

**CITY OF MCKEESPORT
REGULAR MEETING**

WEDNESDAY

7:00 P.M.

JANUARY 1, 2019

This Meeting of Council was called to order on the above-stated date at the above-stated time after the Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence in Memory of President Bush by President of Council Richard Dellapenna.

Prayer was led by Reverend Richard Truss from Zion Baptist.

The following Members of Council were present:

RC-1 PRESENT: JAMIE BREWSTER-FILOTEI, LUETHEL NESBIT, JIM BARRY, RICHARD DELLAPENNA, BRIAN EVANS, KEITH SOLES

ABSENT: TIMOTHY BROWN

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: Mr. Barry, seconded by Mrs. Nesbit, “to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 5, 2018.”

RC-2 YEAS: BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BARRY, DELLAPENNA, EVANS, SOLES (6)

NAYS: NONE (0)

COMMUNICATIONS:

Received both the Fire and Police Reports for the month of December 2018 and also the Fire Annual Report for the Year of 2018.

MAYOR’S REPORT:

President Dellapenna asked for the Mayor’s Report.

Mayor Cherepko said thank you, Mr. President. It’s nice to see our Captain of Detectives, Chris Halaszynski, in the audience with us tonight and also our Pure Penn Governmental Liaison Gina Rosso, amongst everyone else that is here. Thank you for coming out! It’s nice to see you get involved and to really take part in the City and really become part of the solution. For those that hopefully you

received in the mail we sent a little newsletter out about some of the good things going on in the City.

We talk about McKeesport Rising. There's no question we are moving forward. As it's taken a few decades to go down, it's going to take us time to rebuild as well but there's a lot of good things going on and all too often people tend to get caught up in the negative. When you are part of the negative aspects of the City and you strive with the negative, I can assure you that you become part of the problem. We have enough of that from people outside of our town. We really don't need it from people within the town so we will continue to market what we are doing in the City to try to encourage people. There are so many people here in the City of McKeesport that have so much pride. You know, "once a Tiger always a Tiger," and I think you know they believe our better days lie ahead. We have our bumps in the road and without question a couple unfortunate incidents over the last week which the police are dealing with. We will continue to do everything in our power to take part in the pro-active policing aspect of things, intelligent policing. The virtual checkpoints that we are installing throughout the City amongst other things. Without question, you know, the Chief and I were going over numbers, and contrary to what many may believe, crime is on the decline overall in the City of McKeesport. So, we will have those numbers all compiled and put together here shortly but I know we were going over it and it's been a few years now. I mean, you might see some, if you look over the last 8 years to be quite honest with you, you can see a decline. I think I presented that chart to Council last year that we had up through last year.

As we continue to do a lot of the things, the demolitions, the paving, business development, we've gone over so many things that are coming in, that have come in, whether it's down on RIDC with a couple, the Engineer, Nuclear Engineering Firm that came in, Consolidated Power also extended theirs, American Textile extended over. We have another company we are still not allowed to talk publicly about but many of you that drive across the McKeesport Duquesne Bridge you might see work going on down there and that's not for nothing. It will be another company bringing jobs. Tri-Wire is still accepting applications for those looking for a job, decedent pay, good benefits, holidays, vacations, sick time, it's a good chance to really get on your feet, amongst other things. From the Christy Park corridor to down by downtown you will see a building that will be

going up this year, 2019, for sure, right across from Natalie's on a lot that's been vacant for probably 30 plus years. So, we are excited about that as well. We are moving ahead with that and tying up some loose ends as we speak. Some other developments down around the Marina looking very promising right now. Along with a little further down the road the restoration of the Penn McKee as we continue to partner with the Young Preservationists of Pittsburgh.

As far as the demolition goes you know there's been the big asbestos issue with the surveys. I have brought that up at past Council meetings. We are very happy that our contractor has now agreed to contract out the asbestos with another contractor and it's one that we've worked with in the City and they are a company that we believe will move a little more fluently and efficiently to get the process going. Our contractor is fantastic at dropping the houses and getting rid of them. It's just a matter of getting everything cleared through the asbestos that's taking a lot longer than expected but you will still have well over 300 houses that are in the process of coming down. They will go all winter and if the snow doesn't hold them back, they are working.

We will be out doing what we can. The major paving projects will be pushed back probably closer to Spring at this point. We will still be out patching. I did just see 50's and the possibility of 60 over the next week, of course, one is on the weekend, but, Steve and his men will continue to be out making sure that we are addressing those needs throughout the Winter. As pro-active as we try to be with the potholes, the reality of it is that it's hard to keep up so I encourage Council, the public, anyone that when a pothole arises, pick up the phone and call Public Works, call my office, Jennifer in my office, however you want to have it addressed. We will get out there and address it.

