CITY OF MONESSEN
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
August 27, 2026 - 6:30 p.m. - City of Monessen Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Ron Mozer called the regular meeting of Monessen City Council to order at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 27, 2026, in the City of Monessen Council Chambers.

Roll Call: Present were Mayor Ron Mozer, Councilperson Karen Cosner, Councilman John Nestor, Councilman Bishop William Bass, and Councilman Anthony Orzechowski. Five members were present and a quorum was established.

Also Present: City Administrator Mike Korposh, City Solicitor Joseph Dalfonso, City Controller John Mandarino, and members of the public. City Treasurer Gerald A. Saksun was absent.

2. PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Bishop William Bass offered the opening prayer. In his invocation, Bishop Bass gave thanks for the community and asked for God's guidance over Council and the City. He prayed for unity, peace, sound judgment, mutual understanding, cooperation, and concern for the welfare of all residents. He asked that the meeting produce constructive results and that the community experience healing and progress. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

3. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

Motion 1 - Approval of Prior Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of the June 25, July 9, July 23, August 13, and August 18, 2026 City of Monessen Council sessions as provided by Mayor Mozer.

Moved by: The speaker making the motion was not clearly identified in the transcript.

Seconded by: Councilman Anthony Orzechowski.

Vote: Roll Call Vote: Councilperson Cosner - yes; Councilman Nestor - aye; Councilman Bass - yes; Councilman Orzechowski - yes; Mayor Mozer - yes. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Mayor Mozer opened the floor for public comment on agenda items only.

Ernie Telegraphis asked about CDBG funding and the condition of the Monessen Public Library, including the lack of running water. Mayor Mozer clarified that the agenda item stated that CDBG funds could not be used for routine maintenance and said the City would follow up regarding the previously approved plumbing repair.

Mr. Telegraphis also questioned the proposed donation of the vacant parcel at 423 Third Street, including whether taxes were current, and asked about the cost of the circuit-breaker-box repair at the Herman Mihalich Boat Launch. He further asked whether the Terry Tom fundraiser was being sponsored by the City. Mayor Mozer and Solicitor Dalfonso clarified that the agenda item concerned use of the Civic Center rather than City sponsorship of the fundraiser.

No other agenda-item-only public comments were offered.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was reported.

6. SOLICITOR REPORT

City Solicitor Joseph Dalfonso discussed the proposed property donations. He stated that the two Rostraver Street parcels being offered from an estate were vacant, clean parcels with taxes paid, and that the donation would assist in closing the estate. He stated that the 423 Third Street parcel still required review by his office.

Solicitor Dalfonso also reported that he and City staff had identified approximately six properties that could potentially be demolished using 2025 CDBG funds, in addition to four remaining Summit Avenue properties previously cleared for demolition. He also referenced additional County ARPA demolition properties and anticipated demolition hearings later in the fall.

7. TREASURER REPORT

City Treasurer Gerald A. Saksun was absent. The Treasurer Report was deferred to a subsequent meeting.

8. CONTROLLER REPORT

City Controller John Mandarino presented the August 2026 Controller Report and the General Fund CFS Bank reconciliation for July 31, 2026. He reported a beginning bank balance of $1,067,634.41, deposits of $104,244.40, expenses of $559,993.34, and an ending bank balance of $611,885.47. Outstanding checks were reported at $257,911.27 and outstanding deposits at $298,327.79, producing a reconciled balance of $652,301.99.

9. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was brought before Council.

10. MAYOR'S DISCUSSION ITEMS AND MOTIONS

Mayor Mozer introduced Chris Paglia, who presented the proposed Monessen Cat Management program. Mr. Paglia described a five-part approach centered on organizing, educating, empowering, connecting, and growing community participation in humane trap-neuter-release efforts. The discussion included development of a City website resource page, coordination with Mon Valley Paws and other animal-rescue resources, neighborhood volunteers, and outreach to educational and community partners.

