

ALTOONA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Oath of Office for Newly Elected, Organizational/Council Meeting
TUESDAY – JANUARY 2, 2024 - 6:00 P.M.
CITY OF ALTOONA TRAINING FACILITY & COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1320 WASHINGTON AVENUE, ALTOONA, PA

The Meeting was televised live on cable Public Access Channel 14 and re-broadcast Wednesday, January 3, 2024.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH OF OFFICE by City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer to Mayor Matt Pacifico, Councilman Jesse Ickes, and Councilwoman Shelley Clinich

CALL TO ORDER – by Mayor Pacifico at 6:10 PM in Council Chambers
SILENT MEDITATION
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL – taken by City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer
Present: Council members Beatty, Butterbaugh, Clinich, Ellis, Ickes, Kelley, and Mayor Pacifico

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING COUNCIL MEMBER MITCH COOPER & CITY MANAGER OMAR STROHM- Mayor Pacifico presented each with a plaque

Mayor Pacifico announced that Council held an executive session for personnel matters

The Mayor offered recommendations for appointments to authorities, boards and commissions as follows in the resolutions below.

ALL PUBLIC COMMENT – offered and none given

RESOLUTIONS

- a) appointing Councilman Dave Ellis to serve as Vice-Mayor with said term expiring the first Monday of January 2026. (0001-24)
- b) approving the City Council Meeting Schedule, attached hereto, for the year 2024, in accordance with the Home Rule Charter and Administrative Code of the City of Altoona. (0002-24)
- c) approving the minutes of the Altoona City Council Meeting held Monday, December 4, 2023. (0003-24)
- d) approving a one-year extension to the City and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s contract agreement, to continue participation in the Federal Special Bridge Funds Inventory and Inspection Program, and further authorizing

the City Manager or Interim City Manager to execute all documents and the City Clerk to attest to same. (0004-24)

e) awarding Supplemental Snow Removal Services to Miner Excavating, 371 Moser Road, Altoona, PA 16601, in the amount of \$25,600.00, payable from Highway Aid, and further authorizing the City Manager or Interim City Manager to execute all documents and the City Clerk to attest to same. (0005-24)

f) amending the 2023 Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) transferring \$77,365.89 from the 2019 Program Year Funds to the 2023 Nehemiah Meal Preparation Project. (0006-24)

g) reappointing Cory Gehret to the Altoona Water Authority for a term of five years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2029. (0007-24)

h) appointing Councilman Jesse Ickes to the Altoona Water Authority to fill the unexpired term of Omar Strohm. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2027. (0008-24)

i) reappointing Mitch Cooper to the Altoona Housing Authority for a term of five years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2029. (0009-24)

j) reappointing Dave Betar to the Altoona Parking Authority for a term of five years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2029. (0010-24)

k) appointing Mayor Matt Pacifico to the Altoona Parking Authority to fill the unexpired term of Omar Strohm. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2025. (0011-24)

l) reappointing Michael Haire to the Altoona City Planning Commission for a term of four years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2028. (0012-24)

m) reappointing Councilman Ron Beatty to the Redevelopment Authority of Altoona for a term of five years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2029. (0013-24)

n) reappointing Mark Ritchey to the AMED Authority for a term of five years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2029. (0014-24)

o) appointing Mike Kessler to the AMTRAN Authority for a term of five years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2029. (0015-24)

p) reappointing John Garritano to the Civil Service Board for a term of four years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2028. (0016-24)

- q) reappointing Mitch Cooper (alternate) to the Civil Service Board for a term of four years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2028. (0017-24)
- r) reappointing Charles Kimmen to the Electrical & Plumbing Examiners Board for a term of four years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2028. (0018-24)
- s) reappointing Chris Marana to the Electrical & Plumbing Examiners Board for a term of four years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2028. (0019-24)
- t) reappointing Matt Gindlesperger to the Zoning Hearing Board for a term of five years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January, 2029. (0020-24)
- u) accepting the retirement of Omar Strohm, City Manager, effective January 2, 2024. (0002124)
- v) appointing Joseph Merrill to the position of Interim City Manager, effective January 2, 2024, at a gross monthly base rate of pay of \$13,230.75, with the same benefits he is currently receiving through the City of Altoona. Said status as Interim City Manager shall remain effective until the City Council appoints a new full-time City Manager. (0022-24)
- w) appointing Derek Swope to the position of Interim Chief of Police, effective January 2, 2024, at a gross monthly base rate of pay of \$8,230.75, with the same benefits he is currently receiving through the City of Altoona. Said status as Interim Chief of Police shall remain effective until the City Council appoints a new full-time City Manager and Joseph Merrill returns as Chief of Police. (0023-24)
- x) approving the Professional Services Agreement between the City of Altoona and Omar Strohm for the purpose of providing consulting services to the Interim City Manager and authorizing the Interim City Manager to execute the Agreement and all related documents to effectuate same. (0024-24)
- y) reappointing James Potopa to the Code Appeals Board for a term of five years. Said term shall expire the first Monday of January 2029. (0025-24)

