

STATED MEETING - CITY COUNCIL – MARCH 10, 2015

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2015 in Council Chambers, 120 North Duke Street, (Rear Annex) Lancaster, PA, at 7:30 p.m., with President Graupera presiding.

The Council led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present – Mr. Reichenbach, Mr. Roschel, Ms. Sorace, Mr. Soto, Ms. Williams, Ms. Wilson, President Graupera – 7

The minutes of the meeting of Council for February 24, 2015 were approved by a roll-call vote.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilwoman Wilson reported the committee met March 2 and heard a presentation from Police Chief Sadler about enforcement of traffic safety laws. No council action was taken. Chief Sadler reported that between 4,000 and 5,000 traffic citations been written annually in recent years.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE – Councilman Roschel said the committee also met on March 2 to discuss Resolution 10-2015, which Mr. Roschel said he would discuss further when it came before council on the agenda.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE – Councilman Reichenbach reported the committee met on March 2 and discussed Resolution 14-2015, which increases registration fees for bank or mortgage company-owned vacant properties. Also discussed was Resolution 15-2015, which authorizes a cooperation agreement with the North Museum. The agreement allows the museum to seek a \$750,000 state grant for renovation.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Councilwoman Sorace said the committee met March 2 to discuss Resolutions 11-2015, the annual resolution exonerating water and sewer charges for city-owned and related properties, and 12-2015, which amends the Capital Project list with the proceeds from the General Obligation bonds. Ms. Sorace also made a motion to add Resolution 17-2015 to the agenda, which authorizes the destruction of obsolete records.

Councilman Reichenbach seconded the motion.

Laura Mueller, 33 E. Farnum St., questioned whether there was any reason the city should keep any of the records for archival purposes.

Ms. Sorace responded the records have been reviewed and none merited retaining for the archival record.

The motion was unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.

Ms. Sorace said her committee also reviewed Bill No. 4, which is the next item on the agenda, under Old Business.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE – Councilman Soto, was not present at the committee meeting, and deferred to Councilman Reichenbach to make the report.

Councilman Reichenbach said the March 2 committee meeting began with a discussion of an ordinance amendment that would allow the keeping of chickens in the city. No council action was taken. The request, by 20-25 members of the public, was to allow the keeping of as many as six hens per property. Roosters would not be allowed, due to the noise.

Resolution 16-2015, concerning the city's Annual Action Plan submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, was also discussed by the committee.

Also before the committee, a presentation was made by architect Gene Aleci and historic preservation consultant Randy Harris. No council action was taken. Aleci and Harris proposed additional steps the city can take to better inform the public when significant renovation or demolition is proposed for structures in the city's historic districts.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – Councilwoman Williams made a motion to nominate Dwain S. London to the Human Relations Commission Board of Directors. London's term on the board would be March 9, 2015 to September 9, 2018.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Soto and unanimously approved by a roll-call vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Administration Bill No. 4-2015, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

An ordinance authorizing the incurrence of nonelectoral debt of the City of Lancaster, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, by the issuance of up to \$6,950,000 principal amount of General Obligation Note, Series of 2015 (the "Note"); issued for the purpose of providing financing for costs of the current refunding of the city's outstanding General Obligation Bonds, Series of 2010 (the "2010 Bonds"); approving the refunding and authorizing the redemption of the outstanding 2010 Bonds; determining to sell the Note at a private sale by negotiation or invitation; approving the form of the Note; fixing the date, interest and maturity of the Note; making a covenant for the payment of the debt service on the Note; pledging the full faith, credit and taxing power of this city in support of the Note; providing for the filing of required documents; providing for the appointment of a sinking fund depositary for the Note; and authorizing execution, sale and delivery thereof, and other necessary actions.

Councilwoman Sorace made a motion to approve the bill. Councilman Roschel seconded the motion.

Councilwoman Sorace said the bill represents good news for the city. The cost saving for the city by refinancing the 2010 bonds will be \$540,000, compared to the \$380,000 in savings initially projected. Susquehanna Bank will refinance the outstanding bond principal with a loan at a rate of 2.14 percent.

Ms. Sorace thanked representatives of Concord Public Finance for arranging the refinancing.

