

MONESSEN MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
ONE WENDELL RAMEY LANE
MONESSEN, PA 15062

MARCH 12, 2014

OPENING:

Minutes of the regular meeting of Monessen City Council held Wednesday, March 12, 2014 in Council chambers of the Monessen Municipal Complex, One Wendell Ramey Lane, Eastgate 8, Monessen, PA. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Louis Mavrakis.

ROLL CALL:

The roll was called and the following members were in attendance:

PRESENT:

Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Mayor Mavrakis

ABSENT:

PRESENT: FIVE

ABSENT: NONE

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

All present recited the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Mavrakis, "Could I have a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 12, 2014 meeting?"

Councilman Retos, "so moved, Mayor".

Councilwoman Bukowski, "I second".

Mayor Mavrakis, "question on the motion?"

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Mavrakis opened the floor for public comment on Agenda items only at this time.
There was no public comment.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Councilman Jonmichael Retos – Department of Accounts & Finance

No Report

Councilwoman D'Alfonso – Department of Streets & Public Improvements

No Report

Councilwoman Bukowski – Department of Parks & Public Properties

No Report

Councilman Nestor – Department of Public Safety

No Report

Solicitor Albert Gaudio

No Report

Mayor Mavrakis – Department of Public Affairs

No Report

NEW BUSINESS:

Councilman Retos – Department of Accounts & Finance

Councilman Retos made a motion to add Carole A. Baker as an authorized user for the Business Internet Banking and ACH Program on all City of Monessen accounts at First Federal Savings Bank.

Councilwoman Bukowski, "second".

Mayor Mavrakis, "questions on the motion?"

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Patricia Vegso

Councilman Retos made a motion to accept the resignation of Patricia Vegso, effective May 2, 2014.

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "second".

Mayor Mavrakis, "question on the motion?"

Councilman Retos, "I just want to make a comment, she is retiring, she is not quitting. She put in how many years, 30? She is retiring."

City Clerk Minno, "she has 25 years of service".

Councilwoman Bukowski, "my comment would be that she has done such a wonderful job for us while she is here that is really going to be hard to replace her."

Councilman Nestor, "ditto".

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "I think we all agree with that".

Mayor Mavrakis, "I think we all agree on that."

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Mayor Mavrakakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS:

Councilwoman D'Alfonso – Department of Parks & Public Properties

Street Department Report

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "I have the Street Department Report for the month of February. Aside from the fact that the weather and the ice and the snow and the cold temperatures really kept the department very busy, they cold patched 60 streets, the responded to 13 Pennsylvania One Calls, repaired 4 parking meters, cleaned roads, snow removal of 306.5 man hours of overtime, they emptied City trash cans downtown 3 times a week, they worked on 17 vehicles, including police cars, trucks, salt hoppers and snow plows.

Councilwoman Bukowski – Department of Parks & Public Properties

Parks Department Report

Councilwoman Bukowski, "my Parks Department Report for February. Removed trash from the police station 2 or 3 times a week, swept and mopped floors, cleaned rest rooms and jail cells as needed, removed trash from Civic Center, swept and mopped floors in the hallway, cleaned rest rooms, swept and mopped gym floor once a week. Cleaned City sidewalks and steps of snow and salted on following days, February 2, 3, 4, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 26 for a total of 10 days. Scraped ice off of some of the parking lots downtown, removed Christmas lights from downtown and other parts of town, cleaned up tree branches inside City Park from the high winds, removed trash from 9th Street, Shawnee, Walking Track and Boat Launch. They started cleaning out the old City Hall, removing trash, boarded up old windows.

Kare for My Kids

Councilwoman Bukowski, "motion to approve the request of Kare for My Kids to use Monessen City Park for the annual Easter Egg Hunt on April 19, 2014 from 11 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.".

Councilman Retos, "second".

Mayor Mavrakis, "question on the motion?"

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Monessen Civic Recreation Board

Councilwoman Bukowski gave the following Monessen Civic Recreation Board report: They finally got together last month, they elected officers, Eugene Sedlak is the President, Cheryl Fleming is the Vice President, Roberta Bergstedt is the Secretary, John Palmer is the Treasurer, Leroy Bright has the buildings, Donnie Caterino has the scheduling and Marlon Wheeler will take care of the committees.

