Rochester Borough Council

Regular Meeting in the Municipal Building

October 19, 2020, 6:30 p.m.

Present: President Benjamin Rader, Vice-President Marjorie White, Ron Becker, Donna Short, Don Brothers, Solicitor Bernie Rabik, Police Chief Frank Mercier, Manager John Barrett

Absent: Howard Howe, Brandy Dietrich, Martin Knafelc, Mayor Keith Jackson, Code Officer Peggy Griffith, Fire Chief Mike Mamone III

The regular meeting was called to order with the invocation, pledge of allegiance and roll call.

Persons in Attendance:

John Michalik, 355 Clay St, stated that people have been racing quads and motorcycles up and down Indiana Way at all hours of the evening. They are also driving the quads on the streets. He told the Police Chief that he has not called the police as of this time. Chief Mercier stated that he would look into the matter and also asked Mr. Michalik to call the police when this is actually taking place so the officers can respond and possibly catch them in the act.

Jim Long, Rochester Area Heritage Society, asked if Council would have an interest in selling the Municipal Building. After some discussion, Council would be open to consider an offer and asked the Manager to see if there was an appraisal of the building to see what a fair market price might be.

Action Items:

Mr. Becker motioned to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2020 regular meeting and stormwater meeting as presented. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

Mrs. Short motioned to pay all approved bills as submitted. Mr. Brothers seconded and the motion carried.

BILLS:

Gen. Fund – Ck# 9994, 10044, 10046, 10099–10160 – totaling $298397.87.

Payroll (10/2, 10/16) – Ck# 4804-4825 plus Dir. Dep. and Elec. Pymts. – totaling $98,221.69.

Tyrone and Ashley Miller requested that Council give their consent to them so they could purchase 524 Oregon Avenue from the Beaver County Repository. Mrs. White asked the Millers how long they anticipate it will take to rehabilitate the building and what they intended to use the property for. Mr. Miller stated it will take about a year to rehabilitate then they would make that their primary residence. After some discussion, Mrs. White motioned to approve the consent as requested. Mrs. Short seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 5-0, all yes.

Brianna Bauer requested that Council give their consent to them so they could purchase 541 Harmony Avenue from the Beaver County Repository. Mrs. White asked Ms. Bauer how long she anticipates it will take to rehabilitate the building and what she intended to use the property for. Ms. Bauer stated it will take about a year to rehabilitate then she would look to rent it out. After some discussion, Mrs. Short motioned to approve the consent as requested. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried. Roll Call 5-0, all yes.

Draft Ordinance 05-2020 – Establishing an additional imposition rate on earned income to generate supplemental funding for the police pension plan. The draft ordinance provides for a one-half percent (.5%) increase to the earned income tax. The additional tax would be on both residents and non-residents. After some discussion, Mr. Brothers motioned to approve the draft ordinance as submitted and authorize the Solicitor to advertise it for Council to consider at the November meeting. Mr. Becker seconded it and the motion carried.

Garbage Contract – The current contract with Valley Waste Service expires December 31, 2020. Valley Waste Service sent a letter asking for a 2-year extension at a 2% increase for each year. Mrs. White stated that other communities are paying the same rate as Rochester and their collector will pick-up used television sets at no additional charge as long as prior arrangements are made for the pick-up. There was discussion regarding the time the collectors started in the mornings and when residents put there garbage out at the curb-side. Council asked the Manager to see if Valley Waste Services would be willing to include television pick-up as a part of their service.

Council received a letter from Howard Howe resigning his Council seat effective immediately due to health reasons. After some discussion, Mrs. White motioned to accept Mr. Howe’s resignation. Mrs. Short seconded and the motion carried. The Manager was asked to place an advertisement in the Beaver County Times and put a message on the electronic board that Council is accepting letters of interest from anyone in the 2nd Ward to fill the Council vacancy. The letters would need to be submitted by November 10th to be considered.

Review Items:

Council received for their review, the minutes of the September 10, 2020 Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority meeting.

Council received for their review, the meeting notes of the September 8, 2020 Rochester Borough Development Corporation meeting.

