

The City of York, Pennsylvania

Michael Ray Helfrich, President of Council
 Henry Hay Nixon, Vice President of Council
 Renee S. Nelson, Member of Council
 Sandie Walker, Member of Council
 Judy A. Ritter-Dickson, Member of Council

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COMMITTEE MINUTES November 21, 2016 6:00 p.m.

Police	Fire	Public Works	E&C Development	Business Admin	Rules & Admin
Walker Helfrich Nelson	Walker Ritter-Dickson Nelson	Nelson Ritter-Dickson Helfrich	Nixon Ritter-Dickson Walker	Helfrich Nixon Nelson	Helfrich Nixon Walker

*Bold text indicates Chairperson

Note: General Committee is chaired by Council President or designee and includes all Council members.

Council members in attendance: Sandie Walker, Renee S. Nelson, Henry Hay Nixon, and Michael Ray Helfrich, President.

Administration in attendance: Mayor C. Kim Bracey; Business Administrator Michael Doweary; and Assistant Solicitor Don Hoyt.

Council staff in attendance: Dianna L. Thompson-Mitchell, City Clerk.

I. Called committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Committee Issues for the December 6 & 20, 2016 legislative Agenda as follows:

GENERAL COMMITTEE ([View Issues Chart](#))

1. Public interview of candidates to fill a vacancy on Council.

Council received 17 applications to fill a vacancy on City Council created by the resignation of Carol Hill-Evans who won the November 8, 2016 general election for State Representative of the 95th District. Of the 17 applicants, one did not reside in the city and was disqualified. Of the 16 applicants remaining, Council each selected candidates from the pool of resumes to move forward to the public interview phase. Those selected were as follows:

Roderick Artis
 Amy Chamberlin
 Anne Clark
 Ben McGlaughlin
 Judy Ritter-Dickson

All selected candidates were in attendance.

Each candidate answered two rounds of questioning, in rotating order, from each Councilmember, as well as any additional questions from Council.

Immediately following the public interviews, President Helfrich recessed the general committee meeting at 7:12 p.m. and convened in special session at 7:20 p.m. ([View agenda](#)) (Please see the Minutes of 11/21/16 for appointments and reorganization.)

During the special session, Council voted to approve the appointment of Judy Ritter-Dickson to fill the vacancy on Council to serve in said capacity until the first Monday of January 2018. Council also selected Henry Hay Nixon as Vice President and established new committee assignments (See chart above)

President Helfrich adjourned the special meeting at 7:30 p.m. and immediately reconvened Council's committee meeting.

2. Resolution establishing Council's 2017 meetings.

The City Clerk outlined the 2017 proposed meetings schedule of City Council. After discussion, Council amended the meeting schedule to begin its legislative sessions at 6:30 p.m. (instead of 7 p.m.) with public comment being the first order of business.

President Helfrich explained that if public comment reaches the ½ hour mark, he would recess the public comment, move to Council's legislative agenda at 7 p.m., and then reconvene public comment at the end of the legislative business if there are members of the public who didn't have an opportunity to speak during the first ½ hour. However, he said if there is not a lot of public comment, Council will convene its legislative agenda immediately following the last speaker which could happen before 7 p.m.

DECISION: A motion was made by Helfrich, seconded by Nixon to place this item on the **12/6/16** legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Ritter-Dickson, Walker, Nixon, Nelson, Helfrich – 5; Nays – 0.

As item's 3-8 relate to the 2017 Budget, President Helfrich requested that we move them all to the 12/6/16 agenda but save further discussion on these items after the committee agenda is completed. Council unanimously agreed. Therefore, see Council Comment section below for discussion on the 2017 Budget.

3. Bill No. 23 amending Article 951.12 "Annual Collection Fee Schedule" to increase refuse fees.

DECISION: A motion was made by Helfrich, seconded by Nelson to place this item on the **12/6/16** legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Ritter-Dickson, Walker, Nixon, Nelson, Helfrich – 5; Nays – 0.

4. Bill No. 24 amending Article 933 "Sewer Rentals" to increase sewer fees.

DECISION: A motion was made by Helfrich, seconded by Nelson to place this item on the **12/6/16** legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Ritter-Dickson, Walker, Nixon, Nelson, Helfrich – 5; Nays – 0.

5. Bill No. 25 amending Article 741 "Park Conduct" (For commercial restaurants seeking to use public parks)

DECISION: A motion was made by Helfrich, seconded by Walker to place this item on the **12/6/16** legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Ritter-Dickson, Walker, Nixon, Nelson, Helfrich – 5; Nays – 0.

6. Resolution establishing fees related to Bill No. 25.

DECISION: A motion was made by Helfrich, seconded by Nixon to place this item on the **12/6/16** legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Ritter-Dickson, Walker, Nixon, Nelson, Helfrich – 5; Nays – 0.