Mr. Paglia announced a Trap-Neuter-Release question-and-answer session for September 14, 2026, from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Madison Memorial Park, 9th and Knox. Discussion also addressed responsible trapping practices, wildlife concerns, and public education.

Mayor Mozer then invited Evan Hallet of Scout Troop 1543 to present a proposed Eagle Scout project involving installation of a small public library at the Monessen Walking Track. Mr. Hallet described a weather-protected book box mounted on a post, with donated books to be replenished regularly. Council expressed support for the concept, and Councilperson Cosner advised Mr. Hallet to coordinate with Delmar Hepple regarding Pennsylvania One Call requirements before digging.

Mayor Mozer discussed the need to identify grant and funding sources for repairs and preventive maintenance at the Monessen Library, Civic Center, and Fire Station No. 1. He described roof and structural maintenance concerns and stated that Public Works could use the bucket truck to clean roof drains and gutters where the work could be performed safely without employees working directly on roof surfaces.

Motion 2 - USDA Phase 3D Change Order No. 1

Motion: To adopt USDA Change Order No. 1, Project No. MON-2025-01, Phase 3D, for replacement of an additional 585 linear feet of 12-inch sanitary sewer pipe and installation of two new manholes on Ontario Street, together with replacement of 80 linear feet of 12-inch sanitary sewer pipe on Reeves Avenue, with work scheduled to begin October 19, 2026 and paving in spring 2027, in the amount of $928,059.90.

Moved by: Mayor Ron Mozer.

Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.

Vote: Roll Call Vote: Councilperson Cosner - yes; Councilman Nestor - aye; Councilman Bass - yes; Councilman Orzechowski - yes; Mayor Mozer - yes. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

Motion 3 - Handicapped Parking Space at 5 Schoonmaker Avenue

Motion: To move the handicapped parking space at 5 Schoonmaker Avenue approximately 20 feet, as developed and discussed at the recent Council work session.

Moved by: Mayor Ron Mozer.

Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.

Vote: Roll Call Vote: Councilperson Cosner - yes; Councilman Nestor - abstain; Councilman Bass - yes; Councilman Orzechowski - yes; Mayor Mozer - yes. Motion carried, 4-0, with one abstention.

Motion 4 - Phase 3A Change Order No. 7

Motion: To approve Phase 3A Change Order No. 7 for final quantity adjustments resulting from reduced dig-spot repairs and changes in pipe sizes during pre-lining inspections, establishing a revised contract price of $4,371,733.18, a decrease of $194,453.96.

Moved by: Mayor Ron Mozer.

Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.

Vote: Roll Call Vote: Councilperson Cosner - yes; Councilman Nestor - aye; Councilman Bass - yes; Councilman Orzechowski - yes; Mayor Mozer - yes. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

Motion 5 - Acceptance of Donated Vacant Parcels

Motion: To accept parcel 20-02-03-0-422, 303 Rostraver Street, and parcel 20-02-07-0-380, a small corner lot adjoining property currently owned by the City, as donations, pending final review by the City Solicitor. Both parcels are vacant and contain no structures.

Moved by: Mayor Ron Mozer.

Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.

Vote: Roll Call Vote: Councilperson Cosner - yes; Councilman Nestor - aye; Councilman Bass - yes; Councilman Orzechowski - yes; Mayor Mozer - yes. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

Motion 6 - Acceptance of 423 Third Street

Motion: To accept parcel 20-02-07-0-063, 423 Third Street, as a donation to the City, pending final review by the City Solicitor. The parcel is vacant and contains no structures.

Moved by: Mayor Ron Mozer.

Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.

Vote: Roll Call Vote: Councilperson Cosner - yes; Councilman Nestor - aye; Councilman Bass - yes; Councilman Orzechowski - yes; Mayor Mozer - yes. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

Motion 7 - Termination of Employee No. 515

Motion: To terminate Employee No. 515 effective immediately.
Moved by: Mayor Ron Mozer.
Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.
Vote: Roll Call Vote: Councilperson Cosner - yes; Councilman Nestor - aye; Councilman Bass - no; Councilman Orzechowski - yes; Mayor Mozer - no. Motion carried, 3-2.

11. DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE - COUNCILMAN ANTHONY ORZECHOWSKI

Motion 8 - General Fund Invoices

Motion: To pay General Fund invoices in the amount of $46,279.07, as listed in Attachment A to the agenda.
Moved by: Councilman Anthony Orzechowski.
Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.
Vote: Motion carried unanimously by roll call, 5-0.

Motion 9 - Parks Fund Invoices

Motion: To pay Parks Fund invoices in the amount of $3,653.14, as listed in Attachment B to the agenda.
Moved by: Councilman Anthony Orzechowski.
Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.
Vote: Motion carried unanimously by roll call, 5-0.

Motion 10 - Recreation Board Fund Invoices

Motion: To pay Recreation Board Fund invoices in the amount of $16.01, as listed in Attachment C to the agenda.
Moved by: Councilman Anthony Orzechowski.
Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.
Vote: Motion carried unanimously by roll call, 5-0.

Motion 11 - Liquid Fuels Fund Invoices

Motion: To pay Liquid Fuels Fund invoices in the amount of $4,157.66, as listed in Attachment D to the agenda.
Moved by: Councilman Anthony Orzechowski.
Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.
Vote: Motion carried unanimously by roll call, 5-0.

Motion 12 - Line Usage Fund Invoices

Motion: To pay Line Usage Fund invoices in the amount of $28,735.00, as listed in Attachment E to the agenda.
Moved by: Councilman Anthony Orzechowski.
Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.
Vote: Motion carried by roll call with no dissent recorded.

Motion 13 - Payroll Transfer

Motion: To approve the transfer of $78,607.89 from the General Fund to the Payroll Account for the August 27, 2026 payroll.
Moved by: Councilman Anthony Orzechowski.
Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.
Vote: Motion carried unanimously by roll call, 5-0.

Motion 14 - Health Care Account Allocation

Motion: To approve an allocation of $3,000.00 from the General Fund to the Health Care Account.
Moved by: Councilman Anthony Orzechowski.
Seconded by: Councilman John Nestor.
Vote: Motion carried unanimously by roll call, 5-0.

Councilman Orzechowski reviewed balances in the City's principal funds and expressed concern about the City's projected cash position later in the year. He emphasized the need for accurate financial information and timely movement of eligible reimbursements or transfers among the Parks, Liquid Fuels, Line Usage, and General Fund accounts so Council could make informed decisions and avoid a year-end cash shortfall.

12. DIRECTOR OF STREETS AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS - COUNCILMAN BISHOP WILLIAM BASS

Councilman Bass reported that the Streets Department picked up downtown garbage, marked Pennsylvania One Call locations, cut grass on City lots, performed cold-patch work, cut sidewalks and steps, and assisted the Parks Department as needed.

Councilman Bass also discussed winter equipment concerns and the need for additional employee training. He and Councilperson Cosner proposed developing job-safety analyses or safe-work procedures with direct participation from experienced Public Works employees and using available training resources to improve safety and job-specific skills.

13. DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY - COUNCILMAN JOHN NESTOR

Councilman Nestor presented the Public Safety Report for July 2026. Police miscellaneous receipts totaled $105.00, and District Justice court receipts were reported at $1,422.84, for total reported receipts of $1,527.84. The Police Department issued 53 citations during July, with 365 citations year-to-date. The Code Enforcement activity report included habitation permits and reinspections, correction letters, animal and miscellaneous complaints, health inspections, resident meetings, and citations.

Motion 15 - Part-Time Police Officer Status for Brian Mickens

Motion: To accept the request of City of Monessen Police Officer Brian Mickens to become an active part-time police officer in the City of Monessen. Officer Mickens was already on the Monessen Police roster.

Moved by: Councilman John Nestor.

