

# 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 August 15, 2023 6:00 p.m.

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**CALL TO ORDER:** President Walker called the August 15, 2023, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 101 S. George St., York, PA, with the following members present: Betsy Buckingham, Lou Rivera, Edquina Washington, Vice President, and Sandie Walker, President, with President Walker presiding.

**Members of the Administration in attendance included:** Kim Robertson, Acting Business Administrator; Michael Muldrow, Police Commissioner; Chaz Green, Director of Public Works; Clair Twomey, Director of the Human Relations Commission; and Brett Flower, Assistant Solicitor.

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

I. Public Comment:

Javanna Murray, resident, said her child attends York Academy and because of construction it is taking an hour for parents to pick up their children. She asked if there are any alternatives for them to park. She said she attended a board meeting and asked about the empty lot across from the school, but the dean said they weren't allowed to park there because it will be developed into commercial businesses.

Alexander Kocman, resident, serves at a church in York. He talked about abortions at Planned Parenthood and said York is an abortion tourist destination because other facilities are closed. He said the reputation of this city is that this is a place where death can take place. He asked Council to take action to bring this killing to an end.

There being no further public comment, President Walker adjourned the public comment session and immediately convened in legislative session.

II. Called Legislative Meeting to Order at 6:07 p.m.

III. Roll Call

IV. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

V. Moment of Silence was observed.

- VI. Action on previous meeting Minutes of July 18, 2023. Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes and unanimously approved them as written.
- VII. Presentations, Awards and Announcements: None
- VIII. Meeting(s) Scheduled:
  - ▶ **Legislative Meeting:** The next legislative meeting of Council will be held on Tuesday, September 5, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on August 30th.
  - ▶ **Council Committee Meeting:** Scheduled for Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on September 20th.
- 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. 39, Ordinance No. 38 - A Bill  
 Amending the FY2023 Budget. ([View](#)) (For Parks & Recreation by appropriating revenue and expenditures for the donation received for the purchase of bikes, in the total amount of \$650.00)  
 Introduced by: Felicia Dennis  
 Originator: Public Works (Parks/Recreation)

Final Passage of Bill No. 39, Ordinance No. 38, Session 2023, A Bill amending the 2023 budget for Parks & Recreation by appropriating revenue and expenditures for the donation received for the purchase of bikes, in the total amount of \$650.00, which was introduced by Dennis at the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council, and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Walker, seconded by Buckingham, Bill No. 39, Ordinance No. 38, PASSED by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Rivera, Wahington, Walker - 4; Nays - 0.

2. Final Passage of Bill No. 40, Ordinance No. 39 - A Bill  
 Amending the FY2023 Budget. ([View](#)) (For the Police Department to fund More Graduations, Less Funerals Opportunity Scholarships by appropriating expenditures from the **American Rescue Plan Act "ARPA"** funds in the amount of \$125,000.00)  
 Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
 Originator: Police

Final Passage of Bill No. 40, Ordinance No. 39, Session 2023, A Bill amending the 2023 Budget for the Police Department to fund More Graduations, Less Funerals Opportunity Scholarships by appropriating expenditures from the **American Rescue Plan Act "ARPA"** funds in the amount of \$125,000.00, which was introduced by Washington at the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Washington, seconded by Rivera, Bill No. 40 came up for discussion.

Police Commissioner Muldrow said we have an opportunity to change our community and it brings him so much joy knowing that we just sent 4 young men to college. They were on the wrong path, and they asked to take us up on our offer to turn their lives around. His said this amount of money will make a huge difference and this will impact our community for years to come. He thanked Council and the Administration.

Manuel Gomez, resident, said he wholeheartedly supports this and said he's sure there's a vast majority of support for this.

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 40, Ordinance No. 39, PASSED by the following vote:  
Yeas - Buckingham, River, Washington, Walker - 4; Nays - 0.

