

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
Lou Rivera, Member of Council

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MINUTES September 15, 2020 6:00 p.m.

NOTICE: Council's meeting format has been altered due to the Declaration of Disaster Emergency issued by Governor Wolf amid the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic and the recent breach to the city's information technology department (Click here to read press release regarding the breach). Public Comment will only be received on agenda items. General Public Comment is suspended until further notice.

CALL TO ORDER: Vice President Walker called the September 15, 2020 meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following members present: Lou Rivera, Edquina Washington, Judy A. Ritter-Dickson, and Sandie Walker, Vice President, with Vice President Walker presiding. All members of Council teleconferenced in from remote locations.

Members of the Administration in attendance included: Mayor Michael Helfrich; Tom Ray, Business Administrator; Chaz Green, Public Works Director; Osborne Robinson, III, Police Commissioner; and Jason Sabol, Assistant Solicitor. All teleconferenced in from remote locations.

Members of York City Council staff in attendance included: Dianna L. Thompson-Mitchell, City Clerk who also teleconferenced in from a remote location.

Below are ways citizens may watch and participate in the Council meeting:

1. Public view only link: <https://zoom.us/j/95071594656?pwd=eWIPTFg0QUpiSkJFM2RoMjQ5SHVMQT09> | Passcode: 2020
2. Public call-in number: +1 (301)-715-8592 | Webinar ID: 950 7159 4656 | Passcode: 2020
To request to comment during the meeting, you must press *9 to "Raise your hand." When recognized, press *6 to unmute/mute your microphone. Zoom will also remind you to press *6 after you are recognized to speak. Also those watching in Zoom may use the "Raise Hand" feature to indicate you request to comment.
3. Watch the meetings on Comcast Cable Channel 18.
4. Watch the meetings live on Facebook (Search for "City of York").
5. Watch the meetings online at www.wrct.tv
6. Email comments on agenda items to the City Clerk at dthompso@yorkcity.org no later than 3PM on the day of the scheduled meeting.
7. Mail comments on agenda items to: Office of City Clerk, Attn: Public Comment, 101 S. George St., York, PA 17401. Comments must be received the day prior to the scheduled meeting date by 4PM.
8. Persons with hearing impairments may call the Deaf Center at TDD (717) 848-6765 for assistance.

I. Called Legislative Meeting to Order at 6PM.

II. Roll Call

III. Action on previous meeting Minutes of August 18, 2020 (Legislative); September 1, 2020 (Public Safety Committee). Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes and unanimously approved them as written.

IV. Meeting(s) Scheduled:

- **Next Council Legislative Meeting:** Scheduled for **Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.** Agenda items are due by 12 noon on October 14th.

V. **Presentation:** J.T. Hand, York Water Company, gave an introduction of the City of York's new sewer/refuse collection program and touched on the following points:

- J.T. Hand, York Water Company, outlined the new streamlined sewer & refuse billing program for York City customers. He explained that they have reached out to York City customers to explain the new billing service. There has been tremendous publicity by the media which was appreciated. We are eliminating significant lag between the city's sewer/refuse bill and the York Water Company bill. Residents will now receive a water bill and five days later will receive a sewer/refuse bill. Residents will be able to look at their bill and see the water consumption and the charges based on that consumption. This is a one-stop shopping concept, which is a benefit to the residents of the City of York.
- Mr. Hand explained that said sewer bills are based off water usage. Sewer and refuse fees are calculated based on the water meter reading. The first bill received on or after 8/31/20 will reflect the past two months (July & August). Water reading will be listed to show water consumption in relation to sewer and refuse fees. For every 1,000 gallons of water used, residents pay \$9.10 in sewer fees.
- Sewer and refuse will be able to be paid in person at The York Water, online, by mail or by autopay. Ways to educate residents about their bills have included English and Spanish language materials, statement stuffers, social media updates, public service announcements via radio, media outreach and coverage, city communications, customer service call line, and White Rose Community TV. For questions residents may visit www.YorkWater.com/mysewerbill, www.YorkWater.com/mifactura or call (717) 845-3601 between the hours of 8 am to 5 pm.
- As of today, Mr. Hand said they have received 4,227 payments, collected \$590,421 which is 43% collection rate. Customers paid \$1,407 in convenience fees (1.7%). There is a \$1.50 convenience fee charged if paying by credit card. He said they have had 1,091 customers visit The York Water Company since August 31st to present day and they have received 3,055 calls. York Water offers 3 bilingual representatives. Payment windows are installed for ease of access/social distancing, and mutual respect for COVID protocols and procedures.
- Lastly, Mr. Hand explained that there was some confusion about 2 months of sewer and refuse appearing on one bill and that previous balances or credits were not yet posted to accounts. He said the convenience fee for sewer/refuse is for the City of York, not York Water. He said they are working on addressing discrepancies as a result of transferring over 14,000 accounts from the city to York Water.

