COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF MONESSEN

CITY OF MONESSEN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

NOVEMBER 21, 2022

6:30PM

Meeting called to order by Mayor Ron Mozer at 6:30 pm.

1. ROLL CALL OF ALL MEMBERS PRESENT. Anthony Orzechowski – present – Lois Thomas – present – John Nestor – present – Donald Gregor – not present – Ron Mozer – present

2. OPENING PRAYER OFFERED BY REV. JOHN F. CUSTER PASTOR, ORCHARD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, MONESSEN, PENNSYLVANIA. Opening prayer by Lois Thomas

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. Lead by Ron Mozer

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS SESSION, NOVEMBER 10, 2022. Motion to approval of minutes by John Nestor – seconded by Lois Thomas

5. OPEN FLOOR FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY. Ernie Telegraphis – good work with taking down the two buildings – hopefully we can continue the progress – Donner Avenue thought it was already paid – what is the other funding need for (Ron Mozer -the demo was paid for but not the engineering costs – the soft costs were not covered – I think it is $30,000 – we went to Senator Kim Ward and she was able to get $24,000 to cover some of the costs – remaining by CFA – everything is documented – everything went wrong) Ernie – Honor May 20th for the Armed Services – what about Memorial Day (Ron Mozer – that date was requested by the Armed

Services – we will celebrate them both) Ernie – Page 5 – motion #1262 specific funds (Anthony Orzechowski – that is the budget) Ernie #1263 – tax levy (Anthony Orzechowski – will be able to review and make comments – not official yet) (Joseph Dalfonso - #1262 budget – motion to advertise by end of November - #1263 tax levy ordinance – adopt in December – here for public review and advertising in paper)

6. CORRESPONDENCE - none

OLD BUSINESS N/A - none

7. **REPORT OF THE SOLICITOR OF THE CITY OF MONESSEN** – Joseph Dalfonso – working on budget and tax levy ordinances and zoning ordinances

8. **REPORT OF THE CITY TREASURER OF THE CITY OF MONESSEN (REPORT WAS PROVIDED AT THE COUNCIL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 10, 2022) –** Gerald Saksun - absent

9. **REPORT OF THE CITY CONTROLLER OF THE CITY OF MONESSEN** – Rosalie Nicksich - absent

10. **NEW BUSINESS**

Mayor Ron Mozer, Director of Public Affairs

a. Motion to approve the use of the Monessen City Park by Monessen VFW Post 1190 and American Legion Post 28 to include at a minimum the Walking Track Area, the Amphitheater, and the Ball Field on May 20th, 2023, to celebrate Armed Services Day and the City of Monessen for purposes of a display from all branches of the Military Services. This would include helicopters, drones and assorted military gear. The

intent of the event is to instill, honor and celebrate Monessen's patriotism, pride, and love of country. Motion by John Nestor – seconded by Lois Thomas – vote 4 - 0

b. Motion to announce The Thrill of Hope Monessen Christmas Celebration on December 3rd, 2022, beginning at 10 am with Breakfast with Santa, at the Monessen Civic Center, a 12:30 pm Christmas Parade from Donner to 6th Street, Fun Christmas Activity for Kids at the His Place Restaurant, and the Monessen Library from 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm. A Christmas Community Prayer Service at 3:30pm and Christmas Caroling and Cocoa will be held at the Monessen Civic Center all at no cost. Motion by John Nestor – seconded by Anthony Orzechowski – vote 4 – 0 (Ron Mozer – they are asking to light up the Christmas tree by His Place and wanting this to be considered light up night) (Mike Korposh – parade is from Family Dollar to 6th Street)

c. Motion for a second reading and final approval of The Revised Zoning Ordinance for the City of Monessen. Motion by Joh Nestor – seconded by Lois Thomas – vote 4 - 0

d. Discussion on the developments of the Monessen Economic Development Day Long Seminar to be held at the Monessen High School Auditorium on January 20th, 2022, from 9:00am to 4:00 pm. Ron Mozer – there will be Senators, Congressman and Notable people present – Dr. Andrew John will be the keynote speaker – I want to invite everyone