3. Final Passage of Bill No. 41, Ordinance No. 40 - A Bill Amending the FY2023 Budget. ([View](#)) (For the York City Police Department by appropriating revenue and expenditures as follows: **(1)** For the funding received from the County of York as a pass-through for an award from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for a subgrant of Federal Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recover (Federal 21.027 CG) funds, in the amount of \$178,607.00, and **(2)** Amending the FY2023 City Budget for the York City Police Department by appropriating revenue and expenditures in Fund 26 Special Projects for the grant received from the Rotary Club of York in support of the Group Violence Initiative, in the amount of \$10,000.00)  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Police

Final Passage of Bill No. 41, Ordinance No. 40, Session 2023, A Bill amending the 2023 budget for the police department, which was introduced by Washington at the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Washington, seconded by Buckingham, Bill No. 41 came up for discussion.

Manuel Gomez, resident, asked about the line item.

Commissioner Muldrow said the Rotary Club grant is going to be used by the GVI to take kids on exposure trips. We needed a line-item category to put the money because most police departments don't operate like us.

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 41, Ordinance No. 40, PASSED by the following vote:  
Yeas - Buckingham, Rivera, Washington, Walker - 4; Nays - 0.

4. Final Passage of Bill No. 42, Ordinance No. 41 - A Bill Amending the FY2023 budget. ([View](#)) (For Fire & Rescue Services by appropriating revenue and expenditures for the grant received from the Office of the State Fire Commission, in the total amount of \$15,000.00)  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Fire/Rescue

Final Passage of Bill No. 42, Ordinance No. 41, Session 2023, A Bill amending the 2023 Budget for Fire & Rescue Services by appropriating revenue and expenditures for the grant received from the Office of the State Fire Commission, in the total amount of \$15,000.00, which was introduced by Washington at the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council, and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Washington, seconded by Rivera, Bill No. 42, Ordinance No. 41, passed by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Rivera, Washington, Walker - 4; Nays - 0.

5. Final Passage of Bill No. 43, Ordinance No. 42 - A Bill Amending the FY2023 Budget. ([View](#)) (For the Finance Office by appropriating monies not otherwise appropriated (MNOA) from Funds 40 for Funds 44 and 45 2023 debt service payments in the amount of \$925,074.81)  
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham  
Originator: Business Administration (Finance)

Final Passage of Bill No. 43, Ordinance No. 42, Session 2023, A Bill amending the 2023 Budget for the Finance Office by appropriating monies not otherwise appropriated (MNOA) from Funds 40 for Funds 44 and 45 2023 debt service payments in the amount of \$925,074.81, which was introduced by Buckingham at the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion by Buckingham, seconded by Rivera, Bill No. 43 came up for

discussion.

Acting Business Administrator Robertson said this is what we have left of our debt services so we could either pay off debts or put the funds into escrow. This represents the money available and what's going out.

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 43, Ordinance No. 42, PASSED by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Rivera, Washington, Walker - 4; Nay - 0.

6. Final Passage of Bill No. 44, Ordinance No. 43 - A Bill Reducing the board members of the York City General Authority. ([View](#)) (From 7 to 5 members)  
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham  
Originator: General Authority

Final Passage of Bill No. 44, Ordinance No. 43, Session 2023, A Bill reducing the board members of the York City General Authority from 7 to 5 members, which was introduced by Buckingham at the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion by Buckingham, seconded Washington, Bill No. 44 came up for discussion.

Acting Business Administrator Robertson said this is a request from the General Authority. The GA is a funding conduit for the city. The majority of the business of the GA was for the parking system. We sold the parking, but the GA is still relevant as a funding source for the city but since the parking system was sold, we don't need as many members to carry on the business of the city.

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 44, Ordinance No. 43, PASSED by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Rivera, Washington, Walker - 4; Nays - 0.

7. Final Passage of Bill No. 45, Ordinance No. 44 - A Bill Establishing Article 701 "Youth Mental Health Protection." ([View](#)) (Identifying conversion therapy as a general offense within the City of York)  
Introduced by: Lou Rivera  
Originator: Mayor

Final Passage of Bill No. 45, Ordinance No. 44, Session 2023, A Bill establishing Article 701 "Youth Mental Health Protection" identifying conversion therapy as a general offense within the City of York, which was introduced by Rivera at the July 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion made by Rivera, seconded by Washington, Bill no. 45 came up for discussion.

