

**Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.**  
**February 26, 2014**

Easton, Pa  
Wednesday  
February 26, 2014  
6:00 p.m.

City Council met in stated session at the above date and time, in Council Chambers, located on the Sixth floor of City Hall, to consider any business that may lawfully be brought before the body.

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

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Brown (6:05 p.m.), Edinger, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warner, Warren, Panto (7)  
Absent: None (0)

Also in attendance were Thomas A. Hess, City Clerk, William Murphy, City Solicitor, Joel Scheer, Assistant City Solicitor and Glenn Steckman, City Administrator. There were approximately fifty other persons present.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

On motion of Dr. Warner and Mrs. Vulcano the Agenda was approved, as submitted, by the following vote:

Yeas: Panto, Warren, Warner, Vulcano, Ruggles, Edinger (6)  
Nays: None (0)

**ACTION ON MINUTES**

On motion of Dr. Ruggles and Mr. Warren, the February 12, 2014 Council Meeting minutes were approved, as submitted, by the following vote:

Yeas: Edinger, Ruggles, Vulcano, Warren, Panto (5)  
Nays: None (0)  
Abstain: Warner (1)

**PRESENTATION**  
**LAFAYETTE COLLEGE TECH CLINC REPORT**

Audrey DaDalt, Allie Nagurney, Devon Palermo, Drew Williams, Emily Zangla, Guanxiong Zhou, members of the Lafayette College Technology Clinic Team, and Professor Lawrence Malinconico, gave a presentation regarding providing the availability of nutritious foods to

## **Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.**

**February 26, 2014**

residents of the West Ward, and reported on the assistance of local organizations and the City for this program.

Mayor Panto, Dr. Ruggles and Mr. Warren thanked the students and Professor Malinconico for their dedication to this project, and to the citizens of the West Ward.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT** **(Agenda Items Only)**

Robert Levers, 221 W. Lafayette Street, a member of the Nevin Park Fountain Committee read a letter from Mr. Herbert Etchison, Team Leader, of the College Hill Neighborhood Association Nevin Park Team, regarding the Nevin Park Fountain, and funding for the project.

Mayor Panto addressed the concerns and answered questions that were in Mr. Etchison's letter.

Allison O'Donnell, and Genevieve Asselin, Lafayette College Students, co-presidents of the Lafayette College Association of Visual Artists spoke regarding their association and regarding the pieces of Art that were hung on the walls of the 6<sup>th</sup> floor, over the weekend, and how one would go about purchasing any of the pieces of art, and said that the art would be displayed until March 29, 2014.

Dr. Warner and Mr. Warren thanked the students for the new art for the floor and said that it was greatly appreciated.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mrs. Vulcano requested that the proposed Resolution regarding approval of the Non-Union and Management Full Time Employees Benefits for 2015 be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed under New Business; that action was taken.

On motion of Mr. Brown and Dr. Warner the following items, on the Consent Agenda, were adopted by the following vote:

Resolution 26-2014, which approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for 100-104 Northampton Street for removal and replacement of the existing store front.

Resolution 27-2014, which approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for 37 N. Bank Street for the installation of a dormer on the main façade and extension of the second story in the back.

Resolution 28-2014, which approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for 140A Northampton Street, for installation of signs in the windows.

**Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.**  
**February 26, 2014**

Resolution 29-2014, which approved a Stipulation of Counsel in the case of Steven Heyman and Jonathan Heyman vs. Revenue Appeals Board of Northampton County No. C-48-CV-2010-12575 for 140 Northampton Street.

Resolution 31-2014, which authorized the opening of two interest bearing checking accounts at the Merchants Bank of Bangor for Recreation Credit Card payments and Police Violations Credit Card Payments.

Bill No. 4, (Ordinance 5451) Amending Chapter 285 Fees, of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa., which amends fines for Parking Violations.

Bill No. 5, (Ordinance 5452) Amending Section 114.37, Funeral Benefits of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa., which raised the Funeral Benefit from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Bill No. 6, (Ordinance 5453) Amending Subsections in Section 535-65, Imposition of tax; rate, of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa. which amends the Section by deleting 2012 and replacing it with 2014 and changing 1.25% to 1.45%.

Bill No. 7, (Ordinance 5454) Amending the 2014 Parks and Open Space Fund Budget, which amends the 2014 Parks and Open Space Fund Budget by increasing Revenues and Expenditures by \$129,000.

Bill No. 8, Providing for the transfer of funds in the 2011 Bond Fund Budget which provides for the transfer of \$171,228.10 within accounts contained in the Bond Fund Budget.

Bill No. 9, Providing for the transfer of funds in the Revolving Capital Fund Budget, which provides for the transfer of \$250,000 within accounts contained in the Revolving Capital Fund Budget.

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

Nays: None (0)

**REPORTS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL**

There were no reports were received by Council:

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

Mr. Brown, Chairman of the Finance Committee, spoke regarding legislation that he would be introducing, later in the meeting, which would require all individuals or entities utilizing Credit Cards or Debit Cards for payment of delinquent Real Estate Taxes and Municipal Fees to pay the charges or fees associated with the transaction.

**Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.**  
**February 26, 2014**

Mrs. Vulcano, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee reported that the West Ward Neighborhood Partnership was going to meet on a quarterly basis, and said that they would like to partner with the Easton Business Association and other organizations to bring more exposure to West Ward businesses.

Dr. Warner, Chairman of the Planning Committee, had no report.

Mr. Warren, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, spoke regarding a most recent drug raid in the 1400 block of Butler Street, regarding the cash and drugs confiscated during that raid, and congratulated the Police Department for their actions.

Dr. Ruggles, Chairman of the Public Works Committee reported that construction work on the Pennsylvania State Route 22 Toll Bridge would begin once again on March 3, 2014.

Dr. Warner asked a question regarding snow removal on College Hill Streets.

Mayor Panto requested that Mr. David Hopkins, Director of Public Works, to furnish Council with an update on Snow removal throughout the City; which he did.

Mayor Panto thanked the Borough of Wilson, the Township of Forks, and the Easton Suburban Water Authority for assisting the City in snow removal with the lending of equipment to the City.

Mr. Warren asked if there were any Federal, State or County funds available to assist the City with the cleanup.

Mr. Hopkins said that there was not.

Mr. Brown asked if the City had received back any road salt that was lent to other municipalities.

Mr. Hopkins said that all salt had been returned, and that a new shipment from the City's supplier had been delivered.

Mr. Edinger, Chairman of the Administration Committee spoke regarding legislation that he would have for later in the meeting regarding approving the Non-Union and Management Full Time Employees Benefits.

Mr. Murphy, City Solicitor, and Mr. Scheer, Assistant Solicitor had no report.

Mayor Panto gave a brief update on the City Hall project.

**Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.**  
**February 26, 2014**

Joe Biondo and Randy Galiotto, Architects from Spillman and Farmer Associates, spoke to Council regarding the proposed City Hall Building and the layout of offices and spaces on each of the floors of City Hall.

Council members had made comments and asked questions regarding security and Council spaces which were answered by Mayor Panto and Mr. Biondo and Galiotto.

Mr. Edinger made comments and asked question regarding the Project Labor Agreement for this project.

Attorney Graham Simmons, the Parking Authority Solicitor responded to Mr. Edinger's concerns.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The following correspondence was received by Council:

(a) Joan English – Thank you note, thanking Council for the Resolution recognizing the death of her husband, Donald English, a retired Police Officer.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

A February 21, 2014, memorandum, regarding Credit Card Payments at Portnoff Law Associates was received from Christopher Heagele, Director of Finance.

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Bill that would require all individuals or entities utilizing Credit Cards or Debit Cards for payment of delinquent Real Estate Taxes and Municipal Fees to pay the charges or fees associated with the transaction.

Bill 10, An Ordinance requiring all individuals or entities utilizing Credit Cards or Debit Cards for payment of delinquent Real Estate Taxes and Municipal Fees to pay the charges or fees associated with the transaction was introduced by Mr. Brown and ordered processed for adoption.

This Bill would require all individuals that use Credit or Debit Cards for payment of delinquent Real Estate Taxes and Municipal Fees to pay the charges or fees associated with the transaction.

**Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.**  
**February 26, 2014**

Council members made comments and asked questions regarding could the City do what the Ordinance says that the City could do, and regarding a list of the fees associated with the use of the cards.

Council members' concerns were addressed by Mr. Murphy, Mayor Panto, Mr. Steckman and Mr. Chris Heagele, the City's Finance Director.

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution which would authorize the City Administration to apply for a Northampton County Park Acquisition and Development Program in the amount of \$175,000 for Hugh Moore Park improvements.

The following Resolution was introduced by Dr. Ruggles:

32-2014

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

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

Nays: None (0)

The next item on the Agenda was a proposed Resolution which would approve the Non-Union and Management Full Time Employees Benefits.

The following Resolution was introduced by Mr. Edinger:

30-2014

Mrs. Vulcano voiced her concerns with items in benefits package regarding the elimination of Longevity pay and the decreasing of the number if vacation days for some of the employees that had already earned them.

Mayor Panto said that the longevity was not taken away, it was placed as part of their salary, and explained his statement.

Mr. Brown said that some of non-union employees would be losing some of their vacation days that they had already earned. He said that he knew that new hired employees would be capped, but thought that the City was going to give the employees the time to take the days that they had already accumulated.

Mayor Panto said under the November proposal those employees that went from sixty days to fifty days have two years to use the days. He said that the employees could still accrue 50 days and leave at the end of their career with one hundred sick days and 50 vacation days.

**Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.**  
**February 26, 2014**

Mr. Steckman said that the employee must have a minimum of three hundred sick days saved to get paid for one hundred days. He said that the new employees hired after January 1, 2013, were changed to thirty and sixty. He said that in union negotiations vacation has been reduced and they have been seeking to reduce the accrual of vacation days.

Mrs. Vulcano said that she still did not like the employee losing vacation days.