e. Discussion on the redirection of the Recreation Board and The Civic Center in the City of Monessen, and the plans for the City to assist in the promotion, increased income generation and

coordination of all recreation and park activities over the course of the next year and beyond. (Ron Mozer – this is coming from the board – recreation board made up of volunteers that have jobs – they want to come up with ideas to held things at all the parks and the civic center not the day to day operation of the Civic Center – Julian Naphier is in charge of the day to day along with Mike Korposh – just talking – no decision right now – current members suggested it) (Anthony Orzechowski – why don't you have them come here and explain it to us not us trying to explain it) (John Nestor – they were supposed to have a meeting today but did not have a quorum – next meeting is in December) (Ron Mozer – we can have them here – we have time – not an emergency) (Anthony Orzechowski – I would prefer to have them come here and explain) (Lois Thomas – promote the city more with more things going on) (Ron Mozer – that is why we should have a calendar on the website so everyone knows what is going on at each place – we will get someone here for the next meeting)

f. Motion to use CFA grant funds left over from the 500 Donner demolition to demolish the 544 Donner structure. The CFA has approved the use of the funds for this purpose. (Motion by Lois Thomas – seconded by John Nestor – vote 4 - 0

g. Motion to apply for State ARP funding set aside by Senator Kim Ward to pay WEC engineering for work done to demolish 500 Donner. Motion by Lois Thomas – seconded by John Nestor – vote 4 – 0

h. Motion to ask GPI to develop the specifications and RFP for contracting a company to demo 544 Donner. GPI has agreed to

do this at no cost. Motion by Lois Thomas – seconded by John Nestor – vote 4 – 0

i. Discussion on the current activities of the County RDA/Land Bank. The County of Westmoreland Development Authority won the wager of getting the old newspaper office on 6th street demolished before the City had 544 Donner demolished. They are also committed to removing:

348 Indiana
332 Franklin
452 Motheral
506 3rd Street
937 Grant
452 McKee

Ron Mozer - 5th Street hotel and newspaper office down – we need to clean up - they also went for the easy properties as listed above – property belongs to the county – we need to get our properties cleared so they can be demolished – Redevelopment Authority also has a list of properties – next phase will include a lot more properties – 200 properties through the judicial properties – probably won't take all of them – RDA has a little bit of money and is going to fund the demolition orders – they set aside $20,000 -

All of the above referenced projects are fast tracked items belonging to the County Land Bank. The county has already spent some 17% of the money set aside for demolishment, it is up to us to keep on top of the list and get as much done as we can before the funds are depleted.

j. Motion to identify and submit demolition orders and right to demo to the County of all City owned property that is both blighted and vacant. This includes such city owned structures as the Donner side of the Parking Garage, and blighted city owned houses in residential areas. Motion by Ron Mozer – seconded by Lois Thomas – vote 4 - 0

k. Motion to accept ownership of commercial property which has been issued demolition orders for property owners unable to finance demolition on their own. These properties must meet the qualifications and requirements of the County of Westmoreland for demolition. Property that has be condemned and blighted – they are unable to demolish – they can give to the city and we can demolish - Motion by Ron Mozer - seconded by Lois Thomas – vote 4 – 0

l. Discussion on current activities. Ron Mozer - Covered all previously

Councilman Anthony Orzechowski, Director of Accounts and Finance

a. Motion to pay the following invoices from the General Fund in the amount of $34,759.60. All invoices are attached to this Agenda as Attachment "A". Motion by Anthony Orzechowski – seconded by Lois Thomas – vote 4 - 0

b. Motion to pay the following invoices from the Recreational Account in the amount of $803.54. All invoices are attached to this Agenda as Attachment "B." Motion by Anthony Orzechowski – seconded by Lois Thomas – vote 4 - 0

c. Motion to pay the following invoices from the Grant Fund in the amount of $928.54. All invoices are attached to this Agenda as "Attachment C". Motion by Anthony Orzechowski – seconded by Lois Thomas – vote 4 - 0