In addition to those that have already been out on contract for demo, we have condemnation hearings coming up for well over 100. On the 9th and the 11th they will have the Hearings right in here and those were a lot of part of our strategic planning but also, "the squeaky wheel gets the grease." So, when complaints come in, we put them on the list as well. I just ask you to continue to be patient. We are doing everything we can. Without question this is the most aggressive approach that we have had in regard to demolition at one time in the City. You can, over a two-month time, probably have 400-500 houses down and we will

continue to do what we can, internally as well with our own men and our own resources and continue to contract out where we can afford. It's no secret that we sold the Authority to really keep us out of Act 47 but the truth of the matter is that doesn't save us forever. It buys us time as we continue to rebuild and we've been surviving and filling some deficits not just because we closed a year ago on the Authority but if you remember we took a pre-payment on the transaction as well so we've been filling gaps for a few years now, not just the one year that just passed. So, we will continue to invest the money responsibly, get as much interest as we can while it's invested, and continue to watch as we utilize the money too and make sure we are not taking part in any wasteful spending. So, we try to do what's most efficient for the best interest of the City as far as the spending goes and we will continue to do that.

One of the major issues we have going on in the City right now is McIntosh. McIntosh which is down behind the old Tom Clark, which is now Riverview Chevy, we have a landslide that's been a few months now. They pretty much think it is stable at this point and it's not going to go any further but there's a lot of work to get done so we will be coming to this Council probably in February as we have bids out right now to remedy that road, to restore that road, to make sure that the people up there are safe and that the road is safe and the people have access to their homes on McIntosh. It's another expense we can't control. It's something that has to be done. So, the Engineers, which this Council approved last month or the month before, to come up with a couple different solutions have officially now have a bid out. It's officially out I believe or going out very shortly. The opening is at the end of the month, I know that, I don't know exactly when it goes out but we will open the bid on the 31st of January and hopefully be in front of Council the first week in February for approval of a contractor. Hoping it's not crazy high but it's very possible to push a half a million dollars or so. Once again, it's an expense that none of us control. Unfortunately, contrary to what many may believe because there are these thoughts out there that there's just funding for this and funding for that and there's Grants available and truth be told there's just not anymore. We have done a tremendous job, I really believe this administration and Council, to really try to secure as much Grants, as much funding as we possibly can out there, but there's just as many out there as years ago and I know there is really nothing for these types of needs when we deal with

landslides and what not but it's something that is getting addressed and we have a couple other spots in the City as well, maybe not to that level, but not far behind it, that we are addressing as well. That's the unfortunate part, but there are things that we have to deal with.

Other than that, I mean, I apologize for missing the Work Session, it was only a 10 minute one and I can honestly say I think that's the first meeting I missed in 15 years but I guess I was just late, I didn't mean it, but you did close it out, but I do apologize I was running late out of the office.

So, I ask those in the audience and of course Council as always who does a tremendous job to really try to be a voice out there for some of the things that are going on and I will encourage anybody, if you have an issue, pick up the phone and call me, call my office, you will get a phone call back and if there's an issue it will be addressed and if it's something we can't help you with right away we will give you that answer as well. I don't believe in telling people what they want to hear we are very up-front with people and tell them where we are at and we will do everything in our power to help any of our residents out with whatever concerns we have. We will continue to work to make McKeesport a safer place, a better place to live, a better place to work, and continue to track businesses. There are a few other ones too that we will be announcing in 2019 that we cannot even, I cannot even give you the location at this point on a couple of them because we are just sworn to that with Confidentiality Agreements. There's a lot of good things happening.

On another note, good and bad, depending on how you look at it, but I would be remiss if I didn't say something, for those that don't know, our wonderful Police Chief, Chief Washowich is officially attending his last public meeting this evening. I know he is not one to really, you know he doesn't always like the attention and I'll probably hear later I shouldn't have said anything but truth be told I would be remiss if I didn't just acknowledge your last meeting Chief and let you know how much I truly appreciate, as Mayor, what you have done for this City, long before I got here as well as an Officer and working your way up through the ranks as Captain of Detectives and the Chief now, which February 1st will be 8 years, I could tell you in these 7 years what you meant to me as Mayor and more importantly personally. I cannot thank you enough. I know you probably won't

miss those middle of the night conversations and rather it's me venting or whatever the case may be but I just want you to know that your words of encouragement and your advice has been so much appreciated, both on a personal level and a professional level. So, I thank you, I'm proud to have you as part of this administration. Without question you truly held the office of Chief with the utmost level of integrity and have been a tremendous asset to the City and you are going to be missed and I miss you as well already but thank you for all you did and I wish you nothing but the best of luck Chief. So, he will be here until the end of January so February 1st will be the Chief's last official day. This was my last official meeting to at least say thank you.

Other than that Mr. President I can go on or we can stop her. That concludes my Report.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mr. Mayor.