Human Relations Commission Director Twomey said this ordinance is being presented to protect our LGBTQ+ youth from conversion therapy. She said conversion therapy is based on junk science. She said the suicide rate of LGBTQ+ is higher than any other class of individuals. There is no positive outcome of this type of therapy, and this would ban conversion therapy in York. She said Pennsylvania has a partial ban which means the Governor said no state funds will be used for such therapy, but this leaves room for other municipalities to sue. York going forward and being recognized as a haven for safety for the LGBTQ+ speaks volumes to those being affected by the thought of being irradiated. She said how this would play out is that the violation would be reported to us, we would do an investigation and if found guilty, the violator will be reported to the proper authority.

Solicitor Flower said the solution she and Director Twomey used is reporting to the licensing body instead of the summary proceedings by the City of York as a way to keep the enforcement with the appropriate body.

President Walker said one of her concerns was the legal liability that would be connected to the city, which is why this was reviewed and cleared by our solicitor's office. She asked Solicitor Flower if this would absolve Council legally. Solicitor Flower said yes.

Donald Knaub, resident, said he moved here in 1983 and stated that he is a gay man. He said something bad happened to him one day and Mayor Althaus come to his house and asked what happened. After that, York City Council passed an ordinance to protect LGBT people in housing. He said he's 80 years old and there is nothing anyone could have done to change him. He said his mother said he was the best son she ever had. He said he is married now, and he has a good relationship with his neighbors.

Pastor Bill Kearney asked for a point of clarification to Direction Twomey's comment about "junk science." He asked if spirituality would fall into the term junk science as that could be considered a controversial statement. He asked where the religious and spiritual aspect of this ordinance is and how is this going to set with the individuals who believe in the natural means of life.

President Walker said to keep the discussion controlled, we are voting on this ordinance, but she did ask how this relates to religious organizations and contemporary science.

Solicitor Flower said religious leaders working in their role are exempt from the definition of a medical or mental health professional and they are not included in this ordinance.

President Walker said we are clear that religious organizations and leaders are exempt from this legislation.

Solicitor Flower said the language of contemporary science is taken from the Govern's bill on anti-conversion therapy. It's only meant for modern science.

Councilman Rivera said he thinks the issue is why it was described as junk science.

HRC Director Twomey said junk science has been used by many organizations and that medical licensing boards do not consider conversion therapy as legitimate science and therefore they refer to it as junk science.

Carla Christopher, resident, said from the scientific perspective, the conversion therapy was removed from best practices in 2018. She read statistics on the effects of conversion therapy. She said this legislation is specifically for young people who do not have the legal right to say they don't want this therapy but are forced into it by their parents. She said she is a conversion therapy survivor. She said it took her years to be able to walk into church without crying. She said there is no pain greater than to be told you are not accepted by God. She said we must recognize that there is a place where we can co-exist.

Alex Kocman, resident, said Council should consider that there's no great fix between medical professionals and members of the clergy and many times, those professionals are combined. He said if there were therapies to convert heterosexuals into a LGBTQ it would be celebrated so there are no equal standards. He stated that if there is a correlation between suicide and LGBTQ then an internal renovation of the heart is needed through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Sipho Knick-Ndlovu, a social worker and conversion therapy survivor, said her parents thought they were doing the best thing for her by putting her through conversion therapy. She said she has suffered from depression because her parents thought that conversion therapy would make her be someone they would be proud of. She said they thought she needed fixed. She said it was harmful to be told she needed to be fixed and if she wasn't fixed, there was no place for her.

She said she has been in therapy to try to heal from conversion therapy. She said she loves who she is today, and it has taken her years to be able to say that. She said parents love their children but don't always know what's best. She said nothing about the conversion therapy was positive for her.

Pastor Joslyn Kearse, resident, said she has been queer her entire life. She said being raised in York City there was no protection but there was criticism and abuse from the religious and therapeutic aspects. It took years to recover from the years of this harm and has driven her to try to correct these indiscretions. She hopes Council will make the decision to protect queer youth. There is no religious impact but it's still going to be okay for people to use religion for grounds for abuse. She said there is only a legislative concern so she hopes Council will protect young queers in York City.

