

Council of the City of York, Pennsylvania

Henry Hay Nixon, President of Council
Sandie Walker, Vice President of Council
Judy A. Ritter-Dickson, Member of Council
Edquina Washington, Member of Council
H. Michael Buckingham, Member of Council

Dianna L. Thompson-Mitchell, City Clerk
Email: dthompso@yorkcity.org



Office of York City Council
101 S. George St.
York, Pennsylvania 17401

Telephone: (717) 849-2246
Fax: (717) 812-0557

Website: www.yorkcity.org

MINUTES February 11, 2019 11:00 a.m.

(Click [here](#) to read press release for this meeting)

CALL TO ORDER: President Nixon called the February 11, 2019 special session to order at 11:00 a.m. in Council Chambers, 101 S. George St., York, PA, with the following members present: H. Michael Buckingham, Edquina Washington, Judy A. Ritter-Dickson, and Henry Hay Nixon, President, with President Nixon presiding.

Members of the Administration in attendance included: Michael R. Helfrich, Mayor; Joe Jefcoat, Treasurer, and Jason Sabol, Assistant Solicitor.

Members of York City Council staff in attendance included: Dianna L. Thompson-Mitchell, City Clerk.

President Nixon stated that Council called a special meeting to consider introduction of a Bill to increase the York City Treasurer's salary. He said the Treasurer brought this request to Council at its February 5th legislative meeting. The timing of introduction is crucial because according to the [PA Tax Collectors Manual](#), "Any action by a taxing district to raise or reduce the compensation of the tax collector must be finally passed or adopted prior to the fifteenth day of February of the year of the municipal election where the office is filled." He explained that the other taxing districts include the County of York and the York City School Board so they too will need to act prior to February 15th because they also contribute to the Treasurer's salary.

President Nixon opened the floor to discussion prior to introduction of this legislation. He asked Treasurer Jefcoat to make opening remarks.

Treasurer Jefcoat said over the last few weeks he has given Council sufficient materials of the duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer's office and some initiatives that have taken place to provide better services to our constituents. He discussed other initiatives his office is undergoing that will cut costs and improve efficiency. He said they made changes in their operation procedures, saved money with the Homestead Exclusion program, saved money for veterans through programs, and they work closely with the finance department. He stated that he knows his salary was compared to the Harrisburg and Lancaster Treasurers but he feels their job responsibilities are different from his so they might not be the best comparison.

Councilwoman Ritter-Dickson said it's important to explain how many hours you're supposed to work and how many hours you actually work and the increase you're requesting.

Treasurer Jefcoat responded that his position is part-time but it's impossible to do all the tasks of his office on part-time hours. He said he has a deputy treasurer and an office clerk but with the money he's saved in other areas, there is money freed up to transfer to his salary. He said his workload has increased significantly over the past few years. Besides being the tax collector, my office deals with LERTA, RETAP, Homestead, Right-to-Know requests and more, which are all time consuming. He said part-time hours are 20 hours but he's doing 40+ hours.

Assistant Solicitor Sabol reminded Council that this Bill only deals with salary, not part-time or full-time hours. He clarified that the Treasurer's position is already considered full-time because he gets benefits and pension. He said the only thing Council is acting on is a salary increase.

Councilman Buckingham said at the budget hearings Council moved an additional \$12,000 to other professional services which brought that line item to \$16,000. He said he thought that was to hire additional staff so that the Treasurer could go back to working 20 hours a week. He asked if that means the other professional services line item will decrease \$12,000.

Treasurer Jefcoat said responded that we have tried hiring additional part-time help with that money but many times he finds himself correcting and training the part-time help which wasn't an efficient way to run the office.

Councilman Buckingham asked if the county and school district share in the salary. Jefcoat said yes. Buckingham asked if they will have to approve as well. Jefcoat said yes. Buckingham said if they don't approve then you don't get the raise. Jefcoat said that is correct.

Treasurer Jefcoat explained that the county is considering collecting its own taxes so they may not be taking part in this process. The county will abstain from this vote so it will just be the city council and the school board. The school board is meeting this evening at 6 p.m. to consider this matter.

Assistant Solicitor Sabol said he spoke with the school board solicitor and he said their meeting tonight is equivalent to a committee meeting so they cannot act on any matters at this meeting. They will need to call a special meeting in order to vote on the salary increase.

President Nixon asked if there are any examples of the treasurer's job because Harrisburg and Lancaster have a staff of people working in their offices and their staff earns a whole lot more than the elected treasurer. He said he would feel more comfortable if a salary that was comparable was put forth so that Council has something tangible to review. This is kind of the 11th hour and it's difficult to agree on a salary increase when there is nothing to compare.

Councilwoman Ritter-Dickson said if we increase your salary, does that mean you will not have need to hire personnel especially during the tax season. Jefcoat said that is his hope.

Councilwoman Washington asked if Jefcoat could submit to Council the job duties of the other two staff in his office. Jefcoat said he will provide that information.

Councilman Buckingham asked if there are any additional duties the Treasurer's office will take on in the future.

