

Julio Guridy, President
Ray O'Connell, Vice President
Joseph Davis
Jeanette Eichenwald
Jeff Glazier
Cynthia Y. Mota
Peter Schweyer



Allentown City Council
435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101
AllentownPa.Gov

Facebook: Allentown City Council

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
November 6 2013
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Council Meeting – 7:00 PM

- 1. Invocation: Jeanette Eichenwald**
- 2. Pledge to the Flag**
- 3. Roll Call:** Davis, Eichenwald, Glazier, Guridy, Mota, and Schweyer (Absent: O'Connell)
John Marchetto represented for the Solicitor's Office

Mr. Julio Guridy asked everyone to keep Mr. O'Connell in their prayers. Next meeting we will start with a sign-up sheet and that sign-up sheet will be in the back desk and if you want to speak you will give that sign-up sheet to Mr. Hanlon and he will give it to me and we will call you in the order as you come. Stand up when your name is called. Maybe at the next meeting we will have a clock that everybody can see.

4. Courtesy of the Floor

Mr. Kenneth Heffentrager, 733 N. 11th Street, thanked Mr. Dougherty for getting on 12th Street. They have secured that building. He showed a picture of a building and stated that all the windows are smashed out of it. I don't see how we allow this to go on and on and on. The alley is blocked because of garbage. When do you hand out Sweep Tickets to people that don't get their grass cut within a week's time. We allow a place like City Center on Walnut Street to have garbage piled all over the property.

Ms. Jeanette Eichenwald stated that we sit here in renewed splendor with this beautiful facility that we just spent over \$100,000 and Mr. Heffentrager comes here meeting after meeting and shows us how residents need to live in these properties, but next door. We need to have a resolve to fix this problem. We cannot continue to sit here in this splendor and to not be concerned about the citizens.

Mr. Guridy asked Mr. Dougherty for an explanation because he saw a lot of Facebook messages encouraging people to come and talk about this.

Mr. Fran Dougherty asked Tom Harper to come up and describe the history of this property and then I will ask Mr. Paulus. Part II of this we will go back as we do every two weeks to remind you how resolute we indeed are in fighting blight in our strategic planning efforts and I will ask Shannon to update City Council on that.

Ms. Eichenwald stated that she wants to know what is going to happen.

Mr. Tom Harper, Sweep and Animal Control Manager, stated that this property at 942 Pine Street several months ago my Sweep Office canvassed that whole block with the residents in that block regarding their concerns. We went through and cleaned up trash in the block and the Sweep department cleaned up the alleys in the block and it appears that this property here is going through the vacant registry which we have access to. It appears that this property is not in foreclosure and no bank involved. It is still owned by the gentleman and his mother and in checking and trying to find this individual through another system I have

in Lexus Nexus, I could not find this individual where he currently is and it appears that his mother is deceased according to that record. We continue to understand the neighbors' concerns. There is a possibility that people in the neighborhood may be dumping stuff on this vacant property. I can't confirm it because I can't find evidence of people doing that.

Ms. Eichenwald asked are these pictures current. I could not think of no more urgent matter for the citizens of this city. Even in the Wall Street Journal they are talking about the blighted properties in our city as an example of the worst of the worst.

Mr. Harper stated most likely and we are looking to get it addressed asap. I will give it to our crew that cleans properties. We have come to find out that it is a possibility that people in the neighborhood might be using it as their own dumping ground. We will continue to clean it up as quickly as possible and if we find out who is doing it, we will go after them.

Mr. David Paulus, Director of Building Standards stated that he wants to confirm what Tom said. This is an owner-occupied property and not a landlord run property. The woman has deceased and the son has disappeared. We tried to search for him and cannot find his location. We had the inspectors go by the building to make sure no one has been breaking into it. It is secured. It is the neighbors that dump trash into that yard.

Mr. Guridy asked Mr. Paulus can they board up these windows.

Mr. Paulus stated that we can board up the windows. We like to not do that when we can get away with it simply for the fact that it makes the rest of the properties in the neighborhood look bad. If we have to and see a broken window or someone broke into a door then we will put boards on.

Mr. Guridy stated that there are several broken windows. Please board them up.

