

Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.
March 25, 2015

Easton, Pa
Wednesday
March 25, 2015
6:00 p.m.

City Council met in stated session at the above date and time, in Council Chambers, located on the 6th floor of City Hall, One South Third Street, to consider any business that may lawfully be brought before the body and for the presentation of the preliminary 2016 City Budget and for a Public Hearing regarding the reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant Funds.

The invocation was given by Mayor Panto followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Brown, Edinger, Mauro, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Panto (7)
Absent: None (0)

Also in attendance were Thomas Hess, City Clerk, William Murphy, City Solicitor, and Glenn Steckman, City Administrator. There were twenty-three other persons present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion of Ms. Mauro and Dr. Warner the Agenda was amended by removing Bill 9 from New Business, by the following vote:

Ms. Mauro explained why she was making the motion, saying that she felt that the proposed appeal process needed more clarification and said that this matter would be discussed at a Public Committee meeting on April 7, 2015.

Yeas: Brown, Edinger, Mauro, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Panto (7)
Nays: None (0)

On motion of Dr. Ruggles and Mrs. Vulcano the amended Agenda was approved by the following vote:

Yeas: Panto, Warner, Vulcano, Ruggles, Mauro, Edinger, Brown (7)
Nays: None (0)

ACTION ON MINUTES

On motion of Mr. Brown and Mr. Edinger the March 11, 2015 Council Meeting minutes, as submitted, were approved by the following vote:

Yeas: Edinger, Mauro, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Panto, Brown (7)

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Nays: None (0)

RESOLUTION

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution, recognizing the death of Reverend John Steinbruck, former pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church and one of the founding members of ProJeCt of Easton.

The following Resolution was introduced by Dr. Ruggles:

44-2015

The above Resolution was adopted on motion of Dr. Ruggles and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Panto, Brown, Edinger, Mauro, (7)

Nays: None (0)

Council members spoke of ProJeCt's service to the citizens of Easton and extended their sympathies to his family.

The City Clerk was directed to forward the Resolution to the Steinbruck family.

PRESENTATION OF THE PRELIMINARY 2016 CITY BUDGET

At this time Mayor Panto said that he was calling for the elimination of the Per Capita Tax and explained why. He said that there was growth in certain areas, that the City's minimum municipal obligation would remain the same, and said that there was still a 1.1 million dollar gap but that it was the smallest gap in years. He then asked Mr. Steckman to present the preliminary 2016 City Budget.

Mr. Steckman gave highlights of the 2016 Preliminary Budget. (See attachment).

Dr. Ruggles made comments and asked questions regarding the line item for Fire Department Overtime vs. the hiring of another Fire Fighter which Mr. Steckman addressed.

Mayor Panto said that Mr. Marc Redding, the City's new Human Resource Manger, was in attendance and asked Mr. Steckman to introduce him, which he did, and asked Mr. Redding to speak to Council on his background and work experience, which he did.

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Mr. Steckman said that the City had just hired Justin Weiss as the Parks Department Supervisor, Robert Kirgy as the Property Maintenance Supervisor, and Kyra Berckove as the new

Revenue Supervisor, Stephen Murowski as the new Codes Administrator, and said that the City was in the process of interviewing for the Director of Community and Economic Development.

PUBLIC HEARING
Reprogramming of CDBG Funds

At 6:22 p.m., Mayor Panto opened the Public Hearing and turned it over to Mrs. Vulcano, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee.

Mrs. Vulcano read the following statement:

“The purpose of this evening’s hearing is to obtain public comments on the reprogramming of 2014 CDBG funds. The City received program income from the sale of properties. These funds total \$83,112.40”.

“The funds are being moved from:

- Program income from the sale of 686 Pine street \$83,112.40”.

“Funds will be applied to existing projects as follows:

- Acquisition and Rehabilitation \$83,112.40
Increase of more than 25% from the revised budget of \$76,113.61 to \$159,226.01”

“The City advertised the opportunity to comment on the modification plan on March 18, 2015 in the Express-Times”.

“A 30 day comment period from March 18 to April 16 is available to receive comments. Comments may be directed to Tina Woolverton at 610-250-2071 or twoolverton@easton-pa.gov.”

Tina Woolverton, Community and Economic Development Coordinator reiterated that this was the programming of funds from the sale of 686 Pine Street.