Also, Donnie Caterino is taking the calls for scheduling down at the Civic Center. His number is 724-314-3586 at home or 724-518-6715. If anyone needs wants to schedule down there for anything, we are also accepting for birthday parties.

I think that the Board is going to do a real good job. They are very excited and everybody down there is ready to move."

Councilman Nestor – Department of Public Safety

Councilman Nestor, "residents of Monessen, Council, and Mayor Mavrakis the following reports for the Public Safety Department".

Code Office Report

The Code Office Report for the month ending February: Building Permits- \$104.24; Soliciting Permits - \$100; Street Openings - \$3,000; Sign Permits - \$1,020; Magistrate-Code Enforcement - \$111.71; Eat & Drink License - \$50.00; Health Inspections - \$50.00; Occupancy Permits - \$400; Landlord Fees - \$300 for a monthly total of \$5,135.95 and the year to date \$12,177.73.

Fire Report

Councilman Nestor, "here is the Fire Report ending in the month of February. There were 14 Total Runs, 171 Total Responding, Average Responding Call was 12.21 and the Total Man Hours were 171.75."

EMS Report

Councilman Nestor, "this is the Municipality EMS Incident Run Report ending in the month of February, Emergency Calls-128, Fire Standbys-1 for Total Incidents 129.

Thus, concluding my report for the Public Safety Department."

Appointment of Christopher Rhome as the Municipal Fire Chief

Councilman Nestor made a motion to appoint Christopher Rhome as the Municipal Fire Chief.

Mayor Mavrakis, "I second the motion. Are there any questions on the motion?"

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "yes, Mayor. I will be voting no on this motion because I feel that our current Fire Chief has been doing an outstanding job in service to the community. Since his job performance cannot be held in question, I see no reason to disrupt the operation of the Fire Department at this time."

YEAS:

Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Mayor Mavrakis

NAYS:

Councilwoman D'Alfonso

YEAS: FOUR

NAYS: ONE

Mayor Mavrakis asked Christopher Rhome and Judge D'Alfonso to come forward at this time. Judge D'Alfonso swore Christopher Rhome into office.

Councilwoman Bukowski, "I would like to make a comment. I would like to thank Delmar Hepple for all he has done as Municipal Fire Chief. I know that it is not an easy job, but he has kept up and has done what he was supposed to do and I appreciate that. Thank you."

Gerald Saksun – City Treasurer

City Treasurer Saksun, "Mayor Lou Mavrakis and members of City Council, Ladies and Gentlemen the following is a report of the Garbage Collection Fees and City Real Estate Taxes collected for the month of February 2014: Garbage Fees budgeted for 2014 - \$470,000.00; Garbage Fees collected as of January 31 \$377,461.00; Garbage Fees

collected during February – \$45,026.50; Total Garbage Fees collected as of February 28 - \$422,487.50; Delinquent Garbage Fees collected for the month of January \$7,742.07; Delinquent Garbage Fee collected during February was \$6,240.99. Delinquent Garbage Fees collected as of February 28 is \$13,983.06.

General Fund Real Estate Taxes budgeted is \$1,265,619.00; Debt Service Fund budgeted \$490,000.00, City Parks Fund budgeted \$216,250.00, Library Fund budgeted \$50,000.

City Real Estate Taxes collected during February is \$138.45, Delinquent City Taxes collected as of January 31 is \$4,830.37.

Mayor, that concludes my report.”

Mayor Mavrakis, “Can I have a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report?”

Councilman Nestor, “So moved.”

Councilwoman D’Alfonso, “Second.”

Mayor Mavrakis, “Any questions? Clerk call the roll.”

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D’Alfonso
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FOUR

NAYS: NONE

Wayne Vlasic – City Controller

City Controller Vlasic, “Mayor and Members of Council, the following is the General Fund First Federal Checking Account Bank Reconciliation as of February, 2014: Beginning Bank Balance - \$453,015.99; Deposits - \$221,194.51 for a Total of \$674,210.50. Checks Cashed \$576,120.23 leaving a Bank Balance of \$98,090.27. Deposits in Transit \$6,702.00; Outstanding Checks \$2,110.28 leaving a final amount reconciled to the Balance Sheet of \$102,681.99.

CDBG Report

Controller Vlasic, “this will be a two month report of the City of Monessen CDBG Bank Account: Beginning Balance January 1 - \$22,702.63; Deposits \$17,691.99; Total

\$40,394.62; Checks Cashed \$24,401.39; Bank Balance of \$15,993.23; Outstanding Checks \$7,500.00 for a Month End Balance of \$8,493.23".