Mr. Paulus stated that it would probably wind up in foreclosure at some point. Last year, we had the ordinance passed for the foreclosure registry. Once a bank starts foreclosure action they have to notify us and register the property with us and they have to have a property maintenance company list it and at that point in time we would be able to shift the duties from Tom's office over to the bank.

Ms. Eichenwald asked who is taking over and will take over the responsibilities of Karen Beck-Pooley when we used to have the Development Authority.

Ms. Shannon Calluori, Operations Manager – Community and Economic Development and the Acting Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority, stated that she took over the responsibility of the Redevelopment Authority. We would all agree that we have concerns about the blighted properties in the City of Allentown and there are a lot of programs in place that we are working on every single day to try to address blight. There is more that we could do, but there is a lot in place. Some of the tools that we have in place and programs we have in place are our on-going property inspections and our code enforcement. We have the Property Maintenance and Rehabilitation Code that we use to inspect properties and can tag properties and follow up with property owners to ensure that they are maintaining their properties and fixing their properties when necessary. We have the Redevelopment Authority that currently has 41 properties in its inventory and 21 of which we are working on a plan to dispose. The other 20 already have a plan for disposition. Only about 50 percent of the properties in the inventory need a plan for disposition. We are planning to put those properties out for RFP, hopefully by December or January. We are hoping to actually deplete our inventory in the next couple of months and that will free us up to use our limited federal dollars to try to acquire properties in the New Year. There is also the Blighted Property process and the

Redevelopment Authority has a major role as well as the City Council has a role in the Blighted Property process. We are planning on bringing some properties in that process in 2014. We also direct a significant portion of our federal dollars to nonprofit developers and we are working with these partners to rehab properties in the city. The Conservatorship Act was passed in the past couple of years and we are working to take properties through that process so that we could work to improve properties. There are 900 properties in the Vacant Property registry.

Ms. Eichenwald thanked Shannon and stated that she knows that she hasn't been in this role for a very long time. I appreciate this and will share what concerns me. It is the phrase we are looking at. I am not saying we don't have to look at new and innovating ways to do it, but what I am looking at is buildings like this. That is the most important thing that we can look at and what we can do about it. To continue to look for new partnerships and new money, obviously is necessary, but let's tackle this. Look at it and imagine people that have to live on this block.

Ms. Calluori stated that she agrees with Ms. Eichenwald and they can clean this up as Tom Harper said and we are cleaning up properties every day. For a long-term solution we have to look at ways that we can support the property-owners with banks providing loans so that people can stay in their properties or rehabilitate their properties. The city is a huge partner in addressing these issues, but we can't be the only partner. While we can clean it up, that is more of a band aid and I think in long-term.

Ms. Eichenwald stated that she agrees with that, but you also said that City Council has a role. For probably the last three years City Council has had no role in this. The entire system broke down; at the same time we are building these beautiful buildings on Hamilton Street.

Mayor Ed Pawlowski stated that they will try to leverage funding opportunity and other opportunities to address state and federal grants to address those particular problems. We will probably have another public meeting after we narrow the process to get more input on that finalized plan, but there are a number of community representatives that are on that committee and a number of business people, community people and we tried to make it ethnically diverse, regionally diverse as far as folks from different aspects of the city: north, east, south, west, center city, economic status and we even have Council people. Joe is on the committee as well and Cynthia is on the committee. Once we narrow down a plan, we will present it again to the public. We had several public meetings.

Ms. Paulette Hunter asked if it could be posted on the website. She doesn't know when you have these meetings.

Mayor Pawlowski stated that he doesn't know if they are generally open to the public. The public meetings we will definitely post. We send out Press Releases and we do a number of ways to get that information out to public.

Ms. Hunter stated that she read in the paper about reduced density, HUD reduced density. I asked a friend what does it mean and I am trying to ask what does mean for the city. A friend told me it means to displace people. She went to HUD website and they said in 2012 they gave Allentown over \$1 million to help find housing for people with severe disabilities and mental health. I would like to know what happened to the money. How many families did we place in housing based on that? Did we do a study to see what the needs are out there and if I could see that study?

