

**CITY OF MCKEESPORT
REGULAR MEETING**

WEDNESDAY

7:00 P.M.

APRIL 3, 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 by President of Council Richard Dellapenna.

Prayer was led by Reverend Jeffrey Conn from Dravosburg Westside UMC.

The following Members of Council were present:

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

ABSENT: NONE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION: Mrs. Brewster-Filotei moved, seconded by Mrs. Nesbit, “to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 6, 2019.”

**RC-2 YEAS: BARRY, NESBIT, DELLAPENNA, BROWN, BREWSTER-FILOTEI,
SOLES, EVANS (7)**

NAYS: NONE (0)

COMMUNICATIONS:

Received both the Fire and Police Reports for the month of March 2019.

MAYOR’S REPORT:

President Dellapenna asked for the Mayor’s Report.

Mayor Cherepko said thank you, Mr. President, I will be brief. Instead of going into a lot of things that are going on, we will touch base on a few, but I have some introductions to bring forth before Council tonight, in addition to once we introduce some recent promotions, we will then get into our community with the Living the Message Award winners for this quarter as well and then that way these individuals can kind of get on their way in case they have somewhere they want to go, with friends or family, whatever the case may be.

The first one I have is with the Fire Department. We recently had one of our Deputy Chiefs who served the City wonderfully, Chuck Margoloti, retire a few months ago, which gave us the opportunity to replace him with a Deputy Chief, Chief Tomasic and I, after the Civil Service Testing have chosen an individual that I got to be honest with you is one of the most incredible persons I have ever met, a man of absolutely, a first-class individual, class-act, a family-man and someone that is a great leader in the Fire Department as well. Someone that takes a lot of pride in his job and I can't say enough about Jeff List. At this time, I want to bring him forward so that everyone can see him and put a face, in case you don't, you never had the opportunity to meet, our newly appointed Deputy Chief Jeff List. So, at this time, and Chief Tomasic if you could come up as well, if we can have our new Deputy Chief Jeff List come forward.

Our next promotion is within the Police Department. We've had a Detective in our Department, I had the privilege, he was working as a Detective and at the time was not actually a Detective so it was more like an acting position, we had the opportunity through the approval of Council and the Personnel Committee to make him a Detective a few years ago. I can't say enough about Detective Sommers who will now be our Detective Sergeant. Sidney is an incredible leader in our Department. He is currently heading up our Firearms for the entire Police Department as well. He is constantly collaborating with others as well, with other agencies, whether it's the District Attorney's Office, whether it's Federal cases, whatever it may be. He's been in the Narcotics Department for quite sometime and he's an individual that's truly, when you talk about someone that does care, someone that can relate, it's not an easy job that our officers have, that our Detectives have. Sidney is one that is always so very well respectful, no matter what the scene is when he comes across and he realizes whether it's the victim, the victim's family, whatever the case may be, he has the compassion and the sensitivity to really help resolve situations no matter what is put before him. I can't say enough but at this time I want everyone to get the opportunity to put a face with our Detective Sergeant Sidney Sommers.

I know we have Chief Alfer is with us, I see our Captain of Detective, Chris Halaszynski, in the audience as well. Thanks for being here Chris. I know it's another someone that's been there for you and has helped you along the way and now he has a little rank to help you as well. Very well deserving.

