was introduced by Mr. Brown and ordered processed for adoption.

This Bill will authorize a Tower Site Option and Ground Lease Agreement between the City of Easton and Pegasus Tower Company

Bill No. 58, Approving a Site Agreement for a Cell Antenna with Open Range Communications was introduced by Mr. Brown and ordered processed for adoption.

This Bill will approve a Site Agreement with Open Range Communications for a Cell Antenna.

Dr. Ruggles stated that, in the future, he would want any contracts coming to Council signed before Council votes on them.

The next item on the agenda was a proposed Resolution which would approve a job description for a newly created position entitled Revenue Clerk III in the Department of Finance.

The following Resolution was introduced by Mr. Brown:

208- 2010

The above Resolution was approved on motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Warren by the following vote:

Yeas: Brown, Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warren, Panto (7)

Nays: Warner (1)

NOTE: Dr. Warner stated that she voted (No) on this Resolution because she did not have enough time to review the job description.

Mayor Panto stated that he also received the job description late but if it did not pass at tonight's meeting it would create a major problem with the restructuring of the positions.

Mr. Fleck stated that, in the future, there should probably be a book with all of the job descriptions. Mr. Steckman stated that the Human Resource Office already has the book

The next item on the agenda was a proposed Resolution which would set the Salaries and Wages for the year 2011.

The following Resolution was introduced by Mr. Brown:

209-2010

The above Resolution was approved on motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Fleck by the following vote:

Yeas: Fleck, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown (7)

Nays: None (0)

A memorandum was received from Becky Bradley, Director of Planning and Codes requesting A Resolution approving the filing of an application for a Certified Local Government Program Grant.

The next item on the agenda was a proposed Resolution which would authorize the filing of an application for a \$15,000 Certified Local Government Program Grant.

The following Resolution was introduced by Dr. Ruggles:

210-2010

The above Resolution was adopted on the motion of Dr. Ruggles and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck (7)
Nays: None (0)

The next item on the agenda was a proposed Resolution approving the filing of an application to amend the Intermodal Facility RACP #ME 300-364.

The following Resolution was introduced by Mrs. Vulcano:

211-2010

The above Resolution was adopted on the motion of Mrs. Vulcano and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Fleck, Ruggles (7)
Nays: None (0)

CITIZENS RIGHT TO BE HEARD

There were no comments at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m. on the motion of Mayor Panto and Mr. Warren by the following vote:

Yeas: Panto, Warren, Warner, Vulcano, Ruggles, Fleck, Brown (7)
Nays: None (0)

Rita M. Messa, Asst. City Clerk