Ms. Sorace then read the following motion to amend the bill:

Bond counsel has provided each of us with a black-lined version of the Ordinance authorizing and directing the issuance of the City of Lancaster General Obligation Note, Series of 2015 in an original principal amount equal to \$6,950,000. Such Ordinance was introduced as Administrative Bill No. 4-2015 before this Council on February 24, 2015.

I hereby move to amend the Ordinance labeled Bill [4-2015] to include the additions, deletions and other changes referenced on such black-lined version of the Ordinance, which will be re-worded with the minutes of this meeting and which can be summarized as follows:

*** In the third and fifth Whereas clauses, deleting the amount of \$6,955,000 and replacing it with \$6,950,000;**

*** Inserting into the sixth Whereas clause, the name Susquehanna Bank as the Purchaser and the date of February 19, 2015 as the date of Purchaser's proposal for the purchase of the Note;**

*** in Section 1 of the Ordinance, deleting the amount of "Up to \$6,955,000" and replacing it with "\$6,950,000" as the amount of indebtedness authorized by the Ordinance;**

*** in Section 23 of the Ordinance, deleting the current principal balance of the 2010 Bonds of "\$55,000" and replacing it with "\$50,000" as the amount of the Note not used for the refunding of the 2010 Bonds;**

*** in Section 23 of the Ordinance, deleting the amount of "\$55,000" and replacing it with "\$50,000" as the portion of the Note not used for the refunding the current principal balance of the 2010 Bonds;**

*** on Exhibit A, form of Note, inserting the name "Susquehanna Bank" as the name of the Bank and replacing the amount of "\$6,955,000" with \$6,950,000 as the original principal amount of the Note;**

*** on Exhibit B, attaching the amortization schedule as provided by the Purchaser;**

*** on Exhibit C a copy of the proposal of the Purchaser has been attached to the Ordinance as Exhibit C.**

Councilwoman Williams seconded the motion to amend Bill 4-2015. The amendment was approved by a unanimous roll-call vote.

The motion to approve Bill 4-2015 was then approved by a unanimous roll-call vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Administration Resolution No. 10-2015, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

A resolution of the Council of the City of Lancaster approving the adoption of an amendment to the Act 537 Official Sewage Facilities Plan for the City of Lancaster.

Councilman Reichenbach made the motion to approve. Councilwoman Wilson seconded the motion.

Councilman Roschel said such resolutions are approved whenever development occurs which will utilize the city's North Pumping Station. The facility is at capacity and a moratorium has been placed on additional usage by the state Department of Environmental Protection. The resolution is part of the process to approve development of a new restaurant at 690 Charlotte Street despite the moratorium.

City Council approved Administration Resolution No. 10-2015 by a unanimous roll-call vote.

Administration Resolution No. 11-2015, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

A resolution of the Council of the City of Lancaster exonerating 2014 water charges in the amount of \$31,516.95 and sewer charges in the amount of \$28,330.59 for city-owned or related properties at 27 locations.

Councilman Reichenbach made the motion to approve. Councilman Soto seconded the motion.

Ms. Sorace said that every year the city exonerates water and sewer charges on city-owned and related properties. The Lancaster Airport and Lancaster Public Library are also exonerated.

City Council approved Administration Resolution No. 11-2015 by a unanimous roll-call vote.

Administration Resolution No. 12-2015, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

A resolution of the Council of the City of Lancaster approving an amended Capital Project List to be funded by the proceeds of the City of Lancaster General Obligation Bonds, Series of 2014.

Councilman Reichenbach made the motion to approve. Councilwoman Wilson seconded the motion.

Councilwoman Sorace said changes in the Capital Project List were necessitated because grants were secured and less funding was needed for the purchase of police and fire radios. Also, the city was unable to secure grant funding for renovations to the MLK and Reservoir Parks wading pools. Bid costs also exceeded expectations. Additional funding is being allocated to complete the MLK pool renovations in time for use this summer.

Councilwoman Wilson expressed pleasure the MLK pool will be renovated and cited the heavy use of the renovated Rodney Park pool.

City Council approved Administration Resolution No. 12-2015 by a unanimous roll-call vote.