Mayor Panto said that when they looked at the reprogramming of these funds, the \$83,112.40 was from the sale of 686 Pine Street, and felt that the funds should stay in Acquisition and Rehabilitation and Disposition because that was where the funds came from. He said that he believed that the funds should go back into that fund to restore the funds so that the City could rehabilitate more housing in the West Ward part of the City.

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There were no questions or comments from Council or the audience.

Mrs. Vulcano closed the hearing at 6:26.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Agenda Items Only

Jennifer Keating, 141 S. 5th Street spoke regarding the proposed signage to be placed on the Rt. 22 overpass at N. 3rd and Bushkill Streets, and N. 3rd and Snyder Streets.

Mayor Panto said that he was upset, he said that he had met with the Planning Department and had said that he did not want the sign to read "College Hill", and thought that it should read "Lafayette College" on the side of the bridge at N. 3rd and Bushkill Street, and felt that it should read "Local Historic District". He said that he felt that the City should begin to delineate the City's neighborhoods.

Dr. Warner said that she would be introducing amendments to the proposed Resolution when it came up under "New Business". She said that she was also going to propose to table the proposed Resolution because there was no actual maintenance agreement between the College and the Bridge Commission.

Mary Wilford-Hunt, 2012 Shady Lane, Mt. Bethel, a representative from Lafayette College, said that they had been meeting with the Bridge Commission and at this time there was no maintenance agreement between the College and the Bridge Commission.

Dr. Warner said that she was against the sign saying Historic District, and explained why.

There was a short discussion on the proposed verbiage of the sign between Mayor Panto and Dr. Warner.

Mr. Brown read a text message that he had received from Alan Raisman, who said that he had no problem with the name "Lafayette College" on the bridge sign at N. 3rd and Bushkill Street and suggested that it read "Downtown Easton" on the bridge sign at N. 3rd and Snyder Street.

Dr. Warner said that she had spoken to Kim Kmetz and stated that she had the same concerns, and said that maybe the wordage should be discussed at a Committee meeting to give the public an opportunity to express their opinions on how wordage for the signs.

Mrs. Vulcano agreed with Dr. Warner.

Dr. Ruggles said that it felt that the maintenance agreement was a very important item and explained why.

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Mayor Panto said, to Ms. Wilford-Hunt, that they did not need the permission of the City for the signs, but that they would need to go in front of the Historic District Commission for their recommendation to City Council for approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Ms. Wilford-Hunt said that they were on the next Historic District Commission's Agenda.

There was a discussion between Council members and Mr. Steckman regarding signs delineating the different neighborhoods in the City.

Tara Zrinsku, 1510 S. Ciara Drive, Bethlehem Pa., the local coordinator of the Food & Water Watch, and who is affiliated with the campaign to stop the PennEast Pipeline, said that it was her understanding that Council had received an e-mail asking that Council adopt a Resolution for opposing the PennEast Pipeline, and said that she was in attendance to address that matter. She said that they have expressed their concerns with the State and Federal governments, and explained the use of the proposed Resolutions.

Dr. Warner and Mayor Panto explained that Council did not have a proposed Resolution, regarding this matter, on tonight's Agenda, and asked her to approach the Easton Environmental Advisory Council and they would forward a proposed Resolution to Council.

Ross McLennan, 410 Market Street, Perkasio, Pa. said that he had a two page letter from the Easton Environmental Advisory Council in which they stated opposition to the pipeline, but said that he would return to the Advisory Council and inform them of City Council's request.

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Ruggles said that he would like to discuss Bill 8, and requested it be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed under New Business.

On motion of Dr. Ruggles and Ms. Mauro, the following items were adopted by the following vote:

Bill 7, (Ordinance 5488), Amending Section 285-29 E, of Chapter 285, Fees, of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa., This Bill removed the words "(Note: After 90 days ticket goes to citation; see Magistrate).

Resolutions 45 through 51-2015, which approved Certificates of Appropriateness for 42 S. 2nd Street, 110 S. 3rd Street, 65 N. 4th Street, 106 N. 4th Street, 40-42 S. 6th Street, 144 Church Street and 400 Spring Garden Street.

Resolution 52-12, which authorized the disposition of City Records.

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Resolution 53-12, which approved the appointment of Bill Carr to the Planning Commission.