Councilman Retos made a motion to accept the CDBG Report.

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "I'll second the motion".

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Controller Vlastic, "this the City of Monessen CDBG Bank Account for the month of February 2014: Beginning Balance of \$15,993.23; Deposits of \$3,836.97 for a Total of \$19,830.20; Checks Cashed \$3,628.72 for a Bank Balance of \$16,201.48. Outstanding Checks \$7,500.00 for a final month end Balance of \$8,701.48.

Councilman Retos, "motion to accept Wayne's report".

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "I'll second that".

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Albert Gaudio– Solicitor

Solicitor Gaudio, "for the past month the Solicitor has been involved and engaged in several eviction proceedings which have been authorized by Council involving City property. In addition, the Solicitor has assisted Council, Mayor and staff regarding several legal matters involving advice, the execution of documents and things of that nature".

Mayor Mavrakis – Department of Public Affairs

Police Department Report

Mayor Mavrakis, "the Police Department Report for the month of February: Parking Meters - \$1,399.26; Total Fines and Forfeits - \$1,074.00; Parking Permits - \$2,500.00; Total Miscellaneous Collection - \$850.00; Total Receipts for District Justice Office - \$2,565.00; Total Receipts Collected for February 2014 - \$8,388.26. Police Logged and Telephone Complaints 354; Arrests for February 2014 – 118; Year Total – 197; Mileage – 6,871; Miles per Day – 245.39.

Handicap Parking Sign

Mayor Mavrakis, "motion to install a Handicap Parking Sign in front of the residence at 948 Leeds Avenue".

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "second".

Mayor, "question on the motion?"

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Hiring Part Time School Guard

Mayor Mavrakis, "motion to ratify hiring of Kristin Lakin as a Part Time School Guard at \$7.25 per hour. Mando, are you here? Do you want to comment on that?"

Chief Mandarino, "we had a school guard up by the high school and she retired and we replaced her with Kristin. Kristin filled in and she had all the credentials and all the clearances."

Mayor Mavrakis, "Kristin, will you stand up so they can see you? Did you have that baby while you were on duty, or what?"

Kristin, "actually I started two days before and I took off Thursday and Friday and went back to work on Monday".

Mayor Mavrakis, "welcome aboard, Kristin".

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "I will second the motion to ratify the hiring".

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Hiring of Part Time Police Officer

Mayor Mavrakis, "motion to hire Frank Charles Tempo as a Part Time Police Officer at the hourly rate of \$14.25".

Councilman Nestor, "second that, Mayor".

Mayor Mavrakis, "question on the motion?"

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Mayor Mavrakis, "Mando, do you want to comment on that too?"

Chief Mandarino, "I have a couple of part time officers, possibly looking into some medical leaves and we needed to fill somebody in and get them trained before they actually take off. That way we won't be losing any services up in the projects because they cover housing authority property".

PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Jonmichael Retos – Department of Accounts & Finance

Councilman Retos, "motion to approve General Fund Expenditures for the month of March in the amount of \$263,110.83".

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "second".

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Councilman Retos, "motion to approve Grant Fund Expenditures for the month of March in the amount of \$3,312.00".

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "second".

Mayor Mavrakis, "questions on the motion?"

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Councilman Retos, "motion to approve Line Usage Fund Expenditures for the month of March in the amount of \$2,170.00".

Councilman Nestor, "second".

Mayor Mavrakis, "question on the motion?"

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Councilman Retos, "motion to approve Parks Fund Expenditures for the month of March in the amount of \$1,651.20".

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "second".

Mayor Mavrakis, "question on the motion?"

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Councilman Retos, "motion to approve Health Center Project Expenditures for the month of March in the amount of \$7,727.11."

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "second."

Mayor Mavrakis, "question on the motion?"

YEAS:

NAYS:

Councilman Nestor
Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Mavrakis opened the meeting for public comment at this time.

Joe Martinez, 516 Chestnut Street – "a couple of questions and I see that I can see that I can direct them towards Lucille D'Alfonso at this time. What is the Street Departments priority for this Spring?"

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "for this Spring? Could you be more specific?"

Mr. Martinez, "are we going to start repairing the streets?"