Mayor Panto said that the City was not sustainable in its current format. He said that the City had faced another 30% increase in Residential Earned Income Tax last year to balance the budget. Said that the City was now up to 1.95 which was almost double of what anyone else in this area paid. He said that the Budget could not keep being balanced on the revenue side. He said that legacy costs must be cut. He said that employees cannot leave with big paychecks anymore, plus their pension. He said that the City was providing an annuity for them. He said that he was not opposed to having competitive benefits for employees, said that they deserved it, but not six weeks vacation. He said that since he has been Mayor the non-union personnel and management employees have received over a 20% increase in compensation, which Council has supported. He said that if an employee can accumulate that many vacation days and sick days, that employee has too much. He said that in most places you use the days or lose those days. He said that the City could not keep giving. He said that some employees still get twenty five vacation days, fifteen sick days, twelve holidays and three personal days for a total of fifty-five days that the employee could take off.

Mr. Warner said that he has looked very close into this matter over the last couple of weeks, knew what it was to work in the public sector, understood its demands, and understood where the non-union employees were coming from with their opposition on this matter. He said that he did not know how the City could continue to sustain the current direction. He said that everyone was talking about what cuts could be made, and the City has made many significant cuts over the past years, and the City needed to unfortunately continue to make more, and said that he would be voting for the new benefits package.

Dr. Ruggles asked if the Resolution was not adopted, what would the longevity be for these employees in 2014.

Mr. Steckman said that the longevity would stay and the employees' longevity had been added into their 2014 salary.

Mayor Panto said that when the longevity was included into the salaries it was not removed from the Resolution, which has to be done.

Dr. Ruggles spoke further on the Longevity issue.

**Minutes of the Council of the City of Easton, Pa.**  
**February 26, 2014**

After a short discussion on this matter it was decided that a vote would be taken on this Resolution and then an amendment to the benefits package would have to be brought back to Council at a later date to address Longevity for 2014.

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

Yeas: Warner, Warren, Panto, Brown, Edinger (5)

Nays: Vulcano, Ruggles (2)

**CITIZENS RIGHT TO BE HEARD**

Rita Messa, 505 Old Mill Road, said that she respected the decision of Council on the Non-Union employees' benefits, however asked that every non-union and every management person follow the rules just like everyone else had to follow.

Brendon Donnelly, 201 W. Pierce Street, a representative of Residential Home Funding made a statement regarding a mortgage program that his company has that he would like to offer to City employees.

Mayor Panto asked that he give the information to Mr. Steckman; which he did.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p. m. on motion of Mrs. Vulcano and Mr. Warren by the following vote:

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

Nays: None (0)

  
Thomas A. Hess, City Clerk

CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA

Stated Session  
Wednesday  
February 26, 2014  
6:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. INVOCATION
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
4. ROLL CALL
5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
6. ACTION ON MINUTES – February 12, 2014 Council Meeting
7. PRESENTATION – Lafayette College Tech Clinic Report
8. PUBLIC COMMENT – (Agenda Items Only)
9. CONSENT AGENDA
  - a. Resolution approving Certificate of Appropriateness for 100-104 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.
  - b. Resolution approving Certificate of Appropriateness for 37 N. Bank Street.
  - c. Resolution approving Certificate of Appropriateness for 140A Northampton Street.
  - d. Resolution approving a Stipulation of Counsel.
  - e. Resolution approving Non-Union and Management Full Time Employees Benefits for 2015 & 2016.
  - f. Resolution authorizing the opening of two Interest Bearing Checking Accounts.
  - g. Bill 4, Amending Chapter 285 Fees, of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa.
  - h. Bill 5, Amending Section 114.37, Funeral Benefits, of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa.
  - i. Bill 6, Amending Subsections in Section 535-65, Imposition of tax rate, of the Code of the City of Easton, Pa.
  - j. Bill 7, Amending the 2014 Parks & Open Space Budget.
  - k. Bill 8, Providing for the transfer of funds in the 2011 Bond Fund Budget.
  - l. Bill 9, Providing for the transfer of funds in the Revolving Capital Fund Budget.
10. REPORTS RECEIVED BY COUNCIL
11. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
  - (a) Finance (Kenneth Brown)
  - (b) Economic Development (Sandra Vulcano)
  - (c) Planning (Elinor Warner)
  - (d) Public Safety (Jeffrey Warren)
  - (e) Public Works (Roger Ruggles)
  - (f) Administration (James Edinger)

-over-

(g) Report of City Solicitor  
(h) Report of Mayor

(Attorney William Murphy)  
(Salvatore J. Panto Jr.)

12. CORRESPONDENCE

(a) Mrs. Joan English – Thank-you note

13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

14. NEW BUSINESS

(a) Introduction of Legislative Bills.

1. Bill 10, Requiring all Individuals or entities utilizing Credit Cards or Debit Cards for payment of delinquent Real Estate Taxes and Municipal Fees to pay the charges or fees associated with the transaction.

2. Bill 11, Authorizing the filing of a Grant Application. (R)

15. PUBLIC COMMENT – (Any Matter)

16. ADJOURNMENT