

Council of the City of York, Pennsylvania

Sandie Walker, President of Council
Edquina Washington, Vice President of Council
Lou Rivera, Member of Council
Betsy Buckingham, Member of Council
Dr. Felicia O. A. Dennis, Member of Council

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MINUTES February 7, 2023 6:00 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER: President Walker called the February 7, 2023, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 101 S. George St., York, PA, with the following members present: Felicia Dennis, Betsy Buckingham, Lou Rivera, and Sandie Walker, President, with President Walker presiding.

Members of the Administration in attendance included: Kim Robertson, Acting Business Administrator; Joe Jefcoat, Treasurer; Michael Muldrow, Police Commissioner; and Jason Sabol, Assistant Solicitor.

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

I. Public Comment:

Tiffany Lowe, GVI (Group Violence Intervention) Project Manager, said she noticed gaps that she hopes Council can fill in. GVI is an evidence-based strategy that when working with law enforcement, crimes rates can go down. She gave statistics on the costs of crime prevention mechanisms. She said if we work together, we can find solutions to help deter crimes. GVI knocks on doors to build rapport and share information with citizens. She applauded Council for their commitment to the city and that each member must have been impacted by crime at some point in their lives. She discussed the number of crimes that have occurred in the city under Council's leadership. She asked if these number are specific enough to ask that cameras and ShotSpotter be installed. She turned around and showed the back of her t-shirt that named several individuals that have died due to gun violence. She said GVI has Credible Messenger which is a valuable tool for the GVI unit. She said if you could have saved these victims lives, you would have. She thanked Council for appointing more police officers. She also thanked Commissioner Muldrow for his work in addressing crimes. She asked Council to consider doing more and incorporate artificial intelligence into the community so we can save lives.

Councilman Rivera said Ms. Lowe is the future of our community and he applauded her for her work in the community.

Michael Walker, resident, said he was glad to have been able to attend and speak at the Better York meeting on the topic of citywide cameras. He said because of a 2005 Commonwealth Law, several municipalities have instituted citywide surveillance. He said the mayor's endorsement for the City of York could be unconstitutional. He said there are laws on who can and cannot publicly surveil. He said in the Better York meeting, he was one of three people of color in attendance. He said his credentials

and education were dismissed and resulted in a dog whistle dismissal of facts. He said if he reacted to this microaggression, the big picture would have been missed. He said after seeing this behavior and hearing this dog whistle, at the right time, he addressed the mayor only to be degraded. He asked if the powers that be can just respect all of our community beyond stereotypes. He said for those who continue to fall to inadequate stereotypes they will continue to be dismissive of comments and suggestions made by members of our community. He said there is a growing coalition of diverse men and women who want to support this city, but these prejudices and biases have always presented an unwarranted roadblock.

Manuel Gomez, resident, said a lot goes on behind the scenes but if we can focus on the work that is being done, we can get further. He said he believes we get a little antagonistic how we do things but as a regular person that's here, we need to stay focused and keep the public informed.

There being no further comment, the public comment session adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

- II. Called Legislative Meeting to Order at 6:19 p.m.
- III. Roll Call
- IV. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- V. Moment of Silence was observed.
- VI. Action on previous meeting Minutes of [January 17, 2023](#). Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes and unanimously approved them as written.
- VII. Presentations, Awards and Announcements
- VIII. Meeting(s) Scheduled:
 - ▶ **Legislative Meeting:** The next legislative meeting of Council will be held on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on February 15th.
 - ▶ **Council Committee Meeting:** Scheduled for Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on February 22nd.
- IX. Status of Prior Committee Referrals: No reports.
- X. Legislative Agenda: (Order of Business – Action on Subdivision/Land Development & HARB Resolutions; Final Passage of Bills/Resolutions; New Business.)

Final Passage of Bills/Resolutions

1. Final Passage of Bill No. 3, Ordinance No. 3 - A Bill
Increasing the salary of the City Treasurer. ([View](#)) (\$50,000 effective January 2024)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Treasurer

Marilyn Hake, resident, spoke in support of increasing the Treasurer's salary. She said the Treasurer's salary has remained the same since 1996. If we want good candidates, we need to offer a salary commensurate with the responsibilities.

Teresa Johnescu, resident, also spoke in support of the Treasurer and its only fair that he receives pay that matches other city executives.

Marie Rohleder, resident, said we need Treasurer Jefcoat, and she is worried what will happen if we can't keep someone of his caliber and expertise. Increase this salary not just for Joe's sake, consider others who will become the city Treasurer down the road.