CITIZENS IN THE AUDIENCE: When your name is called please come forward and keep in mind that you have 3 minutes. State your name, your address and what you want to discuss.

Dwayne Yeager, 615 Atlantic Avenue, McKeesport. First of all, congratulations Chief you should be really proud of your Department, real proud. I see the difference and I believe that you really believe in McKeesport and you love McKeesport so thank you! My main concern here guys, listen, I have to give you a short breakdown of how this came about. I grew up where the Salvation Army is, probably most of you don't even know where that is, but it's the Kemps Building on West Fifth Avenue. Smack right on a four-lane highway, right behind me was the railroad tracks. Lived there for 18 years and then we moved down to the lower part of Tenth Ward. They are parking the CSX cars on the tracks and it's not the parking, it's not that noise, I worked in a mill and I retired from there noise is nothing but this is crazy. What they are doing is they are hooking and unhooking these cars by camera instead of a break man. Back in the day when they would stop, they just line up and they smack them all hours of the night. Literally knock your things off the walls and shake your windows. I've come to I guess you would call it the Ordinance guy, I've notified CSX, nothing. Once in a while I thought I was getting somewhere because it quieted down but there's got to be some kind of Ordinance where they can only do it, don't hold me to this, from 6-10, but

when they are doing it at 10, midnight, 2 in the morning, literally your whole house shakes, I'm just asking for a little help. I don't want them to stop production, I'm thankful that everything is coming back, but they have to do something guys, this is like taking a pile of steel and dropping it on an empty barge at 2-3 in the morning, you know, and I don't know what to do. They told me, I was advised that I have to put it on record before I can keep going further. Hopefully with the power of you people and a phone call, you can settle these guys down.

Mayor Cherepko said what I will say Mr. Yeager is that I will put a phone call in. We'll even maybe reach out to Congressman Doyle as well because I will tell you CSX is difficult to deal with. You know, so all the regulations and things and what they can do and what we can hold them to we will have to look into as well. I don't know that. I will say we have called in the past about things and I think that might be at times where you kind of saw it maybe slow down for a while and then it picks back up so, I don't want to say they don't try, but we will address it. You are not the only one that has complained.

Mr. Yeager said I don't want to be a thorn. I'm all for it but that's why I gave you the break-down and I have to say to the Chief of Police again, I retired two years ago so my biggest hobby is listening to the scanner and you should be so proud of your Police Department.

Chief Washowich said I am very proud.

Mr. Yeager said 90% of them guys are a team and they just work together and thank you so much!

Mayor Cherepko said we will do what we can. You got that promise, we will do what we can.

Mr. Yeager said I know that, I believe that, thank you guys!

Regis Mellinger, 310 25th Street. Hey guys, good to see you all again, Happy New Year! Chief Washowich, I don't know you that well, but you know, it's a hard job you got so Congratulations and thank you!

Any who, so, the former George Washington location would be a great sunflower maze. That was a thought that hit me today. It's a beautiful lawn right now.

Great, I mean a very nice green lawn, they did a great job of demolishing it but I wonder what could be next you know. I really like growing sunflowers in Renzie, very honored to do so, but I would like to grow some sunflowers maybe where thousands of more McKeesporters can enjoy them. Just a simple thought I had today.

Point 2, I got a few points I am going to hit today, the demolitions I just read Mr. Jason's article about the 140 coming up and these condemnations for hearing and that's fantastic. I wonder if they exist on a map. I know we have great lists that are dedicated to all of the things that are going to be demolished pretty soon but I wonder if there is just like a map version. That's just how I tend to see the world personally.

Speaking of maps, you guys know I made a bike map. I would like to get back to that this year. One thing I learned while researching the map of McKeesport is about 90% of McKeesport is accessible without ever having to get on a 2-lane road, or the double yellow line. I think it's a very phenomenal statistic. It's not a real statistic but if you look on a map there's a lot of McKeesport you can get to without ever touching a double yellow line road. The only three or two districts that you can't really access without using a double yellow line road is Fawcett Plan and what's that one, Highland Grove in the East Fifth Avenue area. The prospect of a trail going from Chickeyville down to Walnut Street, that sounds like a really great idea. I hope that comes to fruition but I think one place where we could really, really use, along the hillside trail would be from McKeesport Versailles Cemetery along the hillside there and ending somewhere around the bottom of Camp Street by the Pennzoil. That would really connect a lot of McKeesport to downtown, as well as providing a safe access point for a lot of people. Personally, I have biked that area from Fawcett Plan to downtown and beyond. It's a really fun bike ride but it is quite terrifying on the Fifth Avenue corridor. That's one place if in the next few years maybe some trail can be made going along from McKeesport Versailles Cemetery to Camp Street that would make McKeesport basically 100% pedestrian friendly. Now, 100% is a really big number, but we could actually do that.

