

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
Lou Rivera, Member of Council

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COMMITTEE MINUTES January 29, 2020 6:00 p.m.

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

*Bold text indicates Chairperson

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

Council in attendance: Lou Rivera, Edquina Washington, Judy A. Ritter-Dickson, Sandie Walker, Vice President and Henry Hay Nixon, President.

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

Administration in attendance: Michael R. Helfrich, Mayor; Tom Ray, Director of Business Administration; Chad Deardorff, Fire Chief; and Don Hoyt, Assistant City Solicitor.

- I. Called the committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- II. Committee Issues for the **February 4th & 18th** legislative Agendas as follows:

Click [here](#) to view issues chart.

PUBLIC WORKS

1. **Budget transfer for \$6,129.51 for Environmental Services **PULLED****
Transfer amount does not exceed five percent (5%) of the appropriated item within said fund and therefore does not require Council approval. As such, this item has been PULLED from the agenda.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2. **Budget amendment for \$7,989.28 for the childhood lead poisoning prevention program**

Councilwoman Ritter-Dickson explained that the Health Bureau will be receiving subsequent available funds (SAF) from the Pennsylvania Department of Health associated with the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention program. These funds will support testing, follow-up and referral services related to childhood lead poisoning, training for the local lead workforce and other stakeholders, and advance other lead poisoning prevention efforts within the parameters

of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program as authorized by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

DECISION: Motion made by Ritter-Dickson, seconded by Walker, to place this item on the **2/4/20** legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Ritter-Dickson, Walker, Nixon; Nays – 0.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

3. Bill amending the 2020 Budget for the Treasurer's bond (\$6M)

Tom Ray, Business Administrator, explained that the total cost of the York City Treasurer's bond is \$12,792 for the four-year term of office covering the period of January 6, 2020, through January 8, 2024. The cost of the bond is split among three entities: The York City Schools District is responsible to pay \$8,035.93; the City of York is responsible to pay \$4,518.14; and the York City Business Improvement District Authority is responsible to pay \$237.93. Since the 2020 approved budget only appropriated \$6,000 for the bond payment, that amount must be amended to reflect the York City School District and York Business Improvement District Authority's share, thereby increasing the revenue line item from \$6,000 to \$12,792.

DECISION: Motion made by Walker, seconded by Ritter-Dickson to place this item on the **2/4/20** legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas – Nixon, Washington, Walker – 3; Nays – 0.

FIRE

4. Resolution waiving residency for Fire Chief Chad Deardorff

Chief Deardorff said when he was approached last year to fill in as Fire Chief, he told Mayor Helfrich he didn't want to uproot his family from their home in West Manchester Township. As such, the Mayor requested approval from Council to waive the residency requirement for one year to give him time to confer with his family. After many discussions with his wife, Chief Deardorff said she stood fast on her reasons for not wanting to uproot our children and he kept the Mayor abreast of his discussions with his family. Chief Deardorff stated that he has been committed to the York City Department of Fire/Rescue Services for 25 years and he will continue to fulfill his commitment as Fire Chief. However, he said, in taking into consideration his wife's wishes, the fact that they hardly get to see him as it is, and what effect this move would have on his kids, he feels it best for his family to remain living in the place they've called home for many years. (See [Resolution No. 15 of 2019](#) for Deardorff's appointment and one-year residency waiver.)

Councilwoman Ritter-Dickson asked Mayor Helfrich if he discussed with any members of Council his intention to ask for a complete waiver of the residency for Chief Deardorff prior to presenting it to Council for action at the January 21st legislative meeting.

Mayor Helfrich said he did not speak to anyone on Council because his intention was to place this item on tonight's committee agenda, but there was a miscommunication and it was put on the legislative agenda.

Vice President Walker said Chief Deardorff said he was keeping you abreast of his discussions with his family months prior to this so why wait until the last minute to present this to Council.

Mayor Helfrich said this wasn't on his priority list and when he was faced with this in January, he presented it to Council for consideration.

Councilwoman Washington said things like this should come to Council in a timely fashion to allow for discussion but instead, this was thrown on Council at the last minute.

