

ALTOONA CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY – APRIL 22, 2019 - 6:00 P.M.  
ALTOONA CITY HALL – 1301 12<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM - ALTOONA, PA 16601

AGENDA

1. Call to Order by Mayor Pacifico at 6pm in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room of City Hall
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Attendance - Council members Butterbaugh, Cacciotti, Jordan (via phone), Kelley, Neugebauer and Mayor Pacifico  
Councilman Cagle was absent
4. All Public Comment – offered and none given
5. Discussion Items

AWA Refinancing Ordinance – Attorney Jens Damgaard, Eckert, Seamans, Cherin & Mellott, LLC stated a refinance is being proposed for the Altoona Water Authority with some of it being bonds associated with the sewer system; when the transaction was completed transferring the water and sewer assets to the City at the same time the City leased them back to the AWA and in the lease it says that the condition to the payments that would be ongoing to the City, in the event that future bonds are issued by the AWA that they would be issued through the City instead; this was done because authority bonds are subject to a trust indenture document and that was the document creating most of the impediments; to avoid extending that indenture into the future and creating those impediments in the future the City will now be the borrower as the owner of the asset; the savings could be approximately \$600,000; there are some tax thresholds, specifically 10 million dollars in a calendar year and this would put the City over that; the City would not lose bank qualification but it may have an affect; the AWA could possibly make the City whole if that would happen; Jens was not aware that the City may borrow at some point

Mayor Pacifico asked that since this technically isn't borrowing new money can the AWA do this refinancing on their own without the City; Jens stated it could but the City would still have to do an ordinance and put its guaranty on it; Jens stated there could be language put in place that stated the AWA would compensate the City for any loss of bank qualification; the City did not do a TRAN and there isn't new capital borrowing on the horizon

Jens asked Council for an ordinance enacted with two readings with the intent to move quickly if possible due to interest rates at this time; introduction could take place on May 8<sup>th</sup>; Peter mentioned that time is important because of the interest rates and trying to get a good rate and Council may want to add a meeting to adopt; Jens stated interest rates would be fixed and taxable; the result is a reduction of about 6% of the subsidy; interest rates is 2 series with one between 5 and 6 1/2 and the other between 4.8 and 7; an update will be provided closer to the date

Council decided to introduce on May 8<sup>th</sup> (regular council meeting) and add a meeting and meet on May 28<sup>th</sup> (City Hall – 6pm) to adopt; Jens stated AWA would like the City's approval before they go to market; Jens will provide an update in rates at the final reading; the AWA will approve a final minimum savings target which gives defined direction and they would go to market in early June

Consideration of the Goodman Trust Recreation Projects – Council discussed and reviewed the projects and decided to fund all requests but the Altoona Area Baseball Association because the application did not provide a project description and supporting documentation; Council agreed to inform the baseball association to re-submit their complete application for the next round of funding.

City Hall Employee Parking Lot Revisions/Improvements Review – Peter Marshall provided an original plan to Council stating he looked at the estimated cost which was \$200,000; Nate and Peter reviewed the plan again and came up with a plan that has the same amount of parking and saves \$115,000-\$145,000; the new estimate would be between \$54,000 and \$84,000; both give you six additional parking spaces, green area, curbing, moves the smoke hut and adds a shed; Peter asked for Council's approval to move ahead and those in attendance agreed

Discussion of strategic priorities – Council reviewed the previous list that was distributed and ranked them by number; Peter stated there are four or five downtown housing studies that have a lot of recommendations and the current list that Council generated and thirteen pages of notes that Marla provided that are about projects that either are started or thinking about; there are a lot of potential priorities and Peter recommended a strategic planning session; Councilman Kelley stated that is a great idea and something that they wanted for a long time; there is a lot and it may be hard to make decisions; Council decided to work on their current list and ranked items 1-3 with 1 being the priority; Mayor Pacifico stated once prioritized there can be a meeting to totally focus on the most current list generated by Council

Councilman Kelly asked if someone has a commercial vehicle that is their livelihood and they drive a step van for a company where can they park; Peter

said they should be required to make arrangements with someone who owns a parking lot to park it in their lot rather than on the streets in the neighborhoods; Councilman Kelley asked if the City can facilitate this to help out and to identify some areas; Councilman Cacciotti asked about some of the lots on the repository and if they could be used for this purpose; that is a possibility although it is a zoning issue and would require re-zoning or petition to the Zoning Hearing Board; Councilman Kelley stated if the public knew the City was looking at this issue there may be parking lot owners out there who are willing to rent space; Councilman Cacciotti stated there are a lot of churches with parking lots; Peter suggested a brainstorm of possibilities; Councilman Butterbaugh said the City needs some input from the public; it will be a future discussion

Peter reviewed the current list with Council and items were ranked or discussion was held as to next steps as follows:

Commercial vehicle parking - 1

Contractor licensing – 1

Option for the homeowner to pull their own permits – remove from the list-4

Odd/even parking during snow events – staff level - 4

Snow emergency routes – staff level - 4

Strategy for downtown in inclement weather - 4

Review existing strategic planning information - 1

Peter will look at the existing plan and see how that relates to what we are doing and what we have done

Housing strategies – 1

Peter stated there are several housing studies over several years; Peter referred to a few of the studies including Housing Strategies-Downtown Investment and Ahead of the Curve; Peter said there is a lot and it will take a very long time to make a dent in it although some things are currently happening