Seconded by: Councilman Anthony Orzechowski

Vote: Roll Call Vote: Councilperson Cosner - yes; Councilman Nestor - aye; Councilman Bass - yes; Councilman Orzechowski - yes; Mayor Mozer - yes. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

14. DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND PUBLIC PROPERTY - COUNCILPERSON KAREN COSNER

Councilperson Cosner presented the Parks Department report for July 2026. Work included mowing City parks and ball fields, cleaning around pavilions for rentals, replacing lights at the Civic Center, mowing around the Civic Center, repairing a Civic Center table, and assisting the Streets Department.

Councilperson Cosner reported that the family of longtime Monessen resident and former Royal Tea Garden owner Terry Tom had requested use of the Civic Center and kitchen for a fundraiser in his honor. Council discussed the existing facility-use fee and deposit requirements, the absence of a date and other details in the material available at the meeting, and the concern that waiving fees could establish a precedent.

Motion 16 - Table Terry Tom Civic Center Fundraiser Request

Motion: To table consideration of the Terry Tom family request for use of the Civic Center and kitchen until additional information, including the date and fee-waiver details, could be reviewed.

Moved by: Councilman John Nestor.

Seconded by: Councilman Anthony Orzechowski.

Vote: Motion carried.

Councilperson Cosner announced that the CNX bat box and three bluebird houses would be installed in City Park on September 4, 2026 at no cost to the City. She also reported that the Columbus Park restroom door had been replaced, the Herman Mihalich Boat Launch circuit-breaker box had been repaired and secured, and the Sky Pilot concert was scheduled for September 12, 2026 at the City Park Amphitheater from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Mozer and Councilperson Cosner also noted a strong turnout at the prior weekend's park event, which ended early because of heavy rain.

15. ADDITIONAL COUNCIL DISCUSSION - LSA GRANTS AND EQUIPMENT

Before general public comment, Councilman Orzechowski requested a status report on approved and pending Local Share Account grants. City Administrator Korposh explained the upcoming County and statewide LSA application periods and stated that the City's previously submitted applications had been approved, but implementation was complicated by the reimbursement structure and the City's need to have cash available before reimbursement.

Mayor Mozer stated that the City had been working with Commonwealth officials to request grant funds in advance where possible. Councilman Orzechowski requested a complete list of approved grants, award amounts, project status, and the steps required to move each project forward.

Council discussed possible future LSA requests for a Police Department project, Public Works garage equipment and tools to permit more vehicle maintenance in-house, maintenance needs at City facilities, and additional street-department trucks. City Administrator Korpash stated that two street trucks were already included in currently approved grant projects. Council also discussed whether short-term financing or other mechanisms could bridge reimbursement timing.

16. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM RELATING TO CITY BUSINESS

Mayor Mozer opened the floor for public comment on any matter relating to City business.

Ernie Telegraphis questioned the City's use of the asphalt zipper and the status of road improvements, asked how CDBG demolition funds were being used and how many additional blighted structures remained, and commented on the City's cat-management efforts. Mayor Mozer responded that demolition activity was continuing, that the City had demolished more than 200 structures with City and County support, and that many additional blighted structures remained.

Don Gregor, Treasurer of the Hilltop Fire Department, asked about the status of previously approved LSA-funded fire equipment, including thermal imagers and positive-pressure ventilation fans, and questioned why equipment approved in 2024 had not yet been received. He urged Council to consider using available City cash to acquire approved grant-funded equipment and then seek reimbursement, noting the operational need for the fire equipment and additional trucks.

Mayor Mozer, City Administrator Korpash, Councilman Orzechowski, Solicitor Dalfonso, and Councilman Bass discussed the reimbursement process, Council authorization required for expenditures, the need to understand the status of each grant, and the importance of avoiding expiration of approved awards. Mayor Mozer stated that a complete grant list and implementation plan would be prepared for discussion at an upcoming work session. Councilman Bass expressed support for the Fire Department's needs while emphasizing that Council members should receive sufficient information before authorizing expenditures.

17. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Councilman Nestor moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Cosner seconded the motion. The motion carried by voice vote, and Mayor Mozer adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,