City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer read the resolutions into the record; Councilman Beatty requested that item t be pulled for a separate vote; the consent vote was taken by the City Clerk on all items except for item t and passed 7 to 0; a vote was taken on item t and passed 6 to 1; Councilman Beatty voted no; all were present for both votes

ORDINANCES - Introduction

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ALTOONA, BLAIR COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, WHICH AMENDS CHAPTER 690 "UTILITIES" OF THE ALTOONA CITY CODE, PARTICULARY SECTION 690-2 "STATEMENT OF FACILITITES OWNED AND/OR MAINTAINED", SECTION 690-5 "APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO ERECT POLES", SECTION 690-9 "LICENSE FEE", SECTION 690-11 "RIGHT OF CERTAIN UTILITY COMPANIES TO CONSTRUCT UNDERGROUND SYSTEMS IN STREETS AND SIDEWALKS", SECTION 690-12 "APPROVAL OF PLANS OF PROPOSED SYSTEM; GRANTING OF PERMISSION TO CONSTRUCT SYSTEM", 690-17 "RIGHT OF CITY TO INSPECT AND SUPERVISE SYSTEMS; FURNISHING DESIRED INFORMATION", AND SECTION 690-22 "VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES" TO CLARIFY THE APPLICABLITY OF CHAPTER 690 AND THE PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION OF CHAPTER 690, TO PROVIDE A REAFFIRMATION OF THE REMAINDER OF CHAPTER 690, TO PROVIDE A REPEALER, SAVINGS CLAUSE AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

This ordinance was read into the record by City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer and introduced by Councilman Butterbaugh.

Adoption - Councilman Ellis

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ALTOONA AMENDING THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ALTOONA TO AMEND CHAPTER 405 ENTITLED "LEASE AND/OR CONVEYANCE OF CITY OWNED LANDS", TO: AUTHORIZE CONVEYANCE OF CITY OWNED LAND LOCATED AT 1901 NORTH NINTH AVENUE TO THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF ALTOONA, FOR \$1.00; REAFFIRM THE REMAINDER OF CHAPTER 405; REPEAL ALL OTHER ORDINANCES OR PARTS THEREOF IN CONFLICT THEREWITH; PROVIDE SEVERABILITY OF PROVISIONS AND PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DATE. (ORD. NO. 5811)

This ordinance was read into the record by City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer

Introduction – Councilman Ellis

Motion for Adoption – Councilman Ellis

Second – Councilman Butterbaugh

The vote was taken by City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer and passed 7 to 0 with all present

CITY MANAGER UPDATES – no updates at this time

MAYOR & COUNCIL DISCUSSION ITEMS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilman Ickes wished Omar well on his retirement and thanked the Interim Manager, Joe Merrill and the Interim Police Chief, Derek Swope for their assistance as Council navigates the City Manager position

Councilman Butterbaugh thanked Omar for all he has done for the City including the time during Act 47; it's been an honor and he appreciated his honesty and trustworthiness; also thanks to Mitch Cooper for stepping up to serve on Council and for serving on the Altoona Housing Authority again; also, thanks to Cory Gehret who was in the audience at this meeting, for serving on the Altoona Water Authority again, and for all of the volunteers who are serving on the authorities, boards and commissions

Councilman Ellis thanked Omar for his service to the City and for doing a great job maneuvering through the ARPA money and the development of the business grants; best wishes in future endeavors; Councilman Ellis also echoed Councilman Butterbaugh regarding the Altoona Housing Authority, agreeing they are a great board with great staff and they don't have the issues that some of the neighboring housing authorities have

Councilman Beatty thanked Omar for his help over the last two years and for guiding the ARPA money and for covering shortages in other departments; in 2023 the City finished the land bank and acquired two houses through the Redevelopment Authority and can move forward in 2024; feels that there needs to be a better system to help the City Manager be successful and also serve the citizens; a management committee was formed to redefine how the City Manager works with Council; blight enforcement and creating livable housing will be a priority in 2024

Councilwoman Clinich thanked Omar; Councilwoman Clinich stated it has been a pleasure to work with Council and to make the right decisions for the City and continue growth in a positive way

Council Committee Assignments for 2024 were brought forth by Mayor Pacifico and reviewed and discussed by Council and are as follows:

Metropolitan Planning Organization - Mayor Pacifico and Councilman Butterbaugh

Greater Altoona Economic Development Corporation Board - Mayor Pacifico and Councilman Butterbaugh as well as Interim City Manager Joe Merrill

Blair County 24 Member Advisory Committee - Councilman Butterbaugh

Blair County Community Action Agency – on hold at this time

Central Blair Recreation Commission - Mayor Pacifico (voting member), Councilman Ellis and Interim City Manager Joe Merrill

ABCD Corporation- Mayor Pacifico and Interim City Manager Joe Merrill

Intermunicipal Relations Committee - Councilwoman Clinich and Interim City Manager Joe Merrill

Pyramid Healthcare - Councilman Ickes

Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation – Councilman Ellis and Interim Police Chief Swope

MEDIA – media attendance included Bill Kibler, *Altoona Mirror*

ADJOURNMENT – by Mayor Pacifico at 6:50 p.m.