Mayor Pawlowski stated that it not what that mean and I don't think that is what HUS means either. Reduce density is trying to reduce the amount of folks in a house. Many of these row homes were single family homes at one particular time and they were chopped up all over the years with multi-family

residences. That burdens the city in a number of different ways. The infrastructure was never built to support those many residences. We don't have enough parking to support those many residences. We don't have water and sewer capacity in many ways. HUD's definition in reducing density and my definition to reduce density is to try to reduce some of the properties back to single family dwellings or back to lower amount of rental units over a period of time as properties become vacant or as they we have funding from HUD to provide or a housing organization like Housing to Rebuild Communities or Habitat or the other agencies that are out there to renovate those properties in the hope is to not keep them as four units. Maybe reduce them to two units or reduce them to single family homes. We did not get a \$1 million. We got CDBG dollars and those CDBG dollars are allocated out for various purposes and one of them is for folks with physical and mental disabilities. Our dollars in that category is allocated out to the Center for Independent Living and to help them in their operational aspects who then provides services to the disability community. We don't provide social supportive services. We are a governmental entity. We rely and provide dollars to other entities.

5. Approval of Minutes: October 16, 2013

Approved by Common Consent

6. Old Business

Mr. Peter Schweyer thanked the Department of Public Works, and Mr. Dougherty for the progress made. We had a lengthy conversation about a vehicular accident in my neighborhood that resulted in the loss of one of my neighbors.

7. Communications:

Mr. Guridy stated that every year we get a budget presentation by the mayor and the budget is due by the November 1st. Today, the Mayor is going to make a presentation of the entire budget and then we will do Public Hearings for particular departments. The next budget meeting is on Tuesday, November 12th.

Budget Presentation: Mayor Pawlowski

Mayor Pawlowski discussed the 2014 Proposed Budget for the City of Allentown, the key components that are in the budget, where we are financially and things that are new for 2014. No property tax increase, business privilege tax remains stable, and \$52 local services and refused fees. There are no increases. There is a decrease in the Earned Income Tax. Personnel and Benefits make up about 77 percent of our entire General Fund. The total city staff is 786.

Ms. Eichenwald asked about the Wall Street Journal's article stating that the city had about seven days of reserve funds. How will this change under this new budget.

Mayor Pawlowski stated that we have \$13 million of unrestricted funds that will help us with a half a year or a year of additional revenue.

Mr. Guridy asked Mayor Pawlowski about the Permit Tech.

Mayor Pawlowski stated that a Permit Tech is another position added in the Building Standards and Safety Department to manage the permit process.

8. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

Budget and Finance: Chairperson Schweyer

The committee met on October 24th and forwarded items on tonight's agenda. Joe and I met with the Controller, Mary Ellen Koval; the Purchasing Agent, Barbara Molitoris; and Deputy Director of Finance,

Deb Bowman to discuss the Auditor RFP on October 25th; the next meeting has not yet been scheduled given the budget.

Mr. Guridy asked if the city was looking to get a different Auditor.

Mr. Schweyer stated by guidelines you can keep the same auditor for up to five years. Their contract is up and we have to go out for an RFP.

Ms. Koval stated that we can retain an auditor for up to six years. The RFP opening is due on December 16th.

Public Safety: Chairperson Eichenwald

The committee has not met since the last meeting; a future meeting has not yet been scheduled. She asked if we had a timetable for the announcement for the new Police Chief. Is it eminent?

Mr. Dougherty stated not at this time.

Mr. Guridy stated that we will have a Chief. I asked, but was not given because they are doing some investigations.

Community and Economic Development: Chairperson Davis

The Committee has not met since the last meeting; the next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Parks and Recreation: Chairperson Mota

The Committee has not met since the last council meeting; a future meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Public Works: Chairperson O'Connell

The Committee has not met since the last council meeting; the next meeting has been scheduled for November 14th at 6:00 PM to review budget priorities and legislation referred to the committee tonight.