Treasurer Jefcoat said all revenue must come through the treasurer's office, as required by law, but we are not getting all revenue. However, he said he is preparing for this additional responsibility by initiating various software programs. He said they are in the process of interpreting tax information into Spanish as well as other initiatives that will require additional responsibilities. Treasurer Jefcoat added that in Lancaster, there is an office that basically combines the duties of the treasurer, controller, and finance department. He said he did contact the Lancaster City Treasurer and she basically serves as overseer. She provides no services to the public so it's sort of a transient position.

Mayor Helfrich asked what has changed since the last Treasurer was in office (former York City Treasurer Karin Krebs).

Treasurer Jefcoat said one of the reasons Krebs decided not to run again was because she couldn't dedicate the time required to run the office.

Mayor Helfrich asked if there will be a reduction in his duties when the city's Dynamics accounting system is integrated with the staff in our finance department. He said he thinks some of this extra burden is because of the Dynamics glitch.

Treasurer Jefcoat said he does believe the Dynamics issue is adding to his workload and hopes the new software being installed to correct the accounting glitches will relieve some of the burden he has in collecting revenue on behalf of the finance department. He added that according to law there are other duties his office should be doing such as attendance at tax and assessment appeals and collection of various other sources of revenue.

President Nixon asked if the solicitor's office has access to tax information when in court.

Assistant Solicitor Sabol said yes.

Treasurer Jefcoat said he's not taking about appearances in court, he's talking about appeals that have not yet gone to court.

Assistant Solicitor Sabol stated that if the assessment board determines an amount that we don't agree with, the solicitor's office would appear in the higher court to appeal the determination.

Mayor Helfrich asked procedural questions about appeals and the process in handling appeals, which was answered by Treasurer Jefcoat and Assistant Solicitor Sabol.

Mayor Helfrich said he is not opposed to moving money from other professional services to salary. He said as long as we are not increasing the budget and no additional money is allocated for other professional services, he has no issue with this request.

Assistant Solicitor Sabol said Council can establish a salary, but they are locked in on that amount for the next four-year term because salary changes can only be acted upon prior to a new treasurer taking office.

Councilwoman Ritter-Dickson asked if Jefcoat ever tried just working the 20 hours to see how it works.

Treasurer Jefcoat said it doesn't work because the work piles up. This is an extremely technical accounting position that handles millions of dollars, so it requires and deserves full-time attention. He said there is no way he can just do 20 hours and leave.

Mayor Helfrich said if the Treasurer's salary is increased but the workload is reduced, we are in a position to decrease the number of employees in the Treasurer's office, so this is an alternative to not being able to adjust the Treasurer's salary mid-term.

President Nixon asked if there are any comments on whether we should introduce this legislation and what salary should be put into place.

Councilwoman Washington stated that she needs to review the duties of the Treasurer's staff before she could make any recommendations.

Councilwoman Ritter-Dickson asked how much the Treasurer is making now.

President Nixon said he's making \$28,000 plus health and pension benefits.

Councilwoman Ritter-Dickson then asked the salaries of the Deputy Treasurer and office clerk.

Assistant Solicitor Sabol responded that the Deputy is making \$46,448, and the clerk is making \$35,963.

President Nixon said if we transfer the \$12,000 from other professional services to salaries, that would allow the Treasurer's salary to be set at \$40,000 so he would like to put forth that amount for consideration. Before considering final passage, he asked Council to compare the Treasurer's duties and salary with other 3rd class cities.

Councilman Buckingham said he would like to put forth an amount of \$45,000.

With two amounts being put forth, Council voted on them separately.

A motion was made by Buckingham to set the Treasurer's salary at \$45,000. The motion was seconded by Nixon and FAILED by the following vote: Yeas – Buckingham; Nays – Washington, Ritter-Dickson, Nixon – 3.

A motion was made by Nixon to set the Treasurer's salary at \$40,000. The motion was seconded by Ritter-Dickson and passed by the following vote: Yeas – Washington, Ritter-Dickson, Buckingham, Nixon – 4; Nays – 0.

With an amount established for consideration, President Nixon opened the floor to introduce Bill No. 6 establishing the Treasurer's salary.

Legislative Agenda:

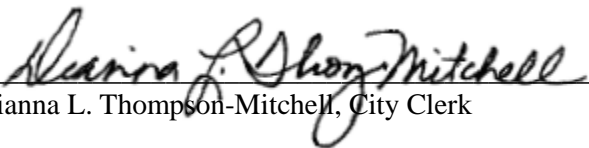
New Business

1. Introduction of Bill No. 6 (DIED – See UPDATE below) - A Bill
Establishing the salary of the York City Treasurer effective the first Monday of January 2020. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Judy A. Ritter-Dickson
Originator: Treasurer

Introduction of Bill No. 6, Session 2019, A Bill increasing the salary of the York City Treasurer from \$28,000 to \$40,000 annually effective the first Monday of January 2020, was introduced by Ritter-Dickson, read by short title, and deferred to the February 14, 2019 special meeting of Council (12:00 noon in City Council Chambers.)

UPDATE: Council canceled its special meeting scheduled for February 14, 2019 (12 noon) as the County of York and the York City School Board were not prepared to act before February 15th on the Treasurer's request for a salary increase. Therefore, Bill No. 6 DIED. ([Read Press Release](#))

Adjournment: There being no further business, the February 11, 2019 special session of Council adjourned at 11:46 a.m.



Dianna L. Thompson-Mitchell, City Clerk



Henry Hay Nixon, President of Council