



The City of York Pennsylvania

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

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Edquina Washington, Vice President
Lou Rivera, Member
Betsy Buckingham, Member
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COMMITTEE MINUTES October 25, 2023 6:00 p.m.

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FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/CityofYorkPA/>

YOUTUBE: <https://www.youtube.com/c/WhiteRoseCommunityTV>.

2023 MEETINGS: Click [here](#) to view 2023 Council Meetings Dates

Fire/Police	Public Works	Econ & Comm Development	Business Admin	Rules & Admin
Washington Dennis Buckingham	Dennis Washington Rivera	Washington Walker Buckingham	Buckingham Walker Rivera	Rivera Washington Dennis

*Bold text indicates Chairperson

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

CALL TO ORDER: President Walker called the October 25, 2023, committee 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, Edquina Washington, Vice President, and Sandie Walker, President.

Members of the Administration in attendance included: Kim Robertson, Business Administrator; Nona Watson, Director of Economic & Community Development; James Crosby, Director Bureau of Housing Services; Keith Gerber, Highway Supervisor; Blanda Nace, COO; and Assistant Solicitor Brett Flower .

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

- I. Call committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- II. Committee Issues for the **November 8 & 21st** legislative Agendas as follows: (Click [here](#) to view issues chart)

General Committee (All Council)

Presentation - Quality of Life Initiatives (Jonathan Desmarais - Downtown Inc)

Jonathan Desmarais, Downtown Inc, did a PowerPoint presentation on the Quality-of-Life Initiatives undertaken by Downtown Inc in collaboration with various local and national partners. (Click [here](#) to view presentation)

Department: Public Works (Dennis)

Resolution - Public Works - PennDOT Easement Agreement

Business Administrator Robertson said we had one of these come through last year. There is a section of land adjacent to Interstate 83 and Penn Dot is asking for the right to access it when necessary so they can do work.

Assistant Solicitor Flower said PennDot is installing a culvert, and they requested a temporary easement while they are installing it.

DECISION: Motion made by Rivera, seconded by Washington to place on the 11/8/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Dennis, Washington, Rivera - 3; Nays - 0.

Resolution - Authorizing the sale of surplus vehicles

Keith Gerber, Highway & Fleet Superintendent, said we do this annually when vehicles cost too much to maintain or don't run. He said any money made from this will go back into our fleet account to help keep our costs down.

DECISION: Motion made by Rivera, seconded by Washington to place on the 11/8/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Dennis, Washington, Rivera - 3; Nays - 0.

Department: Economic & Community Development (Washington)

Resolution - Approving the 2024 Annual Action Plan

James Crosby, Director, Bureau of Housing Services, said this is a plan that comes to Council each year for approval. He stated that this is for year 2024 and we are looking to receive \$41.3 million in CDBG and about \$550,000 in HOME dollars. He said we know this can change in the future depending on what happens in Washington, D.C. This is a preliminary plan to show what we plan to do with those dollars. He then highlighted some funding projects that will benefit the community.

DECISION: A motion made by Washington, seconded by Buckingham, to place this item on the 11/8/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Washington, Walker, Buckingham - 3; Nays - 0.

Ordinance - ARPA - Housing- FY23 Budget Amendments

Administrator Robertson said these are 3 initiatives that are housing based. The first is one the Mayor has pushed which is the \$2.5 million for an incentive for developers and piggybacks on HOME funds. She said this will help them repair properties that need upgraded or rehab buildings to make housing available. We are adding more funds to the pot to make it more appealing to developers. Also, she stated, \$500,000 is being allocated toward the first-time homebuyers' program, as well as a homeowner relief program in the amount of \$500,000 to help qualified property owners who appear on the delinquent tax list to help them pay their taxes.

President Walker ask if the developer incentives and homebuyer assistance will fall under Econ Dev?

Administrator Robinson said all three will fall under Econ Dev.

President Walker said she would like consideration given to assist our homeowners because there has been a lot of funding for renters and a lot of times our homeowners get left behind. She said maybe we can look at what other municipalities are doing to help homeowners.

Councilwoman Buckingham said we currently have a program for repair and asked how much is awarded.

Director Crosby responded that there is a \$10,000 cap and the family has to live in the house. He said Council approved additional ARPA funding for rehab programs, and the county has received homeowner funding that can be used in the city. He said Council approved funding for the elderly, and their funding is for the general public.

President Walker asked if Council could get more information on the programs? She said maybe some tax relief for homeowners as well. She stated that HOME ARP dollars are more restrictive, and she'd like more information on it. There is an ALICE population, and we need to make sure we are meeting the needs of our working-class citizens who are struggling and would like some relief.

Elsbeth Bupp, resident, said she also would like to know more about the developer incentive. She discussed ALICE apartments on Broad St. and asked how the developer would know about these incentives and she hopes the word gets out to them.