Yeas: Panto, Brown, Edinger, Mauro, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner (7)

Nays: None (0)

REPORTS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL

There were no reports received by Council:

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Mr. Brown, Chairman of the Finance Committee, spoke regarding legislation, for later in the meeting, regarding amending the 2015 General Fund, the 2015 Debt Service Fund and the 2015 Recreation Fund Budget, and for approving a Leasing and Maintenance Agreement for City Copiers.

Mrs. Vulcano, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee, reported that the Vacant Property Review Committee had met, earlier in the evening, and had discussed 360 W. Wilkes Barre Street to certify as blight, but that some legal issues have arisen which need to be addressed, so that property has been placed on hold.

Dr. Warner, Chairman of the Planning Committee spoke regarding legislation, for later in the meeting regarding agreeing to Lafayette College's proposed wayfinding signage on the U.S. Route 22 Bridge along N. 3rd Street. She reported that the Planning Committee would also meet on Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

Ms. Mauro, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, said that she had withdrawn Bill 9 from the Agenda so that it could be discussed further in a public forum at a Public Safety meeting to be held on April 7, 2015.

Dr. Ruggles, Chairman of the Public Works Committee, had no report.

Mr. Edinger, Chairman of the Administration Committee spoke regarding legislation that would be forthcoming, later in the meeting, regarding the Charter Study Commission to study amendments to the City Charter.

Mr. Murphy said that they had discussed the procedure for amending the Home Rule Charter and the suggestion was to form an Ad Hoc Committee to review the Charter and to recommend any changes. He said that he had put together a draft Resolution, for Council's consideration, for the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee. He said that it also included a provision for members, or there could be just a resolution for the establishment of the Committee. He also spoke regarding the time constraints on amendments to the Charter.

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There was a discussion between Council members and Mr. Murphy regarding the contents of the proposed Resolution, and how to proceed.

Mr. Edinger also reported that he would have a proposed Resolution, for later in the meeting, regarding approving a Job Description for the Systems Administrator, and asked Mr. Steckman to address Council on amending the Department Section of the City Code.

Mr. Steckman spoke to Council regarding the needed amendments to Chapter 45 of the Codes.

Mr. Murphy, City Solicitor, reported that pursuant to an order of Court, Council had met in Executive Session, in deliberation for the litigation of Pennsylvania Media LLC vs. the City of Easton and others, on Monday, March 23, 2015.

Mayor Panto reported that he had attended a My Brother's Keeper meeting and he and Mayor Pawlowski of Allentown set up a local chapter of My Brother's Keeper in keeping with the intent of President Obama to help young men and boys of color to assist them in going beyond their means to graduate and have reading capabilities to assist them in keeping out of prison.

Mayor Panto informed Council that Mr. Murphy had met with Chief Scalzo and Lt. Lohenitz and the District Attorney regarding Bill 9 and everything contained in the Bill was legal.

Mayor Panto also spoke regarding an incident at the Dog Park and the need for signage prohibiting aggressive dogs and for more patrolling by Police Officers and the Animal Control Agents.

Dr. Warner and Mr. Brown related their experiences at the park and problems they have encountered.

CORRESPONDENCE

The following Correspondence was received by Council.

- (a) Food & Water Watch, E-mail requesting passage of a Resolution opposing the PennEast Pipeline.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill 8, Amending the 2015, General Fund, the 2015 Debt Service Fund and the 2015 Recreation Fund contained in the 2015 Budget was moved on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner.

Dr. Ruggles asked questions concerning overtime for the municipal garage, and the amount for municipal buildings.

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Mr. Steckman and Mayor Panto addressed Dr. Ruggles' concerns.

Bill 8, (Ordinance 5489), was adopted by the following vote:

Yeas: Edinger, Mauro, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Panto, Brown (7)

Nays: None (0)

Ordinance 5489, amended Revenues and Expenditures contained in the 2015 Debt Service, General, and Recreation Fund Budgets.

NEW BUSINESS

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution which would approve the job description for the Systems Administrator's position.

The following Resolution was introduced by Mr. Edinger:

54-2015

Dr. Ruggles said that the word "that" should be changed to the word "the" in the Distinguishing Features of Work in the job description.