GIS/maps for the website and app – staff level - 4

Peter stated this would need to be integrated with BS&A and it is critical that GIS be used with a lot of things

Alley/street vacations and utilities – staff level - 3

Councilman Butterbaugh would like to see the landowner not have to jump through so many hoops, mainly recording of easements, which can be done by the utilities

An app for the City – staff level – 1

Victor provided rates received at a recent conference call with City Sourced who does integrate with BS&A; Mayor Pacifico stated See, Click, Fix states they do integrate with BS&A as well and they provided the names of two municipalities but BS&A states that they do not integrate with See, Click, Fix; it was decided that staff would update Council on their progress on this

Overgrown trees/shade trees/roots/sidewalks – staff level - 1

Peter asked who plants shade trees; Lee Slusser stated the City used to but they stopped planting; Peter stated if the City does not stop it will cost a lot of money because you have to maintain the trees including removal of trees and trimming of trees; the City should be able to get to all of the street trees at least every 5 to 7 years; State College had 5,000 street trees with 2 crews and an arborist when Peter was there; there should be a master plan with the trees shown on GIS and reviewed annually; you have to be prepared to pay for it; Lee Slusser stated the Shade Tree Commission is currently working on a new Shade Tree Plan and Ordinance with an Arborist; Peter asked they are advisory; Lee stated yes

Creating a vehicle replacement fund - 1

Peter recommended the City do this and stated he already started the process; when you purchase replacement equipment you determine the life of that equipment, and it is a straight line depreciation, every year you place that much money in an equipment replacement fund; you start with all of your mobile equipment; when that equipment has reached its life you replace it with the funds from the vehicle replacement fund; it takes it out of the budget and it means that you are earning interest rather than spending; any new equipment that you do not have is in the budget but the replacement equipment is in this fund; Councilman Kelley asked how you factor in increased cost of a vehicle; Peter stated you are earning interest on that money from the time the equipment is purchased until the time that you have to replace it so that puts some of the money back; the other way is if a piece of equipment goes another year – you depreciate it another year which gives you more money in the fund and it helps to build the fund; you have to determine the life of the equipment which is not difficult; eventually you can add other items to the fund; you have to set a standard and anything that you buy has a life; maybe an amount or a number of years; basically a description of capital; the fund is one lump sum and each vin is listed; it is one fund for all departments; it gives you a plan and preserves your reserves

Pay debt – staff level - 4

Councilman Butterbaugh stated this mainly had to do with pensions; Councilman Kelley mentioned debt service and pension obligations and whether it is prudent for the City to take some of the money and pay off some of the debt; Peter stated probably not the debt he will have to look at that and the pensions

Cornerstones on properties and resources to save/promote historical structures – staff level - 2

Councilman Kelley asked if the City can pull resources together to try to help save some of the properties; the pace has not slowed much on tear-downs; it has been almost 20 years since the City had something listed on the national registry; Peter asked if there are other historians that can help to identify historic properties and list them; once this is done there are things that you can do including ordinances that can be adopted; there needs to be interest and effort as it is very time consuming; Peter suggested a presentation by those that have done this in other communities and share their information and discuss what is possible; Lee Slusser mentioned the successful historic districts around the City and that he would be interested in incentives as well as regulations – which Hollidaysburg has done; another area that can be looked at is promotion of historic resources; Mayor Pacifico stated at times there are problems bringing the buildings up to code; Peter stated there are code provisions specifically for historic buildings and it is not as rigorous

Pleasant Valley/Plank Road pedestrian crossings/sidewalks – staff level - 1

Councilman Butterbaugh stated this is a long term item and it needs to be done for safety as there are no sidewalks in most places and limited if any pedestrian crosswalks; Councilman Kelley stated there are more sidewalks now but the crosswalks remain a problem; Lee Slusser stated Penn DOT is currently looking at adding crosswalks at several locations along Plank Road during the upcoming paving; the Mayor has been pushing for a crossing at Logan Boulevard and Plank Road; Lee stated it can be done and staff may need Council's help to move this along; Peter asked Lee to keep him and Council up to date and to also inquire as to the specific locations targeted at this time; Nate Kissell stated there is a program called PennDOT Connects; Mayor Pacifico stated Secretary Richards has a big emphasis on multi-modal transportation and it is more of a priority than it was in the past; Nate Kissell stated unfortunately you can't use liquid fuels money for anything other than cars; Mayor Pacifico stated he has spoke with both the House and the Senate about allowing liquid fuels money to be used beyond vehicles

Joint worksession with Logan Township to discuss joint municipal items - 4

Councilman Butterbaugh stated the City is one third of the County and neighbors with Logan Township and it would be nice to meet once per year to highlight what is shared such as IRC, Electrical crew; also figure out ways to work together; PennDOT likes to see intermunicipal cooperation

Joint worksession with the Blair County Commissioners - 4

Vice-Mayor Cacciotti asked about the bus shelters for downtown; Councilman Kelley stated they are AMTRAN'S shelters; VM Cacciotti would like to see more shelters in downtown; Councilman Kelley stated it has been a while since Council received a presentation from AMTRAN; the City Clerk will coordinate this

6. Resolutions

authorizing a transfer from the Goodman Trust Fund to the following organizations in the following amounts for the recreation projects attached hereto. (0033-19)

City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer read the resolution into the record; a vote was taken and passed 6 to 0; Councilman Cagle was absent

7. Media Questions

Bill Kibler of the *Altoona Mirror* was in attendance.

8. Adjournment by Mayor Pacifico at 7:44 p.m.