d. Motion to pay the following invoices from the Parks Fund in the amount of $333.30. All invoices are attached to this Agenda as "Attachment D" Motion by Anthony Orzechowski – seconded by John Nestor – vote 4 - 0

d. Motion to transfer $3000.00 from the General Fund to the Healthcare account. Motion by Anthony Orzechowski – seconded by John Nestor – vote 4 - 0

e. Motion for first reading and authorization to advertise Ordinance 1262, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MONESSEN, WESTMORELAND COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, APPROPRIATING SPECIFIC SUMS ESTIMATED TO BE REQUIRED FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT, HEREINAFTER SET FORTH DURING THE YEAR 2023. Motion by Anthony Orzechowski – seconded by John Nestor – vote 4 - 0

f. Motion for first reading and authorization to advertise Ordinance 1263, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MONESSEN, WESTMORELAND COUNTY, COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, FIXING THE TAX RATE FOR THE YEAR 2023. Motion by Anthony Orzechowski – seconded by John Nestor – vote 4 - 0 (Ron Mozer – tax rate will not increase)

Account balances – fire $18,410.99 – liquid fuels $248.84 – debt service $760,80.22 – line usage $564,985.35 – payroll $4,013.58 – American rescue $388,913.69 – general $308,913.69 – grant

$81,575.61 – healthcare $5000.67 – park $11,563.21 – recreation $4,157.46 – refuse $68,089.58

Councilman Lois Thomas Director of Streets and Public Improvements

Streets and Public Improvement Report for month ending October 31st, 2022. Lois Thomas – emptied garbage downtown twice per week – answered 28 PA one calls – cold patched several streets – cut city lots – painted arrows and put an extra DO NOT ENTER sign on Montraver – cleaned out catch basins – fixed 3 catch basins – the vactor truck is down due to electrical problems – the sweeper truck was out when possible – getting salt spreaders and trucks ready for winter – helped the park when needed – Mark Kravets handed in his retirement notice

Library – 1630 people count – still selling $2 tickets for November 25th – participating in the Thrill of Hope on December 3rd – fun day – see Santa

Councilman John Nestor, Director of Public Safety

Police and Public Safety Report for month ending October 31st, 2022. John Nestor – police department receipts for the month of October – parking permits $800 – miscellaneous collections copies of police accident reports $270 – total miscellaneous $270 – court receipts from district justice office vehicle code fines $815.64 – crime code fines $176.61 – city ordinance $26.69 – code enforcement $100 – total receipts from district justice office $1,118.54 – total receipts collected $2,188.54 – Total arrests 93 – year-to-date 962

Code activity – habitation permits 12 – correction letters 18 – animal complaints 9 – misc complaints 22 – health inspections 3 – building permits 3 – zoning permits 3 – meetings with residents 6

Monessen fire chief report – automatic fire alarm 2 – public service 1 – natural gas leak 3 – vehicle accident 2 – EMS assist 5 – carbon monoxide 2 – grill fire 1 – live drill Carroll Twp 1 – structure fire Charleroi 1 – structure fire North Belle Vernon 1 – total calls 19 – total responding 189 – average responding per call 10 – total man hours 197

Talked with Mike Kosposh on a lot of Street openings – make sure they are repaired (Ron Mozer – some of the roads are state owned roads and they will take care of them – we will handle the rest)

Councilman Donald S. Gregor, Director of Parks, and Public Property Parks and Public Property Report for the month ending October 31st, 2022, Donald Gregor – absent – ready by Lois Thomas – cut city lots and fields – fixed lights in the police station – preparing to start cleaning up leaves at the park – preparing to close park bathrooms and concessions stands for winter – helped the streets department when needed