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "we certainly have them on our agenda, certainly."

Mr. Martinez, "second question, I am sure that my taxes are paid every year, twice a year just like everybody else here. I saw something several months ago which I couldn't believe that was happening on Sixth Street and Knox. I am sure that the Council is aware of the 5 dilapidated houses, okay. What I saw several months ago were City workers out there on those properties trimming and cutting the grass. Is this how my tax dollars are spent?"

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "in the winter?"

Mr. Martinez, "no, this was several months ago. Sometime last fall, definitely before January and I was planning on coming down, but I thought....and what I see here today, I am extremely impressed. I used to go to the Council meetings under Mayor Smith. I really, it seemed so lopsided. What I see here today is that more people than I have ever seen at a Council meeting before and that makes me kind of proud. So, thank you all and I am going to make sure that I participate more. But, anyhow, back to the question of the City employees....."

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "the City does have a responsibility to keep those areas clear because there are people who live in that vicinity that don't....."

Mr. Martinez, "well, not really. That area...those 5 houses there is basically nothing there."

Councilwoman D'Alfonso, "actually I think you are referring to property that is under litigation right now."

Councilman Retos, "sir, those house were part of the Redevelopment project about six years ago. They were to be purchased by the Redevelopment Authority and new houses were to be put on. The Redevelopment Authority was responsible for some things beyond anybody's controls happen and they have been in litigations and lawsuits for over five years, as long as I have been here. And unfortunately the litigation did not go our way and there are some Redevelopment Authority issues with that which they can expand upon."

Mr. Martinez, "you are talking about litigation against the five houses."

Councilman Retos, "yes, the litigation is between the owner of those five houses and the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Monessen. That is a long on going lawsuit since I have been here six years. It has been a very rough thing. So that is one of those situations where....."

Mr. Martinez, "you can say that City government is about as slow as those in Harrisburg."

Councilman Retos, "it's the legal system."

Mr. Martinez, "okay, thank you very much."

Mayor Mavrakis, "you to answer you, what we are faced with is the last administration, this is different. This Council and this administration we have a total of 264 homes and properties that are in repository that are given to us by the County. What we are going to do, this Council has agreed that hypothetically if you have an empty lot next to your house and that lot is in repository, you will have the option to take that lot and put it on the tax rolls and you will have to cut that grass and that gets the City away from cutting that grass."

Mr. Martinez, "what actually happens to the people who don't actually take possession of a lot, but yet they maintain it?"

Councilman Retos, "then that is adverse possession....."

Mr. Martinez, "yes, which I see my neighbor....I have a neighbor who has a lot between her place and my place and every couple of months in the summertime she pays a lawn care service to come and clip that lawn."

Mayor Mavrakis, "the reason for that is the lot is not in repository yet. There are probably back taxes on there. It takes several years for it to go through the system in order to get it into repository."

Mr. Martinez, "I even offered to help her pay for taking care of that lot."

Mayor Mavrakis, "well we will keep you in mind the next time we have grass that needs to be cut. We would like to have more citizens like you step up to the podium and offer that same deal."

Mr. Martinez, "thank you very much."

Mayor Mavrakis, "one thing you will notice that you don't have three minutes to speak with this administration, you have unlimited time and the same applies to anybody who is in here they can get up and speak as long as you want as long as you are not repetitious and as long as you don't put these people to sleep."

Mr. Martinez, "well, I am impressed. This feels like a whole new era right here."

Mayor Mavrakis, "well we hope that it is."

Solicitor Gaudio, "let the record show that an Executive Session was held on Monday evening following the Work Session for personnel purposes."

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Mavrakis, "can I have a motion for adjournment?"

Councilman Retos, "so moved, Mayor."

Councilman Nestor, "second."

YEAS:

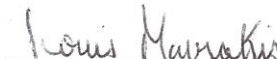
NAYS:

Councilwoman Bukowski
Councilman Retos
Councilwoman D'Alfonso
Councilman Nestor
Mayor Mavrakis

YEAS: FIVE

NAYS: NONE

Mayor Mavrakis, "I wish to thank everybody for showing up. Let's hope that we have the same kind of participation in every one of our meetings so that you know what is going on and you can help us move forward and try to do something with the problems that we had in the City. Thank you on behalf of this administration."



Louis Mavrakis, Mayor

ATTEST:



Holly Minno, City Clerk

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