Committee Reports:

Public Administration – Ron Becker, Chairperson

The Expense & Revenue report covering January 1, 2020 through October 16, 2020 was presented for Council’s review.

Mr. Becker stated that there is a pension meeting set up for October 28th at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The meeting is to review and discuss all aspects of the police pension plan. Attending will be Steve Feaster, Feaster Pension Consultant; Mike Pisula, Phoenix Benefits Group, Gerri Steigerwald, Huntington Bank; Mark Hutter, C.S. McKee; and the police officers. Council members are encouraged to attend as well.

Mr. Becker presented final estimated revenues and expenses for 2020 and a preliminary 2021 Budget for Council’s review. There is a $232,995 deficit projected for 2021 at this time. After some discussion, Council will hold a budget meeting on October 27th at 6:00 p.m. to review and discuss the 2021 Budget.

Public Safety – Don Brothers, Chairperson

Mr. Brothers asked about the status of 313 Deer Lane. Code Officer Griffith was not present to update Council. Solicitor Rabik will contact Mrs. Griffith and ask about any progress she has been able to make regarding the demolition of this property.

Public Works – Howard Howe, Chairperson

There was nothing to report in Mr. Howe’s absence.

Recreation – Brandy Dietrich, Chairperson

There was nothing to report in Mrs. Dietrich’s absence.

Mayor’s Report:

There was nothing to report in Mayor Jackson’s absence.

Solicitor’s Report:

Solicitor Rabik stated that he had received 2 draft ordinances from the Rochester Township Solicitor regarding the establishment of false fire alarm regulations and regulations for recovery of fire expenses incurred responding to certain fires. He will review them and prepare drafts specific for Rochester and present them to Council at the November meeting for their review. Mrs. White motioned to authorize the Solicitor to draft the 2 ordinances for Council’s review. Mr. Becker seconded and the motion carried. It was felt that since the Township provided fire services for both Rochester Borough and East Rochester Borough that the 3 communities would enact ordinances similar in substance for ease of implementing and enforcing these regulations.

Solicitor Rabik noted that he and the Manager met with the police union and discussed their proposal. He would like an executive session to discuss the details of this meeting.

Solicitor Rabik noted Mr. Howe’s resignation and recognized his dedication and commitment to Rochester Borough. Solicitor Rabik thought it would be nice to formally recognize Mr. Howe and present him with a plaque honoring his service to the Borough both as an employee and as an elected official. Solicitor Rabik stated that he would like to pay for the plaque on the Borough’s behalf as a thank you from him. Council agreed and the Manager will work on the details.

Code Officer’s Report:

The September 2020 Code Officer’s Report was presented for Council’s review on behalf of the Code Officer in her absence.

Police Chief’s Report:

Chief Mercier presented the September 2020 Police Department report for Council’s review. Chief Mercier reviewed several items from the report.

Chief Mercier noted that Trick or Treat will be held on October 29th from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. for those residents wishing to participate.

Chief Mercier informed Council that the Freedom Borough Council awarded their police contract to Conway Borough. They thanked Rochester for their interest in providing this service.

Fire Chief’s Report:

The September 2020 Fire Department Report was presented for Council’s review on behalf of the Fire Chief in his absence.

Manager’s/Treasurer’s Report:

Manager Barrett presented the September 2020 Treasurer’s report for Council’s review.

Manager Barrett stated that he contacted Michael Foreman, Governor’s Center for Local Government Services, about meeting with the 3 Rochester’s to discuss what the State can offer as far as assistance in developing a study to consider the merger of the 3 communities or consolidating services within the 3 communities. State officials are not yet meeting in person but he is willing to meet via live feed with the communities. After some discussion, Mr. Rader and the Manager will contact the other communities to try and set up a meeting for November 4th at 6 p.m.

Old Business/New Business:

Mr. Rader noted that there will not be a Veteran’s Day parade this year. However, the VFW was going to hold a ceremony on November 11th at 10:00 a.m. at the VFW hall. All Council members are invited.

Council went into executive session to discuss the negotiations with the police union at 7:25 p.m.

Council reconvened at 7:37 p.m. and the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by,

John M. Barrett

Borough Manager