11. OPEN FLOOR FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM. Peno Cianflone – what is going on with the stop sign by 5th street and Family Dollars (Mike Korposh- we are having a meeting next week for the following week with PennDot – we will talk about the stop signs and line painting – I will coordinate the schedule with you and Linda Lacey) Peno – what about the cars with no plates and no sticks – boats parked on the road with trees growing out of them (Chief David Yuhasz – we have an abundance of abandoned vehicles in the city – at least 15 or more and we are working on

getting rid of them) Peno – 9th Street – by barrier – needs cleaned up – a mess for years – I know city workers need help (Ron Mozer – once the sewage goes through there I am hoping they will make a change and improvements) Peno – how about the new police car and the truck for the city workers (Anthony Orzechowski – this needs to be discussed with council – I was un aware we were paying for one right now – we have three more payments of $10,000 – this now changes things – we may pay that off first – we need to discuss it further) Peno – we have 2 to 3 on a shift and 5 cars – why would you need another one – how about hiring more police – the people who pay taxes for years get no breaks – we are helping the people who don't pay – tearing down their houses – giving them tax breaks – the tax payers are being ignored (Ron Mozer – by people paying taxes is how we come up with the budget – people paying are down 6% each year – the tax payers are the most important part) (Anthony Orzechowski – code, taxes, magistrate – everything goes to Greensburg to be court mandated for citations – they are 8,000 people behind in issuing citations in Westmoreland county – the courts overrule – we need to change this – this hurts us – can not get blood out of a stone – no magic pill to get people to pay their bills – if there was, we would have more money – we are currently at a 96% rate for people paying taxes – highest in Westmoreland County) Peno – we don't get anything – business have no taxes (Ron Mozer – who – the two properties mentioned we sold to non-profits) Peno – I'm tired of taking this – we need to have a meeting with the people who pay their taxes (anonymous (Chris) – that's why we have council meeting – you can come and talk at the meetings) (Ron Mozer – that is why we have council meetings) (Anthony Orzechowski – there are good things that people can see happen in Monessen –

when Ron and I campaigned – we want the nonsense to stop – we don't make the paper any more – we have eliminated that – the fluff is gone – respect to the city and tax payers – Lois brought respect to the council) Peno – I'm not a yes person

Ernie Telegraphis – Mark retired now – now we are down 4 employees – big vacancy here – try to run a game plan with less players – what are you going to do – did you advertise (Ron Mozer – we are working on it – we have applicants – we need to be able to pay them what they want) Ernie – when is Cyper & Cyper coming (Ron Mozer – I have contacted them and waiting on a response) Ernie – how about the budget (Ron Mozer – budget developed by CFO that we work by) Ernie – taxes won't increase (Ron Mozer – we have limits to spending) (Anthony Orzechowski – people have to work within the means of the city) Ernie – 12 years, 3 different administrations – 8 major corporations have taxes reduced – used to pay $100,000 now paying $10,000 – $172,000 now paying $10,000 – city solicitor and school solicitor (Joseph Dalfonso – based on school appraisal – school paid $5,000 to get appraisal – they have the largest tax burden) Ernie – corporations paying a lot less – talking about this for years – why can we not raise the taxes – re-assess corporate taxes not everyone

Rodney Freeman - Thank Mark Kravets for all his years of service – thanks for recognizing we are under manned – just remember when the snow comes, we will handle the main roads and hill first, everything else is last

Ron Mozer - City of Monessen has very little to do with the Water Authority in Charleroi – they are making the decisions – we must follow

Ed Lafever – read article in valley paper – two subjects that bother me – what is the law firms retainer fee for the city compared to last year's law firm (Joseph Dalfonso - $800/month retainer – which includes meeting and unlimited phone calls – legal research and everything else is $100/month - $2500 and $4000 per month – development of ordinances) Ed – mentioned in article was mention some of your work can not discussed legally – freedom of information act (Joseph Dalfonso – some things are protected by law – you can use the right to know law) (Anthony Orzechowski – I think you are asking the wrong questions – no one is asking about legal costs for the past administration paying $100,000 extra out of my budget – we stopped a law suit that was costing our city money – this council stopped it – those are the things we should look at – spending the money right)

12. ADJOURNMENT Motion to adjourn meeting by John Nestor at 7:47 pm – seconded by Lois Thomas – vote 4 - 0