Administration Resolution No. 14-2015, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

A resolution of the Council of the City of Lancaster amending the fee to register abandoned real property as defined and provided for in Chapter 282: vacant and abandoned property in the City Code of the City of Lancaster.

Councilman Reichenbach made the motion to approve. Councilwoman Wilson seconded the motion.

Councilman Reichenbach referenced his comments about the resolution made during his Economic Development & Revitalization Committee report. During those comments, Mr. Reichenbach said the registration of vacant properties is needed because the law does not require banks and mortgage companies to change the name on a deed when they take a property by foreclosure. Often those properties fall into disrepair. The city sends notices to the property owners of record, who often no longer live at that address. Registration fees are being increased to pay a third-party company which manages the registrations.

City Council approved Administration Resolution No. 6-2015 by a unanimous roll-call vote.

Council Resolution No. 15-2015, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

A resolution of the Council of the City of Lancaster authorizing the execution of a cooperation agreement with the North Museum Corporation D/B/A North Museum of Natural History & Science in connection with the North Museum of Natural History & Science project.

Councilwoman Wilson made the motion to approve. Councilman Reichenbach seconded the motion.

Councilman Reichenbach said the North Museum is unable to apply for the state grant directly. The city did so, and will administer the grant on the museum's behalf. Mr. Reichenbach noted the city serves as a pass-through for the grant and is not financially liable for compliance.

City Council approved Administration Resolution No. 15-2015 by a unanimous roll-call vote.

Administration Resolution No. 16-2015, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

A resolution of the Council of the City of Lancaster authorizing the mayor to submit the 2015 Annual Action Plan (year five of the city's five-year consolidated plan) to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The submission includes the projected use of funds for the Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) and Emergency Solutions Grant programs (ESG) during the 2015 program year.

Councilwoman Wilson made the motion to approve. Councilman Reichenbach seconded the motion.

Councilman Reichenbach said the city block grant designates: \$120,000 for police overtime, primarily for special details; \$15,000 for a fair housing program run by the Lancaster Housing Opportunities Partnership; \$550,000 for neighborhood street improvements and required handicapped curb ramps; \$50,000 for vacant property acquisition; \$353,000 for the code enforcement program; \$100,000 for the homeowner critical repair program; \$155,000 for administration of the housing program; and the remaining \$9,000 goes for the audit and compliance administration of the block grant. The block grant program totals about \$1.6 million.

There is also \$140,000 the city receives from the Emergency Solutions Grant program. That funding is combined with the county's allotment from the ESG program and passed to the United Way which coordinates efforts to address homelessness. Most of the money goes to a "rapid rehousing" initiative, which has proven effective in addressing the problem, Mr. Reichenbach said.

Mayor Gray said the federal grant program has been targeted for elimination or reduction by Congress and the president, yet he said the critical repair program, lead-based paint program, housing inspections, police overtime and other initiatives funded through the block grant program are critical to the city. He has spoken to U.S Rep. Joe Pitts about preserving the program. Congressman Pitts responded that if all cities used the program the way Lancaster does, there would be no problem. Pitts indicated the program is abused and tax dollars wasted elsewhere. Gray said he regularly gets letters praising the program from those who desperately need assistance. He contended the program provides enormous benefit for relatively little money.

City Council approved Administration Resolution No. 16-2015 by a unanimous roll-call vote.

Administration Resolution No. 17-2015, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

A resolution of the Council of the City of Lancaster Authorizing the disposal of certain obsolete records (daily cash reports, water billing records, accounting records, cancelled checks, employee time cards, etc.) in conformity with the retention and disposition schedule for records of Pennsylvania municipalities.

Councilman Reichenbach made the motion to approve. Councilman Soto seconded the motion.

Councilwoman Sorace said the records disposal is being done in compliance with the records retention schedule developed by the state Historic and Museum Commission. The shredding of paper records will free space in the city's Fairview Avenue garage, she said.

Mr. Carl Musser, 567 N. Shippen St., questioned the wisdom of disposing of financial records and cited the public's right to reference the information.

Mr. Patrick Hopkins, the city Administrative Services director, responded the city does this every year, or every other year. Documents are at least seven years old. Financial information is often retained for decades. They would also be noted in the annual audit.