Administrator Robertson said we will be requesting proposals for projects and will let them know we have funding available to possibly assist as long as they meet the housing needs of our residents.

Director Crosby said we have an RFP out for our HOME ARP dollars, which is online under the Bureau of Housing Services page. Applications are specific and will highlight the point system that will be used.

Ms. Bupp asked that information be communicated to the public and developers.

President Walker said we need to keep the focus on the city when reaching out to developers. She said if developers are able to work with the city, we need to make sure it benefits our residents.

Councilwoman Buckingham said her understanding is that both the senior and homeowner programs are income based. Director Crosby said that is correct.

President Walker asked when it comes to the application and wait list, how is the Planning Commission (PC) involved.

Director Crosby said the PC processes applications and works with developers to do the work. Our responsibility is oversight and making sure they are spending the money correctly and providing the service we contracted with them.

President Walker said residents said they have tried to contact the county but no answer. How can we do this in house? Director Crosby said we need staff. We used to have three in-house positions for this, but we no longer have that staff. He said the county hired another person because they were overwhelmed with applications, and they needed help with getting through their waiting list. He said the \$200,000 we set aside for ARP funds is pretty much gone.

Manuel Gomez, resident, said when it comes to the tax relief, has there been any coordination with the treasurer, will it affect revenue, and what is the selection criteria? He said if the cash flow incentive was there, they would probably just take care of delinquencies here and there. If you want to look through that lens, just make sure this is on an even scale.

DECISION: A motion made by Washington, seconded by Buckingham, to place this item on the 11/8/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Washington, Walker, Buckingham - 3; Nays - 0.

Ordinance - ARPA - Blight- FY23 Budget Amendment

Administrator Robertson said the goal is to stabilize properties deemed blighted and make sure they are safe. There is additional funding put aside for relocation purposes if residents are displaced out of their

properties. She said the goal is to assist people with addressing issues with their properties. We have opportunities to work with the RDA to obtain properties and get them back on the tax rolls.

Councilman Rivera asked how much it costs to demolish blighted homes.

COO Nace stated as low as \$38,000-\$40,000. He said we did one on Clarke Ave. and that cost over \$90,000. We used funding from the city for acquisition, stabilization, and demolition as well as some other funding sources. He said residents on both sides of the Clarke Ave. property had to move out of their properties while the blighted structure was cared for. He said the RDA paid for those residents to stay in a hotel during the stabilization.

President Walker said the language reads the Dept. of Econ Dev in cooperation with RDA have developed the project. She asked what's the project and the process?

COO Nace said there is a designated and specific process to acquire a blighted property, which is the city's function. The Blight Task Force, Planning Commission, and the Blighted Property Review Committee work together to determine blighted properties. Once the process starts, it goes through the courts who will visit the properties, they will be appraised, and then the reviewers will then establish a value which is just compensation. When authorities talk about taking or acquiring a property, they just don't take it, there is a process, he said.

Director Watson said we work through the entire process to make sure it's a blighted property. She said she would like to see more funds because we would like the person to be able to stay in the property. Maybe we can put a program together to help them bring the property up to codes.

Manuel Gomez, resident, said he would like to see residents be able to keep their homes before the RDA gets involved. We need to sometimes look outside of the box.

Councilman Rivera asked for properties that are blighted, and the owner is absent, what is the process?

COO Nace said we try to track them down but sometimes they are in the wind. If we cannot locate them, we go through the courts. He said a property cannot be deemed blighted unless it is vacant. We want to encourage the property owner to fix their properties first or it will be deemed blighted. He said we sell RDA acquired blighted properties to developers which is basically recycled, and the RDA recuperates the money.

President Walker said the language should be a little clearer with the process because there are some gray areas. She said she thinks we need more discussion on what this looks like and to be clear on the language. She said Council is not directly involved with the acquisition of Dentsply but now the RDA is looking to acquire that property. She said she wants our residents to participate and benefit from these types of properties.

DECISION: A motion made by Washington, seconded by Buckingham, to place this item on the 11/8/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Washington, Walker, Buckingham - 3; Nays - 0.

Department: Fire (Washington)

Resolution - Fire - Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) Match

Administrator Robertson said this resolution should have been done in February. She explained that any grant application that has a match has to get Council approval to allow us to apply. In February the Fire Dept started utilizing a specific grant writer and they went full speed ahead to get the grant. We did get

the grant; the bad news is we didn't get Council approval first to identify the match which is just over \$26,000. She said this grant will allow installation of sprinklers systems and fire alarms in all of the fire stations. The intent with the match is that we have enough money to cover the match, but we won't use it until 2024, so this will be in the 2024 budget.

Councilman Rivera asked how many times this has happened?

Administrator Robertson said we haven't applied for this grant since 2021, so it's very rare that we get a request for a match. Going forward, she said, we want to build an in-house grant program to make sure the processes are followed appropriately and to make sure funding is in place to cover a match before the funding is granted.