7. Bill No. 26 adopting the 2017 Budget.

DECISION: A motion was made by Helfrich, seconded by Nixon to place this item on the **12/6/16** legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Ritter-Dickson, Walker, Nixon, Nelson, Helfrich – 5; Nays – 0.

8. Bill No. 27 adopting the 2017 Tax Rate.

DECISION: A motion was made by Helfrich, seconded by Nelson to place this item on the **12/6/16** legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Ritter-Dickson, Walker, Nixon, Nelson, Helfrich – 5; Nays – 0.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ([View Issues Chart](#))

1. Resolution approving a contract with Capital Blue Cross.
2. Resolution approving an agreement with Reliance Standard.
3. Resolution approving an agreement with Unimerica Insurance Company.

Business Administrator Doweary explained that these are routine items that deal with insurances of our employees.

DECISION: A motion was made by Helfrich, seconded by Nixon to place these item on the **12/6/16** legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas –Nixon, Nelson, Helfrich – 3; Nays – 0.

II. Council Comment

2017 BUDGET DISCUSSION

SEWER FEE INCREASE

President Helfrich said we have heard plenty about these increases during the budget hearings. He said the proposed increase of more than 20% is a result of the lowest bidder for the sewer concessions bid award so unfortunately we have to increase the sewer fees for residential customers.

Vice President Nixon suggested the costs for the Fireside Sewer Project & West Manchester Interceptor Project be split in half so that we can begin the first phase of these projects in 2017 with the remaining funds to complete these projects being financed in 2018. He said the money saved in the 2017 budget could then be used to offset the 2017 sewer increase. He said he feels this would be a fair compromise.

Administrator Doweary said if it is Council's wish to reduce the sewer fee increase, then Vice President Nixon's suggestion is worth consideration.

Council discussed the sewer improvement projects and how this would affect sewer rates.

President Helfrich said he's concerned about spending all the money in this special project line item before 2018 even gets here.

President Helfrich then went over a spreadsheet he worked up and how the 4% tax cut being proposed by the Administration seems nice but when you compare it to the increase in sewer fees, the poorer residents with families are going to pay more while the wealthier will end up paying less. ([View spreadsheet](#)) Helfrich's spreadsheet compared costs if there is a 2% tax cut and 10.3% sewer increase, a 1% tax cut and an 8.3% sewer increase, or no tax cut and a 6.3% sewer increase. He said his figures aren't an exact science but everybody will virtually pay the same sewer rate based on how much water we use regardless if you're rich or poor.

President Helfrich said having tax cuts in the city are important, so a point of compromise would be giving a 1% tax cut and an 8.3% sewer increase. He said this doesn't give anyone what they want but it's a fair compromise. He said he could re-run these numbers to consider Nixon's proposal.

Administrator Doweary and President Helfrich debated general fund dollars, sewer increases, and taxes and how this all would affect the rich and poor.

Councilwoman Walker asked Administrator Doweary if he could review President Helfrich's spreadsheet and Vice President Nixon's proposal and provide feedback to Council on or before Council's 12/6/16 meeting. She also said she would like to hear comments and concerns from the public so she pleaded with residents to attend the 12/6/16 Council meeting.

Administrator Doweary said he is willing to work through these proposals with Council but said he also needs to hear a clear and concise plan on how to move forward.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEES

President Helfrich said he's not in support of creating an additional full-time Property Maintenance Inspector (PMI) position because of the cost needed to retain this position (i.e., salary and benefits). He suggested making this a part-time position with no benefits to help cut costs.

Administrator Doweary said we currently have 4 part-time, hourly PMI's to cover various areas of the city which creates management issues such as start and end times, and expectation of productivity.

Vice President Nixon said he's adamantly opposed to reducing this position to part-time because he feels our PMI's are nearly as important as police officers. He said the major complaints he hears about from residents is public safety and neighborhood blight. He stated that this is a quality of life issue.

Administrator Doweary said the city needs to work through its backlog of complaints and blight before they would even deliberate about changing this to a part-time position.

PUBLIC PARK FEES (Article 741)

President Helfrich said he doesn't understand the entire scope of the fee for commercial use of public parks. He asked that a message be relayed to Public Works Director Jim Gross to provide supporting documentation on this amendment and associated fee.

Administrator Doweary said he would relay the message to Director Gross but he believes this amendment is an attempt to distinguish between a family getting together on the park and a commercial business seeking to make a profit.

President Helfrich said he would also like Director Gross to explain the \$35 penalty increase for someone seeking to reserve a park with less than 30 days' notice. He said he is concerned about why this is such a huge increase when the other fees are only being increased by about \$10.

III. Administration Comment: None

IV. Next Committee Meeting: January 25, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

V. Adjournment: There being no further business, the November 21, 2016 committee meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.