Mr. Steckman said that another item had to be changed in the job description, the word "that" to "to" in the Distinguishing Features of Work, and "50" pounds to "25" pounds.

Dr. Ruggles said that he felt that the City had to look at how they were administrating the City's Website, and spoke further on what he felt were the problems with the site.

Mr. Steckman and Mr. Caruso, the City's IT Manger addressed Dr. Ruggles concerns.

There was a discussion between Council members, Mr. Steckman and Mr. Caruso on this matter.

The above Resolution was adopted on motion of Mr. Edinger and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Mauro, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Panto, Brown, Edinger (7)

Nays: None (0)

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution which would approve a Leasing Agreement with Digital Leasing for copiers at City Hall and the Police Department.

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The following Resolution was introduced by Mr. Brown:

55-2015

Dr. Ruggles informed Council that he had questioned certain items contained in the agreement but had spoken with a representative from Digital Leasing and his questions were answered.

Mayor Panto said that he did not understand why the Contracts came before Council unsigned. He said that Council does not approve unsigned contracts.

The above Resolution was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner, by the following vote:

Yeas: Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Panto, Brown, Edinger, Mauro (7)

Nays: None (0)

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution which would approve a Maintenance Agreement between the City and Advance Business Equipment for copiers at the Police Department and City Hall.

The following Resolution was introduced by Mr. Brown:

56-2014

Ms. Mauro asked what the length of the contract was and what the cost was on a quarterly basis.

Mr. Steckman said that the length was for four years. He said that the entire cost was not indicated, but that the City was going from the rental of the copiers based on volume to a per print charge.

Ms. Mauro asked if Mr. Steckman had an estimate of the quarterly cost.

Mr. Steckman said that the City was roughly budgeting \$45,000 a year for printing which should be significantly lowered with the per print cost.

The above Resolution was adopted on motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner by the following vote:

Yeas: Vulcano, Warner, Panto, Brown, Edinger, Mauro, Ruggles (7)

Nays: None (0)

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The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution in which Council would agree to Lafayette College's proposed wayfinding signage on the U.S. Route 22 Bridge along N. 3rd Street.

The following Resolution was introduced by Dr. Warner:

57-2015

The above Resolution was amended in the following manner on motion of Dr. Warner and Mrs. Vulcano by the following vote:

By removing "WHEREAS, The signage on the North side of the bridge facing South will read "Historic Easton" and the South side of the bridge facing North will either read "College Hill" or "Lafayette College"; and

By adding the following to the fourth Whereas, "and to provide Council with a maintenance agreement between the College and the Delaware River Toll Bridge Commission.

By adding the following to the Now Therefore Be It Resolved that; "with verbiage to be approved by Council at a later date".

Yeas: Vulcano, Ruggles, Mauro, Edinger, Brown, Panto, Warner (7)

Nays: None (0)

The above amended Agenda was adopted on motion of Dr. Warner and Mrs. Vulcano by the following vote:

Yeas: Warner, Panto, Brown, Edinger, Mauro, Ruggles, Vulcano (7)

Nays: None (0)

PUBLIC COMMENT

(On any item)

Wendy Summers, 145 S. 11th Street spoke and asked questions regarding the meeting of the Vacant Property Review Committee and said that she had mailed a letter to Mayor Panto in which she expressed interest in being appointed to the Committee.

Mrs. Vulcano answered her questions.

Anthony Marraccini, 525 Ferry Street, Apt. 1, asked questions regarding parking at intersections and driveways, the actions of a Parking Enforcement Officer, and the erection of a No Parking Sign placed on the street.

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Mayor Panto answered his questions

Robert Trotner, 1910 Bayard Street, Bethlehem, a representative of the Lehigh Valley Coffee Party, said that he sent e-mails to Council members requesting a meeting with the members regarding their proposed Resolution to assist and to support the American Anti Corruption Act and said that he was willing to meet at any time.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p. m. on motion of Dr. Ruggles and Ms. Mauro by the following vote:

Yeas: Mauro, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Panto, Brown, Edinger (7)

Nays: None (0)


Thomas A. Hess
City Clerk



CITY OF EASTON

PENNSYLVANIA

TO: City Council

FROM: Sal Panto, Jr., Mayor
Glenn Steckman, City Administrator

CC: Tony Bassil, City Controller
Chris Heagele, Director of Finance

RE: 2016 Preliminary Budget Highlights

DATE: March 25, 2015

Introduction and Background

The City Charter requires that a two-year budget is presented by the Mayor and City Administration each year. The proposed 2016 budget is attached to this memo. The proposed budget is largely based on the assumptions used in the 2015 budget.