Human Resources, Administration and Appointments: Chairperson Glazier

The Committee has not met since the last council meeting; a future meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Rules, Chambers, Intergovernmental Relations and Strategy: Chairperson Guridy

The Committee has not met since the last Council meeting; a future meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Special Committee – Tax Exempt Properties – Chairperson Eichenwald

The Committee has not met since the last meeting; meetings have been set up with local non-profits; the next meeting will be scheduled if needed during our budget deliberations.

OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Schweyer stated that given the news that we heard from Shannon tonight about the Blighted Properties process, can you double check to see if all of our commissions are and contact folks.

Mr. Guridy stated that as you read in the paper about the Allentown Housing Authority there was a lengthy \$725,000 that was at the county to redevelop Cumberland Gardens and that money was to rehab six units that will be supportive units and the county did not approve that. It is needed money.

Controller's Report

None

Managing Director's Report

None

9. APPOINTMENTS: Maria Tjeltveit - Ethics Board Term to End 01/25/2016

RESOLUTION PASSED, 6 – 0

10. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE:

Bill 49 Interfund Transfer Appropriation

Amending the 2013 Water Fund and Sewer Fund – recognizing the receipt of funds from the Water Sewer Lease Concession transaction and placing the funds - \$114,710,204.49 and \$67,369,485.18 – into Interfund Transfer Accounts of the Water and Sewer Funds.

Mr. Schweyer stated that Bill 49 is an accounting bill. After the deposit the city account as a result of the water and sewer lease we have to move those dollars after the defeasement of the water and sewer debt into the water and sewer fund respectively. This is the third bill that we received from the administration. Nothing is Bill 49 allocates these funds.

Mr. Guridy stated that this was discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting. He asked were there any comments from the dais or the public.

Mr. Glenn Hunsicker asked when the ordinance will take effect.

Mr. Schweyer stated that the ordinance takes effect ten days after final passage.

Ms. Deb Bowman stated that the cash amount was listed in the last monthly report.

ORDINANCE PASSED, 6 – 0

11. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION:

Mr. Guridy stated that the budget bills are referred to their respective budget committee meetings per the schedule alluded to above.

Bill 50 Ordinance Pool Fees

Referred to Parks and Recreation

Amending Article 400.05, of the **Department of Parks & Recreation Fees** by adopting a new fee schedule for daily admission and season pass fees, and adopting new categories for the same for the city's four public swimming pools.

Bill 51 JAG Grant (2012-DJ-BX-0093) Appropriation

Referred to Public Safety

Amending the 2013 General Fund Budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of Seventy-Three Thousand Six Hundred Forty-Two (\$73,642) Dollars from a Department of Justice Grant (2012-DJ-BX-0093) to the Allentown Police Department to provide for the purchase and installation of 15 mobile data transmitters to be installed in police cruisers as a result of a Department of Justice Grant.

Bill 52 JAG Grant (2013-DJ-BX-1021) Appropriation

Referred to Public Safety

Amending the 2013 General Fund Budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of Sixty-Six Thousand Nine Hundred Two (\$66,902) Dollars from a Department of Justice Grant (2013-DJ-BX-1021) to the Allentown Police Department to provide for the installation of license plate reading equipment in several patrol vehicles as a result of a Department of Justice Grant.

Bill 53 EMS Iron Pigs - June to Sept 2013

Referred to Public Safety

Amending the 2013 General Fund Budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of Nineteen Thousand Eight Hundred Eighteen Dollars and Seventy-Five Cents (\$19,818.75) from the Lehigh Valley Iron Pigs for providing on-scene emergency medical services.

Bill 54 2014 SWENTERPRISE

Referred to Public Works

An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing and adopting the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund Budget for 2014 and appropriating the sum of Eighteen Million Eight Hundred Seventy –Nine Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$18,879,500) to the Solid Waste Fund as more fully detailed in Exhibit A, “City of Allentown 2014 Budget.”

Bill 55 Solid Waste Fee

Referred to Public Works

Amending Article 1131, Municipal Waste Storage, Collection and Disposal by maintaining the Solid Waste Fee to Three Hundred and Seventy-Five (\$375) Dollars.

Bill 56 2014 LIQUIDFUELS

Referred to Public Works

That an appropriation in the sum of Two Million Four Hundred Eighty-Two and One-Hundred-Fifty Dollars (\$2,482,150) is hereby made to the Liquid Fuels Fund as more fully detailed in Exhibit A, “City of Allentown 2014 Budget.”