Our next four (4) individuals are four (4) police officer that may not be a new face to some. They've been serving our community for, most of them, roughly a year, give or take. We have been down on manpower in the Police Department. We will continue to try to do more with less but at no point in time will we ever, at the interest of the public safety, make this anything other than our number one priority, making sure McKeesport is safe and making sure that Chief Alfer has all the resources that he needs in order to continue to help curb not only the addiction to crime and violence in the City but to also just decrease crime overall and contrary to what many may see or read, crime is on the decline in the City of McKeesport over the last 7 or 8 years. Once again, these are jobs that I for one do not take for granted. You live in a world that without question you are trying to protect and serve and you do so under a microscope and sometimes we forget about the loved ones that have these officers out here that are just hoping that they never get that visit, job hoping that their loved one finishes their tour for the day and returns home safely. We have a lot of pride in our Police Department here in the City of McKeesport. If you look around I am proud to say that we don't have many of the issues that you see and I contribute that to Chief Alfer, Chief Washowich prior to him, and don't get me wrong, we are not perfect and I am not saying that for one second., but we have officers that are truly vested in the City, truly care. Part of it, when you talk about community policing, a lot of people don't know this but our officers reside in the City of McKeesport. Our officers have kids that are interacting and go to schools here in the City of McKeesport. We have many officers that actually coach various youth activities. Our Police Chief is the High School Wrestling Coach. Many of our others, whether its Little Tigers, whether it's the baseball programs, or whether its down at the Boys & Girls Club, whatever the case may be and I truly believe that helps contribute to the relationships that we have. Not that we can't continue to work on them and always continue to better those relationships because we always will. We will look at every opportunity to connect with our community. But, with what we have, I can't thank Chief Alfer enough, Chief Washowich prior to him, for

their leadership and what we do here on a daily basis. But, with that I want to introduce our four (4) officers who without question will all be tremendous assets to the City. But, to see them promoted to full-time, to see them grow, to see them get more engrossed in the community, I can't even begin to say how excited I am and looking forward to it. So, at this time I am going to ask them to come forward. I want everyone to be able to put, I see Lieutenant of Narcotics Mark Steel in the audience as well, thanks for coming Lieutenant, but these four (4) I want these to come forward so we can put a face with them if you haven't already. First, we have Sebastian Cencich, we have Officer Sheena Leszcynski, Officer Charles Thomas, and Officer Nicholas Probola. I see Officer Patty Sommers; Officer Sommers thank you for coming tonight as well.

I should open up some seats if there are people in the hall. What we are going to do, we will just move ahead at this time and get with our Living the Message Awardees. Every Quarter Jennifer Vertullo, my Assistant, Angela and others on the Committee, I see Angela back there. Harold Allen hiding back there, I didn't see Harold. We look to identify individuals through nominations of the community that are truly Living the Message of Respect, Love, Dignity and Hope. This community message is something that we are trying to really let individuals know, let our youth know. You know, they hear that all too often in school that sometimes it's almost like when they leave school they kind of turn the switch off and think what applies at school doesn't apply in the real world and I think what we are trying to do is see businesses trying to put signs up around throughout the community so that they can see that this isn't just for youth. This is a way to live life. If everyone truly lived in respect, dignity, love and hope, we would without question have a much more peaceful world. So, as we continue to try to spread that message here in McKeesport and we look to select individuals, I am going to go through with our four (4) Awardees this evening. Read the Proclamations, the nice thing about these Awards are we've gotten from the youngest that you could imagine to older individuals, to, it doesn't matter, I want to say we had as young as 5, 6, years old, Elaina, and we had other school-age kids as well, up to seniors that still believe and I think these are individuals that when you talk about living the message you talk about still having the pride in the City of McKeesport, still knowing that yes we have had a down-turn, we've struggled since the collapse of the steel industry like the whole Mon Valley and beyond, but our better days do

lie ahead. Unfortunately, it takes time. I've said it a million times, if I didn't say it once, you got to crawl before you walk and walk before you run, and when it takes 30 plus years on a downhill spiral it's not going to rebuild overnight either. But, these individuals, without question are individuals that are trying to lead by example and I couldn't be more honored to have the opportunity to present Proclamations tonight.

The first winner goes to the Award of Respect and that goes to Terry Ruccio.