DECISION: A motion made by Washington, seconded by Buckingham, to place this item on the 11/8/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Washington, Dennis, Buckingham - 3; Nays - 0.

Department: Police (Washington)

Ordinance - Police - FY23 Budget Amendment (PCCD) for Juvenile Engagement Officer

Administrator Robertson said this is the companion piece to the resolution Council approved for JEOs. She said this is to amend the budget to accommodate the actual funding.

Elsbeth Bupp, resident, said the other supplies and materials has \$36,000, can you explain?

Administrator Robertson said in addition to funding the JEO officer, there is also funding for laptops and school supplies for students through the GVI program.

Ms. Bupp then said the GVI did talk about laptops and they wanted to give them to the students but they needed a legal agreement that the laptops are on loan. She said maybe we can just give it to them instead of just lending it to them.

Administrator Robertson said that would be up to the GVI.

Assistant Solicitor Flower said she did draft an agreement and submitted it.

DECISION: A motion made by Washington, seconded by Buckingham, to place this item on the 11/8/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Washington, Dennis, Buckingham - 3; Nays - 0.

Department: Business Administration (Buckingham)

Ordinance - FY24 Proposed Budget

Administrator Robertson said the 2024 budget and taxes ordinances don't have the figures plugged in but she wanted to make sure she went through the correct process to get it on the November legislative agenda.

DECISION: A motion made by Rivera, seconded by Walker, to place on the 11/21/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Walker, Rivera - 3; Nays - 0.

Ordinance - 2024 Tax Ordinance

Administrator Robertson said, again, the numbers are left blank until they are finalized, but this doesn't mean taxes are being raised.

DECISION: A motion made by Rivera, seconded by Walker, to place on the 11/21/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Walker, Rivera - 3; Nays - 0.

Resolution - York County - MDJ - Lease Agreement

Administrator Robertson said this has been in the works for several months. The county inquired about the vacant space on City Hall's first floor where the bank was and the possibility of housing two of their District Justices (DJ) in that space. She said the most recent agreement went through the solicitor's office and sent back to the county. She said she wanted to make sure all boxes were checked before it was submitted to Council for approval.

Councilman Rivera said he thought there was an agreement with PA American Water Company (PAWC).

Administrator Robertson said PAWC is currently occupying one of the offices in that space and they are incorporated into this plan, so they will still have a space to do business.

Councilwoman Buckingham asked if the county would pay for the build out?

COO Nace said the lease will be for a 10-year term, with five-year renewals and they will pay for the complete build out.

Vice President Washington asked how soon they are planning to start the process.

COO Blanda said ASAP. They extended their lease for an additional year at their current location so now they have 14 months before they will have to leave.

Elsbeth Bupp, resident, talked about parking and said if we move DJ offices in there will there be sufficient parking. She also asked if they will completely close off that side of the building for security purposes. She also thought DJs were located around the city to cover particular quadrants of the city and if that was factored into the thought process.

COO Nace said he believes we're right on the border, but he can't speak to the details. He said the George St. doors will be general entrance. The doors along the parking lot will be for prisoner entry. He said we are providing them with 14 spaces for their staff and visitors so there is plenty of parking.

Councilwoman Buckingham said she has visited to her DJ's office, and it would be an incredibly long walk for her to get there.

President Walker asked if this will be for DJs Boxley and Hartise. Coo Nace said, yes.

DECISION: A motion made by Rivera, seconded by Walker, to place on the 11/21/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Walker, Rivera - 3; Nays - 0.

Resolution - 2024 Health Insurance Renewals

Administrator Robertson said this is a yearly resolution we submit to Council to allow the mayor and controller to sign our health insurance coverage because it exceeds the amount requiring Council's approval. She briefly outlined the types of insurances this resolution will cover.

DECISION: A motion made by Rivera, seconded by Walker, to place on the 11/21/23 legislative agenda. The motion passed by the following vote: Yeas - Buckingham, Walker, Rivera - 3; Nays - 0.

III. Council Comment:

President Walker encouraged residents to check the city's website for a direct link to PAWC. If you are in a single residential property, you will get the sewer bill; if you don't receive a bill, you are still required to pay, and you will be responsible for paying any back bills.

Administrator Robertson encouraged residents to contact PAWC if they need assistance with paying their sewer bills.

Councilman Rivera applauded city employee Lettice Brown and all of the residents who fought to keep a 422,000 sq. ft. warehouse from being built along Pennsylvania Ave.


IV. Administration Comment: None

V. Next Committee Meeting is scheduled for **November 29, 2023** at 6PM in Council Chambers. Committee agenda items due by 12 noon on November 22nd.

VI. Adjournment: There being no further business, the October 25, 2023 Committee Meeting of Council adjourned at 7:39 PM.



Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk



Sandie Walker, President of Council