The proposed budget has a current deficit of \$1,111,582.35. There are several major drivers on both sides of the income statement (revenues and expenses), which are outlined below.

City of Easton Revenue Budget Drivers

The major changes to the revenue budget are as follows:

- **No Allocation of Fund Balance to the 2016 Budget** – Per our past practice, the proposed draft budget does not commit any fund balance to the 2016 budget.
- **Collections from Solid Waste and Sewer Fees** – These amounts are some of the largest revenue items and are budgeted at the 2015 revenue estimates and may be revised later.
- **Real Estate Taxes** – No change in the property tax rate is proposed, but the budget increases by \$50,000 based on a major increase in the total City assessment.
- **Real Estate Transfer Tax** – The proposed draft budget assumes that real estate transfer tax will be \$30,000 higher than presented in the 2015 budget.
- **Admissions Tax** – The proposed draft budget assumes that admissions tax will be \$15,000 higher than presented in the 2015 budget.
- **Ad Hoc State Pension Aid** – Ad hoc pension aid from the Commonwealth was approved for municipalities between 2006 and 2015. This aid, in the amount of \$55,000, will not be available to Easton next year.

- **Parking Meters** – The proposed draft budget assumes that parking meters will be \$70,000 higher than presented in the 2015 budget, and is now budgeted at \$1,000,000 because more meters will be added in 2016.
- **Residential Rental Permits** - The proposed draft budget assumes that residential rental permits will be \$10,000 higher than presented in the 2015 budget.
- **New Garage Revenue** – The revenue from the new garage has been increased in 2016 to account for a full year of garage activity.

City of Easton Expense Budget Drivers

- **Yearly Wage Increases** – The proposed draft budget includes annual wage increase for City workers as required by contract. FOP, IAFF, and AFSCME employees have a 3% wage increase in 2016.
- **Additional Staffing** – The proposed draft budget includes 63 police officers (1 additional officer over the 2015 budget) and filling 2 vacancies in the Department of Public Works (1 in parks and 1 in highways).
- **Minimum Municipal Obligation** – The proposed draft budget holds the MMO constant with 2015. This assumption is reasonable as the next actuarial valuation will not have an impact on the budget until 2017.
- **Health Care** – The proposed draft budget increases the health insurance budget by \$200,000 to \$4.25 Million. As of the first two months of this year, health care spending has been well within the City budget.
- **OPEB Trust Fund** – The City administration proposes to continue funding an OPEB trust fund. For 2016, the administration proposes \$20,000.
- **Fire Department Staffing** – The 2016 budget assumes that a fire department retirement and a fire department resignation will not be filled. Instead, department overtime will be increased by \$80,000 to cover our minimum manning commitment from the collective bargaining agreement.
- **GEDP Grant** – The 2016 budget reduces the GEDP grant by \$40,000 to the agreed to amount of \$315,000.
- **Fuel & Energy** – Fuel and energy accounts remain budgeted at current amounts.
- **Highway Maintenance** – The proposed draft budget maintains highway maintenance at the 2015 amount of \$250,000.

Conclusion

This draft budget presents our fiscal reality as of today. The City of Easton administration will be working hard between now and the presentation of the Mayor's budget on October 1, 2015 to eliminate the deficit that currently exists in the draft 2016 budget. As we do so, we welcome City Council input, questions, and suggestions.



CITY OF EASTON

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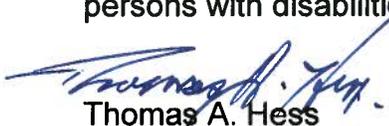
March 20, 2015

MEETING NOTICE

The Regular meeting of the Easton City Council has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2015 for general business, for the presentation of the preliminary 2016 City Budget and for a Public Hearing regarding the reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant Funds.

The meeting will be held in Council Chambers, located on the 6th floor of City Hall, One South Third Street, and will begin at 6:00 p.m.

All meetings of City Council are open to the Public and are accessible to persons with disabilities.


Thomas A. Hess
City Clerk