Bishop Anthony Sease said he hopes this bill does not infringe upon the beliefs he has being a pastor but that the legislation is to protect youth who are not in the position to make their own decision. He said his concern is whether he's going to be imposed upon because of his belief.

Solicitor Flower said this legislation does not regulate the religious aspect and they cannot be held liable for their statements.

Manuel Gomez, resident, thanked Councilman Rivera for introducing the bill. He said he's not a fan of all the language. He said there have been many entities to tackle this and have failed. He said he has concerns about the enforcement. He said the licensing bodies have been beckoning for the legislators to do something. The licensing bodies seem to be ready to act and denounce these practices. He said in section 701.01 "Definitions," this does not include members of the clergy. He said it seems clear that they can proceed as long as they follow the definition. He said this is protecting minors and he's pleased that we can hear both sides of the argument.

Melanie Yan, social worker, said she has regular contact with young people and teens. She said it is dangerous to have these businesses available to parents. Vulnerable people will do anything to fix their problems. Having businesses offering conversion therapy are disguised as happy people wanting to help. However, having friends who identify as LGBTQ, you will find places and people who will embrace you. Having these types of businesses aren't going to help anyone and they are not welcome here and they should be banned because they are dangerous.

Adam Jones, Hanover, PA, technology small business owner and political candidate, said we have had powerful stories about how individuals survived conversion therapy. The whole point of this is to not traumatize people. We can show there is a safe place in this county to be yourself. If conversion therapy really works, there would be more people speaking about it today.

Heidi Kersh said she is concerned about the Christian medical professionals and if they will be discriminated against.

Solicitor Flower said the action of the city will be to make referral to the licensing board and the licensing board will act. She said the city will be enforcing the ordinance through the Human Relations Commission and will not be discriminatory. She said the ordinance is the act of someone trying to convert youth. This does not affect counseling services.

Director Twomey, HRC, said she's a psychotherapist, and Governor Wolfe made it clear that funds will not be used for conversion therapy. There is a difference between a Christian therapist and a therapist that identify as Christian. They are two separate entities.

President Walker said addressing this from the surface level was not an option. She thanked those who helped clarify. She said she watched programs on this issue. She said as a legislator,

we had to make sure this wouldn't become a legal issue for Council which is why it took months to draft.

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 45, Ordinance No. 44, PASSED by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Rivera, Walker - 3; Nays - Washington -1.

### Introduction of Bills

8. Introduction of Bill No. 46 - A Bill  
Amending the FY2023 Budget. ([View](#)) (ARPA - \$200,000 for LifePath Christian Ministries)  
Introduced by: Sandie Walker  
Originator: Economic & Community Development

Introduction of Bill No. 46, Session 2023, A Bill amending the 2023 budget to appropriate ARPA funds in the amount of \$200,000.00 for LifePath Christian Ministries, was introduced by Walker, read by short title, and deferred to the September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council.

9. Introduction of Bill No. 47 - A Bill  
Amending the FY2023 Budget. ([View](#)) (By appropriating revenue and expenditures for the Year 1 funding received from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for a grant of Federal Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recover (Federal 21.027 CG) funds for the Law Enforcement Support Initiative, in the amount of \$488,910.00.)  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Police

Introduction of Bill No. 47, Session 2023, A Bill amending the 2023 budget by appropriating revenue and expenditures for the Year 1 funding received from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for a grant of Federal Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recover (Federal 21.027 CG) funds for the Law Enforcement Support Initiative, in the amount of \$488,910.00, was introduced by Washington, read by short title, and deferred to the September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council.

### New Business – Items for Consideration of Consent Agenda

**Motion to consider consent agenda.** A motion was made by Buckingham, seconded by Rivera, to consider agenda items 10-16 as a consent agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Rivera, Washington, Walker - 4; Nays - 0.

President Walker asked if there are any requests to pull items from the consent agenda.

Councilwoman Buckingham requested to pull agenda item #13.

**Motion to approve consent agenda items.** A motion was made by Washington, seconded Rivera, to approve agenda items 10-12 and 14-16. The motion to approve PASSED by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Rivera, Washington, Walker - 4; Nays - 0.