WHEREAS, the McKeesport Message Committee uplifts the values of Respect, Dignity, Hope and Love through community programming and other efforts; and

WHEREAS, Terry Ruccio is at home in the City of McKeesport, fulfilling her passion for faith-based service by helping local children, families and others in need to overcome their hardships at Sunshine Community Ministries and the Hope House; and

WHEREAS, Terry is an experienced youth leader who began working with students at the First Free Evangelical Church in McKeesport before turning to serve at-risk populations at Sunshine, which offers a community kitchen, clothing closet, and tutoring program; and

WHEREAS, Terry dedicates herself to Sunshine's mission of reinforcing the notion that the Lord changes lives and she teaches others to welcome the change as she supports and serves the McKeesport community.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Mayor of the City of McKeesport, I do hereby honor Terry Ruccio as the Living the Message awardee for Respect.

Lois, we thought maybe wasn't going to be able to be here and she didn't make it, but for Love, we have Lois Brown.

WHEREAS, the McKeesport Message Committee uplifts the values of Respect, Dignity, Hope and Love through community programming and other efforts; and

WHEREAS, Lois Brown is a long-time McKeesporter and has been active in the community for decades, from her career as a McKeesport Area Early Childhood Education to U.S. Steel Operations. Lois has found time to share for the needs of our society as well as that of her own family; and

WHEREAS, Lois is well known in her role as an Outreach Specialist at the Intersection Soup Kitchen and Support Center where she helps clients meet their daily needs in time of financial distress.

WHEREAS, Lois' love of family and community melt together in the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group which helps caregivers navigate the rewards and challenges of parenting the second time around.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Mayor of the City of McKeesport, I do hereby honor Lois Brown as the Living the Message awardee for Love.

Mayor Cherepko said please give Lois a round of applause in abstention.

Our next awardee is for Dignity and that goes to Alex Dalton.

WHEREAS, the McKeesport Message Committee uplifts the values of Respect, Dignity, Hope and Love through community programming and other efforts; and

WHEREAS, Alex Dalton is a McKeesport Area High School Senior whose experience with the interact and rotary clubs led him to develop plans for a Student Solution Center to address students' mental health needs; and

WHEREAS, in partnership with the District Administrators Alex developed a resource in which a select group of students will be trained to serve as Peer Mediators. They will help classmates cope with High School environment or overcome personal issues before they escalate to violence or substance abuse; and

WHEREAS, Alex wants to reduce the stigma of mental illness and raise awareness of the impact mental health has on students in school performance and their roles at home or in the community.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Mayor of the City of McKeesport, I do hereby honor Alex Dalton as the Living the Message awardee for Dignity.

Mayor Cherepko said I always find it amazing how no matter how many of these we give out you always see very few words and I think it's just individuals that truly care and do what they do just because they want to help out and make McKeesport a better place, no matter what role they play. It's never about recognition, that's for sure.

Our next individual I a gentleman that I've gotten to know for quite some time, well actually I shouldn't say, but probably for about the last 5 or 6 years I got to know him a little better and when you talk about Hope, I think it's very fitting, and that award goes to Larry Bridges.

WHEREAS, the McKeesport Message Committee uplifts the values of Respect, Dignity, Hope and Love through community programming and other efforts; and

WHEREAS, Larry Bridges is a McKeesport resident who is helping cancer survivors take pride in their victory with the wide spread bell-ringing ritual that often marks the end of chemotherapy and radiation treatments; and

WHEREAS, through his local Non-Profit, Another Shoulder, Larry is raising funds to install these survivor bells in as many hospitals as possible, bringing a symbol of Hope to patients across the region during such trying times in their lives; and

WHEREAS, Larry hopes to inspire the McKeesport community to set alarms and ring bells at 12:00 noon on June 2nd in honor of Cancer Survivors Day.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Mayor of the City of McKeesport, I do hereby honor Larry Bridges as the Living the Message awardee for Hope.

Mayor Cherepko said all right, just a few comments. I told you with the presentations I was going to be brief and I will stick to that. Our road paving project should be on its way here probably, we are hoping, within about a month when the asphalt plant opens up sometime in April if the weather continues to cooperate, we can get that up and running.