Joe Jefcoat, Treasurer, thanked those who spoke in support of his increase. He said he has attended meetings about his salary increase. He said the school district and the county are in support of an increase. He said the ordinance that is written only compensates for the collection of the real estate taxes. He read section 415 of the Optional Charter Law. Then he read section 1403 of the 3rd Class City Code regarding tax collection. He also said the city's administrative code reinforces state law. He said the city budget exceeds \$100 million dollars and he understands the fear of someone incompetent running for and obtaining the office of city Treasurer. All York County officials make adequate compensation, and the county Treasurer makes over \$86,000. He said he is aware that \$80,000 exceeds the Mayor's salary so Council may feel it may be more appropriate to pay lower compensation for his position. However, the Controller's office and Treasurer's office operations completely separate from the Mayor's office. The Treasurer has to be present daily to do the job. He discussed budget decreases over the past years. He added that his office has generated over \$70,000 for services each year which is more than enough to compensate the salary increase. He said we want to attract competent accountants to this elected position.

President Walker said we need to look at elected officials overall. She stated that when she looked at the Lancaster & Harrisburg Treasurer's office which is comparable to the City of York. She said she agrees that if we want more interest in individuals running for office especially for the amount of work that is expected and required, she said she believes we need to look at this as a collective effort in the future. At this time, she said she is not in favor of going above \$50,000 but this is a step in the right direction.

Councilwoman Buckingham said she agrees with President Walker. She said she appreciates the energy and expertise that Joe brings but we have no control over who will run in the future and or their dedication to this office.

Councilwoman Dennis said she also agrees that we are moving in the right direction, and we need to take small steps.

Councilman Rivera said he's in support of this increase. He said Joe is cut from a different cloth, but he doesn't like being lectured by his supporters. He stated that elected officials are replaceable, and he hopes we are grooming the next officials, but we must keep in mind that someone else may run and win and not have the same standards as Joe.

Manuel Gomez, resident, said he has never heard any negative feedback about Treasurer Jefcoat. He said he thinks we have the right person in the position now but we must keep in mind that this is an elected office. He said he doesn't like seeing the Treasure making a plea directly to the Council for this raise at the podium. He said it seems a little off and should have its own organic impetus.

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 3, Ordinance No. 3, PASSED by the following vote: Y Yeas - Dennis, Buckingham, Rivera, Walker - 4; Nays - 0.

Introduction of Bills

2. Introduction of Bill No. 4 - A Bill Amending the FY2023 Budget. ([View](#)) (Amending the FY2023 City Budget by appropriating expenditures from the **American Rescue Plan Act "ARPA"** funds, for the Homes at Thackston Park Phase II Project, for purchase of drywall in the amount of \$100,000.00 and removal of contaminated soil in the amount of \$350,000.00.)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Mayor | Finance

Introduction of Bill No. 4, Session 2023, A Bill amending the FY2023 Budget by appropriating expenditures from the **American Rescue Plan Act "ARPA"** funds, for the Homes at Thackston Park Phase II Project, for purchase of drywall in the amount of \$100,000.00 and removal of contaminated soil in the amount of \$350,000.00, was introduced by Buckingham, read by short title, and deferred to the February 21 meeting of Council.

Items for Consideration of Consent Agenda

Motion to consider consent agenda. A motion was made by Rivera, seconded by Buckingham, to consider agenda items 3-8 as a consent agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Dennis, Buckingham, Rivera, Walker - 4; Nays - 0. .

President Walker asked if there were any items Council would like to pull from the consent agenda. There were no requests.

President Walker asked if there was any comment from the Administration. There was none.

President Walker then asked if there was any public comment. There were individuals wishing to comment so President Walker opened the floor for public comment.

President Walker thanked those who volunteer serving on the city's boards and authorities.

Mina Edmonson, Human Relations Commissioner, spoke kind words about Mr. Query and thanked Council for accepting their nomination of him to the HRC Board and they are pleased to have him join the commission.

Manuel Gomez, resident, said he doesn't think these should be co-mingled into a consent agenda. He said he thinks Council uses this consent agenda method a little too often.

President Walker said when it comes to consent agenda items, it's up to Council. She explained that the consent agenda is done because a lot of discussion happens in committee, so that's the purpose of having committee meetings before acting on legislation. However, if during consideration of final passage, issues with agenda items arise, then Council has the option to request said item(s) to be pulled from the consent agenda for more discussion.