10. Resolution No. 77 - A Resolution  
Reappointing Aaron Anderson to the RDA. ([View](#))  
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham  
Originator: Mayor

Resolution No. 77, Session 2023, A Resolution reappointing Aaron Anderson to the York City Redevelopment Authority to serve until April 28, 2028, was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

11. Resolution No. 78 - A Resolution  
Accepting the recommendations of HARB. ([View](#))  
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham  
Originator: HARB

Resolution No. 78, Session 2023, A Resolution accepting the recommendations of HARB in issuing certificates of appropriateness for work to be covered in the following applications: Application filed for work to be done at 27 E. King St.; Application filed for work to be done at 442 W. Market St.; and Application filed for work to be done at 45 E. King St., was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

12. Resolution No. 79 - A Resolution  
Approving the prelim/final land development plan submitted by Apple Service Center. ([View](#))  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Economic & Community Development / Planning

Resolution No. 79, Session 2023, A Resolution approving the preliminary/final land development plan submitted by Apple Service Center for the properties located at 1060 Marbrook Lane and 1128 Roosevelt Ave., was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

13. Resolution No. 80 - A Resolution  
Extending terms of an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement. ([View](#)) (York County Regional Chesapeake Bay Pollutant Reduction Plan)  
Introduced by: Felicia Dennis  
Originator: Public Works

Motion to read by short title. A motion was made by Buckingham, seconded by Washington, to read Resolution No. 80 by short title. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 80, Session 2023, A Resolution extending the term of the amended and reinstated intergovernmental cooperation agreement for implementation of the York County Regional Chesapeake Bay Pollutant Reduction Plan, was introduced by Buckingham, read by short title, and on motion of Buckingham, seconded Washington, Resolution No. 80 came up discussion.

Councilwoman Buckingham said we are not in this alone - we are in this with six other states and Washington, D.C. to improve the health of our steams. This means we cannot use soap to clean our cars at our homes. She said she has been using plain water and it works well. She said there are ways we can help.

Director Green said this is extending the agreement to 2025 and allows us to be involved in the projects. He said he's pleased with this agreement.

There being no further discussion, Resolution No. 80 PASSED by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Rivera, Washington, Walker - 4; Nays - 0.

14. Resolution No. 81 - A Resolution  
Authorizing an agreement with Warehaus Architects/Engineers/Designers. ([View](#)) (Design services for renovations to the Sylvia Newcombe Center)  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Economic & Community Development

Resolution No. 81, Session 2023, A Resolution authorizing an agreement with Warehaus Architects/Engineers/Designers for design services for renovations to the Sylvia Newcombe



Center, was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

15. Resolution No. 82 - A Resolution Approving the award of contracts for the Rex-Laurel Firehouse renovation project. ([View](#))  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Fire/Rescue

Resolution No. 82, Session 2023, A Resolution approving the award of contracts for the Rex-Laurel Firehouse renovation project, was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

16. Resolution No. 83 - A Resolution Accepting a PCCD grant award. ([View](#)) (\$933,860.00 to hire a Crime Analyst, cover the cost of officer and desk officer Lexis Nexis report subscriptions, Intel Tech software, and contracted support of a Restorative Justice and Youth Education (RJYE) Coordinator and administrative support)  
Introduced by: Edquina Washington  
Originator: Police

Resolution No. 83, Session 2023, A Resolution Accepting a PCCD grant award in the amount of \$933,860.00 to hire a Crime Analyst, cover the cost of officer and desk officer Lexis Nexis report subscriptions, Intel Tech software, and contracted support of a Restorative Justice and Youth Education (RJYE) Coordinator and administrative support, was approved unanimously by consent agenda.

XI. Requests for Future Meetings: None

XII. Council Comment

Councilwoman Walker asked if we are scheduled for budget hearings in the first week of November.

Acting Business Administration Robertson said Nov. 1, 2, and Nov. 8 are set aside for budget hearings.

XIII. Administration Comment: None

XIV. Adjournment: The next legislative meeting of City Council is scheduled for September 5, 2023 at 6PM in City Council Chambers. There being no further business, the August 15, 2023 meeting of Council adjourned at 7:30 PM.

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

  
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Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk

  
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Sandie Walker, President of Council