Councilwoman Ritter-Dickson said residents have questioned the convenience fee. Mr. Hand said there is a \$1.50 fee for paying by credit card. Councilwoman Ritter-Dickson asked what happens if residents do not pay the convenience fee. Mr. Hand responded that customers will not be able to pay their bill using a credit card.

Assistant Solicitor Sabol asked if the convenience fee is based on an amount paid. Mr. Hand said yes it's \$1.50 convenience fee for payments up to \$100. He stated that the average bill should be about \$80 per month. So, if paying on time every month, there is a \$1.50 convenience on that amount. If \$180 is owed, they must make two payments, one for \$100 and another for \$80 with both incurring a \$1.50 convenience fee. He said we are willing to work with the city on this, but we wanted to minimize this cost for the maximum number of customers, otherwise there would be a blanket convenience fee of over \$2 for everyone.

Vice President Walker said she thought the city was absorbing the convenience fee. Mayor Helfrich responded that he thought the same so he will go back and look at this because and will follow up.

There being no more discussion, Vice President Walker moved on to the legislative agenda.

VI. Legislative Agenda:

Final Passage of Bills & Resolutions

1. Final Passage of **Bill No. 13, Ordinance No. 13** - A Bill
Approving the 2019 Codified Ordinances replacement pages as part of the York City Codified Ordinances. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Lou Rivera
Originator: Council

Final Passage of Bill No. 13, Ordinance No. 13, Session 2020, A Bill approving the 2019 Codified Ordinance replacement pages as part of the York City Codified Ordinances, which was introduced by Rivera at the August 18th meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Rivera, seconded by Washington, Bill No. 13, Ordinance No. 13, PASSED by the following vote with no comment from the public. YEAS – Rivera, Washington, Ritter-Dickson, Walker – 4; Nays – 0.

New Business

2. Resolution No. **84** - A Resolution
Accepting the recommendations of HARB. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Judy A. Ritter-Dickson
Originator: HARB

Resolution No. 84, Session 2020, A Resolution accepting the recommendations of HARB in issuing certificates of appropriateness for work to be covered in the following applications:

1. Application filed Crispus Attucks Association for work to be done at 123 E. Philadelphia St.
2. Application filed by Blair Lehman for work to be done at 328-330 W. Market St.
3. Application filed by Nathan Bloch for work to be done at 310 E. Market St.
4. Application filed by Rusen Yanik and Russel Oft for work to be done at 244-246 W. Market St.

The resolution was introduced by Ritter-Dickson and on motion of Ritter-Dickson, seconded by Rivera, Resolution No. 84 came up for discussion.

Councilwoman Washington requested approval to abstain as she is an employee of Crispus Attucks Association. The request for abstention was approved by the following vote: Yeas – Rivera, Ritter-Dickson, Walker – 3; Nays – 0.

There being no further discussion, Resolution No. 84 PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Rivera, Ritter-Dickson, Walker – 3; Nays – 0; Abstain – Washington – 1.

3. Introduction of **Bill No. 14** (Will be on the 10/20/20 agenda for consideration of passage) - A Bill
Making an appropriation not otherwise appropriated (MNOA). (\$20,000 for Special Events – The Parliament) ([View](#))
Introduced by: Sandie Walker
Originator: Public Works (Recreation & Parks)

Introduction of Bill No. 14, Session 2020, A Bill making an appropriation not otherwise appropriated (MNOA) in the amount of \$20,000 for a Special Events contract agreement with The Parliament was introduced by Rivera, read by short title, and came up for discussion.

Councilman Rivera said the former special events contractor retired so he questioned the RFP process for this contract award and if this was budgeted for.