Our demos are moving along. The asbestos surveys are moving much more quickly than what they were at the beginning. We are still looking at probably around 250 homes that will come down this year.

The street light at the intersection of Route 148, down in the Christy Park Section, that's moving along as well and we hope to see something very shortly. The development opportunities, I know it's been pretty repetitive, over the last several months but they are things moving along very slowly pretty much on every end of town from East Fifth Avenue to Christy Park to right down here in downtown to possibilities with the Penn McKee. We did get our report back from the Young Preservationists of Pittsburgh, pretty much making sure that we knew that we were correct in the way that we feel that are opportunities there and the building can be saved and for the most part that's pretty much what the report says so we will continue to market the Penn McKee and make sure that it fits into our strategy. We will also be holding events down at the Riverfront Park which Jennifer is starting to plan now with the Non-Profit that we set up, the McKees Point Development Group, and we are hoping to do a couple of those this summer.

McIntosh Drive was approved and the contractors are moving forward. They did get the notice to proceed. They did bid last time with the additional footage so what we are looking to do is now that's going to be longer. So, the bid did include "x" amount of dollars for every, I think I did it by 8' on the bid, we actually got them to come under what their bid was. So, what they are trying to do is try to get everything in so that they can do the entire thing at once. So, I know we see some of our residents back there from McIntosh. The project now will, I mean without question, it's going to be well over half a million dollars because we probably have roughly \$180,000 in addition to what we thought we were going to do last week with the additional work. Which will take them up past their homes. The homes at the beginning, to secure all of that. We also did reach out to the Post Office and as soon as we can get that side of the road stable, at that point there shouldn't be an issue. I will say it's a little more complicated than what I thought. Wow, the minute you say you can't learn something new, is something else. But I didn't realize it would be that complicated to make sure that they get mail service there but we did reach out to Congressman Doyle's Office and Jeff Schaffer, and they are doing everything they can to restore that as well. We will continue to work on that as well but the project is going to be bigger and we have concerns elsewhere in the City as well but that's our number one priority right now is McIntosh. Our bid last was \$312,000 plus the \$70,000 we already had in, we were almost at \$400,000 and you are adding another \$200,000, so you are going to be almost at \$600,000 to restore one road. But it's something that they need without question. I see our residents back there and it is in the hands of the contractors at this point. We gave them their notice to proceed, we okayed everything, Council okayed it last month, and I would hope that it would be very, very soon. I think if we wouldn't have added the other work they probably would have started, but the way they are looking at it is they now want to start where we were adding and work their way back. I don't know, that seemed to make sense because all the dirt, it hasn't actually collapsed yet, it's just cracked and starting to lie, so they want to work on that end because they don't have to worry about all the fill and work towards Marshall Drive. So, I believe that's what held it up a little bit but it is in their hands.

Some events here and then I will finish. Our Easter Egg Hunt that we have for kids 10 and under is Saturday, April 13th at 10 a.m. Also, there is, this is for the

McKeesport Little Theatre, a Spaghetti Dinner to benefit McKeesport Little Theatre Juniors, Saturday, April 27th from 5-8 p.m. That is at the Little Theatre.

We will be doing our Spring Clean-up, starting with the electronics and the recycling program. That will be Saturday, April 27th, this month, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will be pretty much the same as last year, right, we agreed, which is you get one free drop off for a tv and then anything after that is a \$5 charge. Tires, \$3 for standard and \$5 for over-size. Cellphones, computers, keyboards, any of those electronics you have laying around the house that you cannot get rid of.

We will have our Clean Up Day, our 5th Annual Environment Day on Saturday, May 4th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., so we will remind everyone at next month's meeting because I think next month's meeting is May 1st or whatever. So, we will remind everyone.

Also, in April, our SS McKeesport, 76th Anniversary, on Monday, April 29th at 12 noon at the Palisades.

There was one thing that popped in my mind while I was going through that.