Point three kind of made an analogy of the story of a hippy and a fisherman. You've probably heard that story before in different words. I would say the hippy

is walking along the lake you know and he sees two guys fishing and he says hey how you guys doing are you catching anything? The fishermen say no we are not really catching anything and the hippy says well how about you try fishing on the other side of the boat you know and then they end up catching everything. That's an analogy that I use for going back to 2018 and reversing Fifth Avenue. I really do believe we will catch a lot more fish, a lot more people coming into Fifth Avenue if we do reverse it. So, I did some math. Let's imagine one person has to turn left three times a week, two lefts to get onto Fifth Avenue from Lysle Boulevard. Let's imagine that it takes one minute to make two left turns on Lysle Boulevard to get onto Fifth. You know, for any reason, whether you own a business or whether you work in City hall, just one person three times a week on Fifth Avenue times four weeks in a month times 12 months in a year that equals 144 lost minutes. That's two hours of time for just one person that has to turn left on Fifth Avenue. So, let's imagine the Police, let's say one Police Officer, let's imagine one Police Officer makes two left turns to patrol Fifth Avenue just once a day. They probably do it more but for math sake let's say one officer patrols Fifth Avenue once a day by making two left turns times 365 days that's about 6 police hours gone if you do the math, 365 days a year and 1 minute per day.

President Dellapenna said your time is done Mr. Mellinger.

Mr. Mellinger said hey, that's great man, that's all I would like to bring up. I like to make George Washington a sunflower maze if that's cool or something like that and I just wanted to show up and say Happy New Year and you guys take it easy.

President Dellapenna said thank you, Happy New Year!

NEW BUSINESS:

President Dellapenna asked Secretary James for New Business.

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-001 – BILL #1 (INTRODUCED BY MR. SOLES) – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, ESTABLISHING REGULAR MEETINGS OF CITY COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR 2019 AND JANUARY 2020.

MOTION: Mrs. Nesbit moved, seconded by Mr. Evans “to approve Bill #1.”

President Dellapenna asked for questions or comments and Mayor Cherepko said if I may Mr. President the only ones that really are different are the Summer meetings will fall on the first Tuesday. Tuesday, July 2nd, just to get it a little bit away from the Holiday so we just did the June meeting on a Tuesday as well so people know your Summer meetings are on Tuesday night. Other than that, the January meeting will not be January 1st will be on a Wednesday, so we will do it the following Monday. The reason why we chose Monday is by our charter every other year we are to have a Reorganization Meeting on the first Monday of the month anyway so being that we are required to have a Reorganization meeting on that Monday we will have the Reorganization meeting probably at 6:30 p.m. or so, or 6:15 p.m., and then we will just go regular Work Session and meeting at 6:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. like we do. So, I just wanted to explain. I know some of the media are here so I just wanted to explain why we did them as well.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor.

RC-3 **YEAS:** BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BARRY, DELLAPENNA, EVANS, SOLES (6)

NAYS: NONE (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-002 – BILL #2 (Introduced by Mrs. Brewster-Filotei) – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, SETTING FORTH THE PAYDAYS FOR THE YEAR 2019.

MOTION: **Mr. Barry moved, seconded by Mr. Soles, “to approve Bill #2.”**

RC-4 **YEAS:** BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BARRY, DELLAPENNA, EVANS, SOLES (6)

NAYS: NONE (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-003 – BILL #3 (Introduced by Mrs. Brewster-Filotei) – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE PROPER CITY OFFICIALS TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH ACE PYRO, LLC FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING THE FIREWORKS DISPLAYS AT RENZIEHAUSEN PARK FOR JULY 4TH (INDEPENDENCE DAY), AUGUST 13TH (INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE), SEPTEMBER 2ND (LABOR DAY), AND TBA (PATRIOT’S DAY).

MOTION: Mr. Barry moved, seconded by Mrs. Brewster-Filotei, “to approve Bill #3.”

President Dellapenna asked for questions or comments and Mayor Cherepko said Fireworks Bids always are a different bid, different type of bid because we tell them what we want to spend on each one and they tell us what they are going to provide. There were two that put in. This is the same one that’s done ours the last few years and looking over everything it looks like this is our biggest bang for the buck. No pun intended. President Dellapenna asked if there were any other questions and there were none.

RC-5 **YEAS:** BREWSTER-FILOTEI, NESBIT, BARRY, DELLAPENNA, EVANS, SOLES (6)

NAYS: NONE (0)

ADJOURNMENT:

President of Council Dellapenna said that concludes the Council meeting. I would like to thank everyone for attending and wish everyone a Happy New Year and Congratulate the Chief!

The meeting then adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette James
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

APPROVED:

Richard Dellapenna
President of Council

das