Bill 57 2014 TREXLER

Referred to Parks and Recreation

That an appropriation in the sum of One Million Two Hundred Eighty and One- Hundred Seventy-Two Dollars (\$1,280,172) is hereby made to the Trexler Fund as more fully detailed in Exhibit A, “City of Allentown 2014 Budget.”

Bill 58 2014 GOLF COURSE

Referred to Parks and Recreation

That an appropriation in the sum of One Million Four Hundred Thirty and Four Hundred and Sixty Three Dollars (\$1,430,463) is hereby made to the Golf Course Fund as more fully detailed in Exhibit A, “City of Allentown 2014 Budget”.

Bill 59 2014 Equipment Fund

Referred to Parks and Recreation

That an appropriation in the sum of One Million Three Hundred Seven Thousand and Fifty Two Dollars (\$1,307,052) is hereby made to the Equipment Fund as more fully detailed in Exhibit A, “City of Allentown 2014 Budget.”

Bill 60 2014 RISK Fund

Referred to Budget and Finance

That an appropriation in the sum of Eighteen Million Twenty-Three Hundred and Three Hundred and Twelve Dollars (\$18,023,312) is hereby made to the Risk Management Fund as more fully detailed in Exhibit A, “City of Allentown 2014 Budget.”

Bill 61 2014 DEBT

Referred to Budget and Finance

That an appropriation in the sum of Eight Million One Hundred Seventy-Five and Nine Hundred and Sixty-Five Dollars (\$8,175,965) is hereby made to the Debt Obligation as more fully detailed in Exhibit A, “City of Allentown 2014 Budget.”

Bill 62 2014 E911

Referred to Public Safety

That an appropriation in the sum of Three Million Three Hundred Sixty-Nine and Seven Hundred and Four Dollars (\$3,369,704) is hereby made to the E-9-1-1 Fund as more fully detailed in Exhibit A, “City of Allentown 2014 Budget.”

Bill 63 2013 GF Transaction

Amending the 2013 General Fund, Capital Fund and Risk Fund by transferring money from General Fund to the Capital Fund and Risk Fund.

Referred to Budget and Finance

Bill 64 2014 GENERALFUND

Adopts the General Fund Budget

Referred to Committee of the Whole

Bill 65 2014 ARTICLE 331 EIT DECREASE

Reduces EIT Tax

Referred to Committee of the Whole

Bill 66 2014 TAXRATE

That a tax for general revenue be levied for the fiscal year, beginning the first Monday of January, A.D., 2014, upon all real, personal and mixed property within the limits of the said City, taxable according to the laws of the State of Pennsylvania, the valuation of such property to be taken from the assessed valuation of the taxable property under the provisions of the law regulating the same, at the rate of Three and Forty-nine Thousand Two Hundred Sixty-seven Hundred Thousandth (3.49267) mills on improvements and Eighteen and Four Sixty-two Thousand Thirty-one Hundred Thousandth (18.46231) mills on land.

Referred to Committee of the Whole

12. CONSENT AGENDA:

CA- 1 Appointment of a Patrolman

RESOLUTION PASSED, 6 – 0

13. RESOLUTIONS ON SECOND READING:

None

14. RESOLUTIONS ON FIRST READING:

R29 Capital Improvements Program

Adopts the Capital Improvements Program for 2014-2018

Referred to Budget and Finance

15. NEW BUSINESS

None

16. GOOD AND WELFARE

Ms. Eichenwald stated that she would like to take the opportunity to welcome Mr. Hendricks this evening as an official about to be installed City Councilmember. I welcome you and I look forward to working with you as I am sure the rest of my colleagues are, congratulations.

Mr. Guridy stated that we will see you soon, on the dais. Congratulations on all who won re-election, including myself.

17. ADJOURNED: 8:16 PM

Council meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month beginning at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers. For copies of the agenda or meeting announcements, please visit our website at www.allentownpa.gov or contact the Clerk at Michael.Harlon@allentownpa.gov to receive an email notice of the meetings.