Public Works Director Green explained that the RFP went out on 10/22/20 with three responses received with The Parliament being the lowest bidder. He said this contract was reduced from \$60,000 which was paid to one persons – the city’s previous special events contractor - to \$40,000 to an organization to handle the same tasks. He said the \$40,000 is to pay for their services, not the events. Just like the previous contractor, he said The Parliament will fundraise to pay for our events and vendor fees.

Mayor Helfrich added that there was a line item missed in the budget between Public Works and Business Administration in the budgeting process last year, which is unfortunate, however, this money is available through fund 26, which is not General Fund dollars. As a result of the COVID pandemic, this provider has agreed to reduce its fee by 50%.

There being no further discussion, this item was deferred to the October 20th meeting for consideration of final passage.

Consent Agenda

Vice President Walker asked if there is a motion to consider items 4-7 on the legislative agenda as a consent agenda.

Councilman Rivera made a motion to remove agenda item # 6 (open containers) from the consent agenda to allow discussion. The motion was seconded by Washington and PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Rivera, Washington, Ritter-Dickson, Walker – 4; Nays – 0.

A motion was made by Washington, seconded by Rivera to consider agenda items 4, 5, and 7 as a consent agenda. The motion PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Rivera, Washington, Ritter-Dickson, Walker – 4; Nays – 0.

Vice President Walker asked if there was any Council comment on consent agenda items? There was no comment.

Vice President Walker asked if there was any Administration comment on consent agenda items? There was no comment.

Vice President Walker asked if any public comment has been received on consent agenda items. The City Clerk responded that no public comment has been received.

A motion was made by Washington, seconded by Ritter-Dickson to approve consent agenda items 4, 5 and 7. The motion to approval said items PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Rivera, Washington, Ritter-Dickson, Walker – 4; Nays – 0.

Vice President Walker then opened the floor for discussion on agenda item #6.

4. Resolution No. 85 - A Resolution
Authorizing an agreement with AT&T Wireless. (Small Cell Wireless Antenna Lease Agreement for NW the corner of Madison & Carlisle Avenues.) ([View](#))
Introduced by: Sandie Walker
Originator: Public Works

Resolution No. 85, Session 2020, A Resolution authorizing an agreement with AT&T Wireless for a Small Cell Wireless Antenna Lease Agreement for the NW corner of Madison & Carlisle Avenues, was approved unanimously by consent agenda with no discussion or public comment.

5. Resolution No. 86 - A Resolution
Appointing a probationary police officer. (D. Jones) ([View](#))
Introduced by: Edquina Washington
Originator: Mayor | Police | HR

Resolution No. 86, Session 2020, A Resolution appointing Dalton Jones as a probationary police officer was approved unanimously by consent agenda with no discussion or public comment.

6. Resolution No. 87 - A Resolution Extending the open container authority granted to the Mayor. (To allow open containers in areas designated by him for the purpose of accelerating the City's economic recovery through December 31, 2020) ([View](#))

Introduced by: Sandie Walker
Originator: Solicitor's Office

Resolution No. 87, Session 2020, A Resolution extending the open container authority granted to the Mayor to allow open containers in areas designated by him for the purpose of accelerating the City's economic recovery through December 31, 2020, was introduced by Walker and on motion of Walker, seconded by Ritter-Dickson, Resolution No. 87 came up for discussion.

Councilman Rivera said he wanted residents to know that Council is not voting on approving the closing of George St. for the purpose of allowing open containers. He said Council is voting to approve open containers to support recovery efforts of local businesses following loss of revenue resulting from the COVID pandemic.

Mayor Helfrich said that is correct but stated that he would not do open containers if he could not close the streets.

Councilman Rivera asked if other businesses other than downtown businesses were being considered for the open container designation.

Mayor Helfrich said he has extended the offer to other businesses outside of the downtown business district but received no requests.

Mandy Arnold, business owner, said she and her husband, Sean, support this resolution. She said they own the Left Bank located downtown. She stated that if this opportunity were not made available to them, they could see their business as well as other businesses closing. She said this will help them get through the rest of the year.

Robert Godfrey, business owner, agreed with Mrs. Arnold's sentiments and thanked the city for its support of local businesses. He said this opportunity has allowed them to stay afloat and has drawn people downtown which has had a huge impact on their sustainability.