City Council approved Administration Resolution No. 17-2015 by a unanimous roll-call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Laura Mueller, 33 E. Farnum St., cited the recent annual report of the Lancaster City Alliance and asked how the city government was related to the organization.

Mayor Gray responded the Lancaster City Alliance is a private organization of major city business interests. The city has no formal relationship with the group. Yet, the LCA provides enormous benefit to the city, the mayor said. The group advises the city on economic development, is now doing an strategic economic plan, provides litter pick-up through the Downtown Investment District and bike patrols through much of the city.

Martha Good, 338 E. Chestnut St., of Lancaster Unity, thanked council members who attended the group's recent potluck luncheon at Crispus Attucks Community Center. She said they hope to have the next potluck outdoors.

President Graupera proposed it be held at Binns Park.

REPORT OF THE MAYOR – Mayor Gray read the following report:

The Lancaster County Conservation District is receiving an allocation of just over \$285,000 from Pennsylvania's Low Volume Road Maintenance Program. Funds from this program are used to finance projects on roads that carry no more than 500 vehicles per day. The city submitted successful grant applications that will provide just over half-a-million dollars to allow funding of green infrastructure and other improvements to city alleys.

I am very pleased to report that yesterday we welcomed Lt. Andre Kelley back to full-time duty as an assistant fire marshal. As you recall, Lt. Kelley has been recovering from critical injuries he suffered while attempting to rescue occupants during a house fire on February 18, 2013. On behalf of the city and all of our residents, I want to congratulate Lt. Kelley on his return and to thank him and his family for all of the work they have done to make his return possible. Nobody can know how hard it has been for Lt. Kelley and his family to get to this point and we owe them a debt of gratitude for all they have endured. While we welcome Lt. Kelley back to work, he has asked that he not be contacted for news stories at this time. So we ask the media to respect L. Kelley's and his family's privacy until such time as they are willing to speak with the media.

Included in this report is a white paper recently released by the Lancaster Parking Authority that summarizes the status of parking assets in the city. The analysis will be a useful part of future planning efforts.

Citing the report, the mayor noted that monthly parking charges in Lancaster garages are \$55-\$65. In York that amount is \$91. Reading charges \$69-\$90. The cost in Harrisburg is \$170-\$185. He contended Lancaster is inexpensive in comparison.

Finally, our Common Sense Legal Defense Fund total now approaches \$18,000. In a related matter, our city solicitor is preparing a response to a right-to-know request from Joshua Prince, an attorney and chief counsel for the Firearms Industry Consulting Group. Mr. Prince describes himself as a frequent blogger on several internet forums, including Subguns, Uzitalk and AR15.

In response to a question from President Graupera, Mayor Gray said some information requested by Prince will be provided. Publication of a news article about the records request has also promoted several more donations to the city's legal defense fund, the mayor said.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT – President Graupera said he had recently attended a fund-raising event for Neighbors United, a community group in the northwestern part of the city. He heard about their plans to bring the Lancaster City Alliance bike patrols to their area; along with streetside trash receptacles and improved lighting. He was pleased that Neighbors United is supporting and being supported by Lancaster Unity. He said it is encouraging to see groups working together because the city cannot provide all services and initiatives.

COUNCIL COMMENTS – Councilwoman Wilson said she had attended the Lancaster Office of Promotions board meeting earlier in the day. She reported that construction of the downtown visitors center in the former City Hall on Penn Square will begin in about two weeks. Despite delays, the center is slated to open in June. In the meantime, the visitors center will be operated from the lobby of the Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square hotel.

Also, she said the number of people attending events at the Lancaster County Convention Center increased from 58,000 in the first quarter of 2014 to 78,000 in the first quarter of 2015.

Councilman Reichenbach took the opportunity to praise the mayor for bringing walking consultant Jeff Speck to Lancaster to do a walkability study. He said the recommendations presented by Speck in a recent public meeting were profound and - if carried out - promise to improve the quality of life for people in the city.

He also praised Chief Tim Gregg for his handling of the Madison Street fire that seriously injured Lt. Kelley. Chief Gregg's openness and willingness to make changes to improve the Fire Bureau in the wake of the fire have changed the culture of the bureau for the better.

President Graupera adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

John E. Graupera, President

Attest:

Bernard W. Harris Jr., City Clerk