

ALTOONA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 26, 2014 - 7:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS - 1320 WASHINGTON AVENUE, ALTOONA, PA

The meeting was televised live on cable Public Access Channel 14 and re-broadcast Thursday, February 27, 2014.

CALL TO ORDER – by Mayor Pacifico at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers

SILENT MEDITATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL – taken by City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer

Present: Councilmen Butterbaugh, Cacciotti, Cagle, Haire, Kelley, Neugebauer and Mayor Pacifico

Mayor Pacifico asked Councilman Haire to read a resolution that was going to be added to the agenda; the resolution reads as follows: rescinding Resolution 0025-14, the appointment of Councilman Michael Haire as a member of the Altoona Water Authority, and appointing William Schirf of 1401 Ivyside Drive, Altoona, PA as a member of the Altoona Water Authority for a term of five years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January, 2019.

PUBLIC COMMENT- Josh Karst, 5238 Grandview Avenue, Altoona, PA stated he works for the Penelec Union of 142 members who have been locked out for 93 days and they are ready to go back to work and asked if Council had any questions regarding the strike; Mr. Karst stated both sides had not met in negotiations in six weeks although they were ready to negotiate; the last negotiations that were held lasted one half hour and were held in Pittsburgh and included 5 minutes before lunch and 25 minutes after lunch; Mr. Karst stated the union does not consider that negotiating; Mr. Karst stated the contract is proposing an 8% raise and he considers this to be fair but they were given a stipulation which they were not willing to vote on; it went to a membership vote and was overwhelmingly shot down; the last, best and final is worse than the stipulation so it doesn't look like the union will vote on a contract; Penelec plans to take away the retiree health benefit; the retirees have what is called a VIVA Trust which has funds in the amount of 78 million dollars in it and it is used to pay the retiree health benefits; the question the union has is if they take away the health benefit where will that money go; that 78 million pays out 13 million dollars a year and it accrues 2 million dollars; the union is unable to get information on the VIVA Trust; the previous contract was a five year with a three year extension and the union had not negotiated with Penelec for eight years; Mr. Karst stated the union workers have been watching what is going on with their replacements and Mr. Karst stated that he believes someone is going to get killed or injured; Mr. Karst stated it never should have taken 30 hours to put the bank back into power after the recent incident on Route 764 when the beer truck wrecked into the pole; Mr. Karst stated the damage was not that extensive and 764 was blocked for over 9

hours and it is unacceptable and like a double standard because if the union workers had done something like that they would have not have gotten away with that; Mr. Karst stated the union members also watched a temporary worker almost get killed in the same area by blowing his arms off outside of the Eldorado substation because of lack of knowledge of the job; when that incident occurred there were not any of the other temporaries that could help this guy; in another incident the temporary workers left a guy hanging and turned the light off on him and left the scene and he was up in the air in the dark with 7,000 volts outside the substation in a dangerous area to be in; the union workers can get the power on a lot faster; also, regarding negotiations, the federal mediator is not even willing to sit in the same room with them; this is the difference between right and wrong and is not about the raise; Mr. Karst provided Council with a resolution and asked them to review it and consider signing it

Councilman Butterbaugh stated he hopes they get back to work soon as 93 days is a long time to be out of work

Councilman Cagle commended the union members in attendance and thanked them for coming to the meeting and telling their side and their concerns and hopes that it is resolved soon and that both sides can get together

Public Works Annual Report – Dave Diedrich, Public Works Director gave a power point presentation for 2013

Monthly Financial Review – Omar Strohm, Finance Director reviewed January 2014 finances; the preliminary numbers are in for December but because of modified accrual they aren't realistic; the final numbers should be available in one month

MANAGER'S REPORT – the report was distributed to Council previously; there were no questions and no further discussion was held

RESOLUTIONS

a) approving the minutes of the Altoona City Council Meeting held Wednesday, February 12, 2014. (0037-14)

b) awarding the Juniata Memorial Spray Park Project Bid to Mid-State Construction, Inc. of 260 Brush Mountain Road, Altoona, PA in the amount of \$824,005.20 payable from the Recreation Project Fund, DCNR/Land and Water Conservation Grant and HUD Funds and further authorizing the Interim City Manager to execute all documents and the City Clerk to attest to same. (0038-14)

c)awarding the Ash Tree Treatment – Arborjet Tree IV Project Bid to Bennetti Tree Service, Inc. of 162 Bennetti Drive, Altoona, PA in the amount of \$8,430.00 (payable from Account No. 10-53880-4530) and further authorizing the Interim City Manager to execute all documents and the City Clerk to attest to same. (0039-14)

d)rescinding Resolution 0025-14, the appointment of Councilman Michael Haire as a member of the Altoona Water Authority, and appointing William Schirf of 1401 Ivyside Drive, Altoona, PA as a member of the Altoona Water Authority for a term of five years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January, 2019. (0040-14)

the resolutions were read by City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer; a consent vote was taken on all items and passed 7 to 0 with all present

DISCUSSION ITEMS –Councilman Haire asked about the right of way ordinance that was referred to in the Act 47 Plan and if the money needed to complete phase 2, the study, which would be roughly \$30,000, could be found suggesting Senator Eichelberger be contacted or DCED or that it be taken out of the City contingency; Councilman Haire stated the money will be recouped by the City in the first year alone once the ordinance is in place; Omar Strohm stated he will discuss it with DCED on Thursday and get back to Council regarding this matter

Councilman Haire asked for an update on the Altoona Hotel; Deputy Fire Chief Mike Tofano stated the property is still under investigation by ATF so they are in a holding pattern; Chief Freehling stated she has nothing further to report at this time and that she did not receive additional information

MEDIA in attendance included Bill Kibler for the *Altoona Mirror*, Steve Willet for WRTA and Benn Manning for WTAJ TV 10

ADJOURNMENT – by Mayor Pacifico at 7:55 p.m.