There being no further comment, Resolution No. 87 PASSED by the following vote: Yeas – Rivera, Washington, Ritter-Dickson, Walker – 4; Nays – 0.
Nays – 0.

7. Resolution No. 88 - A Resolution Extending the Declaration of Disaster Emergency to October 31, 2020. ([View](#))

Introduced by: Edquina Washington
Originator: Mayor | Solicitor

Resolution No. 88, Session 2020, A Resolution extending the Declaration of Disaster Emergency to October 31, 2020 was approved unanimously by consent agenda with no discussion or public comment.

VII. Requests for Future Meetings: None

VIII. Council Comment

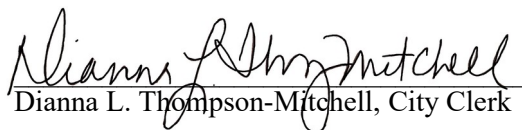
Councilman Rivera invited the public to the grand opening of the Spanish-American Multi-Cultural Resource Center on Sunday, October 11, 2020 from 2-8 p.m. at 426 S. George St., York, PA.

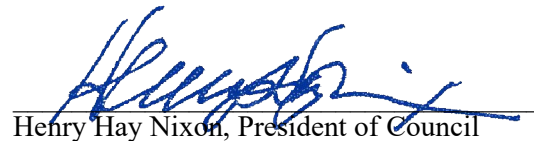
IX. Administration Comment

Mayor Helfrich spoke about the following:

- He thanked former Mayor Kim Bracey for moderating the virtual lecture on racism held on September 14th with prominent race expert Jane Elliot. He said The Parliament Arts Organization partnered with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission to bring Elliott's "The Eye of Prejudice" presentation to York County. "Elliott rose to prominence after a legendary 1992 appearance on the Oprah Winfrey Show that left audience members shocked by their own subconscious biases. Elliott's appearance on the show, where she conducted the now-famous 'Brown Eyes - Blue Eyes' exercise, has been viewed by millions of people across the country. The exercise has since become the basis for much of what is now considered diversity and inclusion training." (Source – [York Daily Record](#)). Mayor Helfrich thanked and applauded all who made the event successful. The interview is available online through The Parliament's Facebook page.
- Announced the passing of Karen Noll who died unexpectedly while hiking in the woods. He said Ms. Noll served as treasurer of the board for Lower Susquehanna Riverkeepers Association and had previously worked with the Codorus Creek Improvement Partnership. He said this year's Codorus Creek Clean-up will be done in her honor for all she had done to protect our waterways. To take part in the clean-up, participants are asked to meet up at the Boat Basin this Saturday, September 19th at 8 a.m.
- Update on the City Hall security breach where a man broke in and destroyed the city's computer servers. The IT Department has been working hard to get us back up and running. They are working with other entities such as Dell to help us rebuild our system. He stated that we are still waiting for our new phone system to arrive.
- Hope to have the Finance and Treasurer's offices open by next week so bill paying can occur again at City Hall. We are still doing a lot of work virtually. City cell phones and emails are still operational.
- Large item pickup is available but on a limited basis. Residents must call in Mon-Thurs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. No voicemail is being accepted at this time. Please call (717) 600-7055 to schedule a pickup. Permits, Planning & Zoning is handling applications online at www.yorkcity.org. Contact mdiggs@yorkcity.org for any property maintenance violations. The York City Police's non-emergency phone number is (717) 324-2168. Parking concerns should contact kbarnes@yorkcity.org. To contact the Treasurer's office, use email address jjefcoat@yorkcity.org. There is a white drop box located at the rear of City Hall where payments can be dropped off (except sewer/refuse payments which can be dropped off at York Water). Phillip Given has now returned to the position of Chief of Staff so inquiries may be sent to him at pgiven@yorkcity.org. Other contact numbers are posted on the city's website at www.yorkcity.org so feel free to visit.

X. Adjournment: The next legislative meeting of Council is scheduled for October 20, 2020 at 6 p.m. There being no further business the September 15, 2020 meeting of Council adjourned at 7:03 p.m.


Dianna L. Thompson-Mitchell, City Clerk


Henry Hay Nixon, President of Council