Michael Walker, resident, spoke on agenda item #8 in that when it comes to requests for tax exonerations, Council is setting a precedent and you're going to have other organizations coming to Council asking for exonerations. So, he said be cautious about this because you might not be able to say "no" when other organizations come forward asking for tax exonerations.

Jason Query thanked Council for considering his appointment and he hopes to serve the city well.

Vote on consent agenda items. There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Buckingham, seconded by Rivera, to APPROVED agenda items 3-8. The motion PASSED by the following vote: Yeas - Dennis, Buckingham, Rivera, Walker - 4; Nays - 0.

The City Clerk then administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Query.

3. Resolution No. 5 - A Resolution Accepting the recommendations of HARB. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Lou Rivera
Originator: HARB

Resolution No. 5, Session 2023, A Resolution accepting the recommendations of HARB in issuing certificates of appropriateness for the applications filed by Michelle Hill for work to be done at 237 W. Market St., and Phil Briddell for work to be done at 50 N. Duke St., was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

4. Resolution No. 6 - A Resolution Approving various appointments/reappointments. ([View](#)) (J. Query appt. to HRC; G. Witmer appt. to Board of Appeals; P. Maher reappt. to Board of Appeals)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Mayor

Resolution No. 6, Session 2023, A Resolution consenting to the following as recommended by the mayor: **1.** Appointment of Jason Query as a member of the York City Human Relations Commission, to fill the unexpired term of Dawn Wright, which term shall expire July 16, 2025; **2.** Appointment of Gal Witmer as a member of the Consolidated Board of Appeals to fill the unexpired term of Jeffrey Kirkland, which term shall expire on the first Monday of October 2023; and **3.** Reappointment of Patricia A. Maher as a member of the Consolidated Board of Appeals, which term shall expire the first Monday of October 2025, was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

5. Resolution No. 7 - A Resolution Approving substantial amendments to the 2021 Annual Action Plan. ([View](#)) (To approve the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan)
Introduced by: Sandie Walker
Originator: Economic & Community Development | BHS

Resolution No. 7, Session 2023, A Resolution approving substantial amendments to the 2021 Annual Action Plan to approve the HOME-ARP was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

6. Resolution No. 8 - A Resolution Authorizing an agreement with the County of York. ([View](#)) (For the Healthy Moms/Babies program - \$319,729.00)
Introduced by: Sandie Walker
Originator: Economic & Community Development | Health

Resolution No. 8, Session 2023, A Resolution authorizing an agreement with the County of York. for the Healthy Moms/Babies program in the amount of \$319,729.00 for the period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023, was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

7. Resolution No. 9 - A Resolution Extending the Declaration of Disaster Emergency to 2/28/23. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Mayor

Resolution No. 9, Session 2023, A Resolution extending the declaration of disaster emergency to 2/28/23 was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

8. Resolution No. 10 _____ - A Resolution
Exonerating 2022 municipal taxes for the Well Worship Center. ([View](#))
Originator: Treasurer (on behalf of The Well Worship Center)
Introduced by: Felicia Dennis

Resolution No. 10, Session 2023, A Resolution exonerating year 2022 municipal taxes for the Well Worship Center was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

XI. Requests for Future Meetings: None

XII. Council Comment

President Walker applauded Ms. Lowes for her presentation about GVI. She said we all take violence and the loss of life in our community very seriously. There is a lot of work that we do behind the scenes. With the public safety system, specifically camera surveillance, she said there was a lot of work done last year with recent discussion taking place within the past week. She said we've done hours of research and conversations on how to proceed with protecting our community. We need to protect our citizens and there is detail that must be provided before we can consider approving infrastructure. She stated that she has been requesting information on surveillance for years. There is no pride when it comes to this because we are talking about lives in our community. We have to make sure we do this and do it right. There are no other municipalities in the nation other than Lancaster that has a 3rd party operating a citywide camera system. She said we don't have the policies and procedures of the Lancaster Safety Coalition, so we have to take our time to make sure we're doing the right thing.

XIII. Administration Comment: None

XIV. Adjournment: The next meeting of City Council is scheduled for February 21, 2023 at 6PM in City Council Chambers. There being no further discussion, the February 7, 2023 meeting of Council adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

XV. Resumption of Public Comment Period (at the discretion of the presiding officer): None

Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk

Sandie Walker, President of Council