Councilman Rivera said Council gave Chief Deardorff a one-year extension to allow time for him to relocate to the city. He asked why Chief Deardorff didn't take his name out of the running for Fire Chief if he knew for months that he wasn't going to move into the city. He said this now places the onus on Council to decide whether or not to completely waive the residency requirement. He said Police Chief Bankert was given a one-year waiver and he managed to relocate to the city before his year was up. (See [Resolution No. 52 of 2018](#) for Bankert appointment and waiver)

Mayor Helfrich said he feels it is important that a Police Chief live in the city, but he doesn't feel the same way about a Fire Chief. He said a Police Chief has frequent and diverse interactions with our citizens in a way that a Fire Chief would not.

Councilman Rivera asked what happens if Council does not approve this waiver.

Mayor Helfrich said if Council does not waive the residency requirement for this outstanding chief, then he will have to look for a chief who will move into the city. He informed Council that Chief Deardorff would fall back into the ranks but will retain his current salary. He said economically speaking, doing this is not in the best interest of the city because he will now have to search for a replacement and pay the new Fire Chief a comparable salary.

Vice President Walker said her thought process has nothing to do with Chief Deardorff serving as Fire Chief. She said her problem is the Mayor's lack of communication with Council. She said items are either pulled or delayed because the administration doesn't take the time to communicate with Council about what's going on. She said all you had to do was make time to discuss this with Council. Now we are left on the hook to make a hasty decision. She said this should be been discussed with Council months ago and it's unfair to bring this to us weeks before his waiver is to expire

Mayor Helfrich reiterated that it was his intention to place this on tonight's committee agenda – not the January 21st legislative agenda. He said because of miscommunication with his staff, it was mistakenly placed on the January 21st legislative agenda. He said this item is in front of you tonight, so let's discuss it.

President Nixon said when he approved the one-year residency waiver for Chief Deardorff, it was because he thought Chief Deardorff had planned to move into the city. Instead, he said, Council now hears he doesn't want to uproot his family – a decision President Nixon said he believes was already made at the time his one-year waiver was approved.

Councilwoman Ritter-Dickson said this is not personal, it's business. She said Council recognizes Chief Deardorff's work in the community.

Councilwoman Washington said she has known Chief Deardorff and his family for years and this has to do with the administration's lack of communication with Council.

Mayor Helfrich read a statement endorsing Chief Deardorff's residency waiver and outlined his outstanding tenure as a firefighter and exemplary service as Fire Chief. He said in 2010,

Council approved a complete waiver of residency for Police Chief Wes Kahley. He said Chief Kahley held that position for seven years while residing outside of the city. He asked Council to waive Chief Deardorff's residency so he can continue to raise his family in the home he owns 5 minutes outside of the city. He stated that his 25 years of service makes him the best suited candidate for this position. He said he has now been reprimanded publicly about his lack of communication, so if this is not personal, he said, continue to reprimand me but don't take it out on Chief Deardorff. (See [Resolution No. 69 of 2010](#) for Kahley's appointment and waiver.)

President Nixon said when he voted to waive Chief Kahley's residency it was because Chief Kahley made it clear from the beginning that he wasn't going to move into the city. After conversations on this, we decided a waiver made sense. If Chief Deardorff would have made it clear from the get-go that his family didn't want to uproot, that would have been helpful to know beforehand. He said it was disingenuous on Chief Deardorff's part to lead Council to believe he was going to relocate to the city when he knew all along that he wasn't.

Vice President Walker said when bringing up former Mayor Kim Bracey and the Chief Kahley waiver, it's important to understand that there was a process beforehand and that it wasn't just thrown on Council at the last minute.

DECISION: Motion made by Washington to place this item on the 2/4/20 legislative agenda. The motion did not receive a second and therefore the Resolution **remains in committee**.

III. Council Comment: None

IV. Administration Comment: None

V. Next Committee Meeting: The next committee meeting of Council is scheduled for February 26, 2020 at 6PM. (Committee agenda items are due by 12:00 p.m. on 2/19/20).

VI. Adjournment: There being no further discussion, the January 29, 2020 committee meeting of Council adjourned at 6:36 p.m.



Dianna L. Thompson-Mitchell, City Clerk



Henry Hay Nixon, President of Council