So, we do have a lot going on. In addition to that, Steve in the Public Works Department is out there trying to get the potholes caught up with, trying to get ready for paving, trying to get our Parks ready, it's one of those things where Spring kind of snuck up on you. We went straight from very quickly, there was really no grace area, I mean at all, it just went from one to the other, but we are trying to get everything up and running for the parks for the kids. Pavilions will be all brand-new this year. Those renovations are finished. We are finishing up the Dog Park as well. We are very excited about that as well.

New signs are going up with the numbers of the pavilions. We kind of numbered them a little differently so they are more in a chronological order.

Also, we are excited with the Grant that we received from Senator Brewster, no I'm sorry I take that back, that particular Grant was not through the Senator, that was through RAD, where we were able to build a new pavilion this year. So, we are going to add another pavilion up towards the Heritage Center which will enhance the Heritage Center as well. It will still be one you rent but that will go along side of a parking lot that we are going to put in as well.

You know, it's a good problem to have, we don't have parking in Renzie Park. That means your park is being utilized and we need to add additional parking.

So, with that our Concerts will be starting soon. We are getting ready for all of the events.

Just a chance, finishing up, once again, to thank the volunteers, the Rec Board, thanking the Lions Club for all that they do to really help make these events a success. When you talk about working together for a better McKeesport, I think they totally show and demonstrate just what that means. I don't take it for granted the volunteers we have. I can tell you it's the one best part of my job is seeing how many people truly care about the City and just want to make a difference and I know Keith Soles chairs the Rec Board as well and you see other people show up at different events and do what they can. They are sitting up here, just volunteers throughout the community, from the bottom of my heart I say thank you, not just as Mayor, but as a life-long resident who loves my City dearly as well.

With that Mr. President, I do see Regis out there and I think someone said it's his Birthday, so I do want to wish him a Happy Birthday, but other than that, that concludes my Report.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mr. Mayor.

CITIZENS IN THE AUDIENCE: Next is Citizens in the Audience. Mr. Mellinger come forward.

Regis Mellinger, 310 25th Street. Hi there and thank you very much. As you know today is the last day in my 20s. The first half was like something you'd see in the movies, big college dreams, and the second half well, some of you were light houses in stormy seas, absolutely. Speaking of light houses, what if we took the light house we have and put a light in it and put it at the point? That would be brilliant. Anyway, Tom Maglicco told me a story one time. We were passing out fruits and nuts, the best joke of the night, that's all I got, tell you what, leave now. Tom Maglicco told me a story one time when we were passing out fruits and nuts, he said, Rege, when I was in school that's when the mills finally shut down for good, kaput, they closed the doors, and you would have your best friend sitting with you in class one week and the next week the seat might be empty. He told

me that's just the way it was, people got new jobs and went somewhere and I thought, wow, Tom, I really couldn't imagine, that's really interesting, but then I thought about it and I thought about my classmates from 2007 and the GIEP Program and I thought, I wonder where they are today. I think one of McKeesport's biggest issues is a silent one, it's the moving away of our best and brightest minds and since the collapse of the steel industry it really hasn't stopped. So, on my last day of my 20's I am here to say in the future make a city for people in their 20's. It's kind of the demographic that we are missing. Look ahead for trends of the future happening today. That's been the underlying theme of almost all of my topics that I have talked about. What's going on elsewhere and how cool it would be to have it here in McKeesport. But, don't do it for me, I'm about to be an old man, I'm about to be 30, pretty soon you will see me busting out a cane with a wheelchair and a kayak and a bunch of people chasing me and wondering where I got the kayak. Don't do it for me, do it for Gina, for Jeff, for Max, for Alex, they are the ones who really need the City the most, you know brilliant people in their 20's is the demographic we need the most. Tomorrow I will still be here but some local groups lose one big statistic. The Lions, the Kiwanis, Trail Commission, this Council meeting, all lose one member in their 20's and it's been a joy to be here. I hope one day McKeesport is on the cutting edge of technology, arts, music, with dance theatres and all the stuff I hear everybody else talk about from way back when, that would be awesome. I hope we can make McKeesport fun. It's definitely getting there and how much cool stuff can we pack into one City I wonder sometimes and in 8 months we are entering the roaring 20's so, I am going to leave you with....Did you hear about the dentist with the speech impediment who became a lawyer? No, he said I want the tooth, the whole tooth and nothing but the tooth. It's been a joy being here so I will see you guys later.

President Dellapenna said thank you Regis.

Donna Byrne, 2913 Grover Street. Ok, I wasn't planning on doing this. Hi, I am Donna Byrne and I am President of the McKeesport Lions and I am here to talk about the McKeesport Lions, along with Senator Brewster, Representative Davis, and Mayor Cherepko, are hosting a Blood Drive on Saturday, May 4th from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the McKees Café, 1st Floor of the Palisades. We are doing this to honor the First Responders, victims and families from the Tree of Life Tragedy so

we are asking that you please join us by sharing your arm and a little bit of your time. I have some information here on how you can sign up. We will be on social media within a week to show you how you can sign up for it and, well, that's all I have to say. Thank you, but I will be back next month to remind you again.

Council all said thank you.

NEW BUSINESS:

President Dellapenna asked Secretary James for New Business.

ORDINANCE NO. 19-003 – BILL #21 (INTRODUCED BY MR. EVANS) – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, APPROVING THE EDITING AND INCLUSION OF CERTAIN ORDINANCES AS PARTS OF THE VARIOUS COMPONENT CODES OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF MCKEESPORT, PENNSYLVANIA.

MOTION: Mr. Soles moved, seconded by Mrs. Brewster-Filotei “to approve Bill #21.”

President Dellapenna asked for questions or comments and there were none.

RC-3 YEAS: BARRY, NESBIT, DELLAPENNA, BROWN, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, SOLES, EVANS (7)

NAYS: NONE (0)

ORDINANCE NO. 19-004 – BILL #22 (INTRODUCED BY MR. SOLES) – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 04-14, AS AMENDED, TO ESTABLISH A MINIMUM SQUARE FOOTAGE REQUIREMENT FOR SINGLE FAMILY DWELLINGS.

MOTION: Mr. Brown moved, seconded by Mrs. Nesbit “to approve Bill #22.”

President Dellapenna asked for questions or comments and there were none.

RC-4 YEAS: BARRY, NESBIT, DELLAPENNA, BROWN, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, SOLES, EVANS (7)

NAYS: NONE (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-019 – BILL #23 (INTRODUCED BY MRS. NESBIT) – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF APRIL 2019 AS “FAIR HOUSING MONTH” IN THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT.

MOTION: Mrs. Brewster-Filotei moved, seconded by Mr. Evans “to approve Bill #23.”

President Dellapenna asked for questions or discussion and there was none.

RC-5 YEAS: BARRY, NESBIT, DELLAPENNA, BROWN, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, SOLES, EVANS (7)

NAYS: NONE (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-020 – BILL #24 (INTRODUCED BY MR. BROWN) – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MCKEESPORT, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AUTHORIZING THE PROPER CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO EXECUTE A LEASE WITH THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (PENNDOT) FOR THE LEASING OF LANDS ALONG STATE ROUTE 148 FOR USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE BIKE TRAIL.

MOTION: Mr. Barry moved, seconded by Mrs. Nesbit “to approve Bill #24.”

President Dellapenna asked for questions or comments or discussion and there was none.

RC-6 YEAS: BARRY, NESBIT, DELLAPENNA, BROWN, BREWSTER-FILOTEI, SOLES, EVANS (7)

NAYS: NONE (0)

ADJOURNMENT:

President of Council Dellapenna said that concludes the Council Meeting for Wednesday, April 3rd. I would like to thank everyone for coming and please drive safe.

The meeting then adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette James
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

APPROVED:

Richard Dellapenna
President of Council
das