

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEETING

September 1, 2020

The virtual Council Meeting of September 1, 2020 was called to order by Council President Derrick Perry at 7:30 PM by way of the GoToMeeting.com application.

There was a **Moment of Silence** followed by the **Pledge of Allegiance**. The following Council members were connected to the online meeting:

Valerie Scott-Cooper
Thomas Lepera

Hakim Jones
Rebecca Smith

Sonya Sanders
Derrick Perry

Heather Lewis

Also present were: Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator; Captain Richard Clowser, Norristown Police Department; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning & Development; Amrinder Singh, Building and Codes Manager, Chief Thomas O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief.

Motion to Approve Minutes

There was a **motion by Councilman Lepera, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve the Minutes of the August 18, 2020 virtual Work Session Meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.** Councilman Jones suggested that there be a heading for the vote to open the agenda for a request to advertise Ordinance 20-13 which follows the vote under Parks and Recreation for the Keystone Communities Grant.

Executive Session Announcement

Council President Perry announced that Council met in Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss legal matters.

Presentations

Presentation request for Preliminary/Final Land Development approval – Montgomery County Justice Center

Mr. Tom Bonner, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, provided information about his staff and design team and noted there will be a presentation regarding the proposed Justice Center project. He noted that Council's comments from past meetings have helped to refine and change the design.

Mr. David Hahn, Montgomery County Capital Projects and Programs Director, noted that this project has been three years in the making and that a few months ago, some of the areas planned for the new building have been decreased in size which resulted in a 10-foot buffer on East Penn Street.

Mr. Peter Glasson, Lead Designer, provided the Power Point presentation which included information regarding the Site, Landscaping, Building Enclosures and Materials and a Q&A session. He noted that the goal is to expand the footprint and to increase access to Main Street and the proposed lobby would co-join the new and historical building. It would also include café space, ADA accessibility, three entries to the building and plantings. He added that they are also analyzing the composition of the façade.

Following the Q&A with Council members, Mr. Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor, noted there are 6 Waivers attached to this project. Mr. Dymtryk, Municipal Engineer, reviewed the Waivers, which include sheet size, trees, landscaping, piping and groundwater recharge. Mr. Dymtryk recommended approval of these Waivers.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Scott-Cooper**, to open the agenda for Public Comment. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Netta Johnson, 1002-1004 Arch Street, Norristown - Ms. Johnson asked if any local resident could be part of a diversity and inclusion committee?

Mr. Thomas Bonner stated they are in the process of formulating policy and understanding the requirements.

Kaden Beegle, 1109 West Washington Street, Norristown – Mr. Beegle voiced his concern over mindfulness of green energy or solar capacities of the building.

Mr. Bonner provided an explanation of the “green” plans for the project.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Lepera**, to close the Public Comment. **The motion passed unanimously.**

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Scott-Cooper, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Preliminary/Final Land Development approval for the Montgomery County Justice Center along with the Waivers discussed by the Municipal Engineer. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Announcements

There are 2 surveys to provide opportunities for community input. One is for the Recreation Department to get input regarding park equipment and a communications survey for the community to tell Council how well they are being communicated to. Both are available on the norristown.org link.

There is still time to complete the 2020 Census at my2020.census.gov.

Rent or Mortgage Relief available through PHFA.org/PACares.

“Help a Single Parent” – 300 headphones (that support Chromebooks) and school supplies have been collected and will be donated to school students on Wednesday, September 9 at 3 pm in the Norristown Area High School lot.

Oak Street Park – Friday, September 4 from 6 to 8 pm. “Stick Together Group” will be providing free back-to-school supplies and community resources. Please wear a mask. Contact Amy.

Food Distribution by “Be Seen, Be Heard” on September 12 from noon to 3 pm in the lot on Dekalb and Airy Streets. There will be Norristown Voter Registration and resources available.

“Pop-Up Flea Market” at Ackey’s Park on Saturday, September 5 from 8 am to 4 pm. There will be multiple vendors.

Public Comment

Raphael Huff, 546 E. Main St.

Norristown should absolutely NOT sell its sewer system to the corrupt private company, Aqua PA. This is a completely immoral decision that shows no care for the people of Norristown. Low income residents cannot afford increased rates, and all residents will be harmed by the negligent and shady behavior of the greedy Aqua PA profiteers. We deserve better.

Thank you.

Dennis Eaton, 1741 North Hills Dr.

As a Norristown taxpayer who is against the sale of our sewer system, can someone explain to me where this money will go? Does it lower our already high taxes? It's a slap in the face with so many questions and no answers! We deserve the right to know! And why out of nowhere is it even being sold? Please answer questions. I personally know workers on the sewer authority and they always took care of me! We as taxpayers should have a say! We want the same service with them keeping their jobs. We can't afford prices going up! Hope you all think of the people on fixed incomes because as high as taxes are, it's hard to upgrade and keep our properties! If you sell something we own as a city and we all know sewer bills will go up, is it right to do that to people that are struggling? Especially during the pandemic! The taxes went up! Prices of everything went up! I ask you from the heart to fight for us homeowners and taxpayers that you all get paid from to work hard for us! Consider all those who are struggling that can't afford anymore price hikes! What budget ain't being ran right that you need to sell our system? Don't sell our stuff cause money is needed somewhere else. It will just screw the people in this town! Have a great day and please do what's right for the Norristown people!

Pat McLaughlin, 554 Stanbridge St.

To Whom It May Concern:

By selling the sewer plant you are selling out your constituents.

Keep our public utilities in the public's interest.

David Reppert, 1839 Powell St.

Please stop the sale of the Norristown sewer system to Aqua. Privatizing Norristown's sewer system will give Aqua incentive to increase their rates so that their corporate officers and shareholders will benefit, while at the same time deferring needed maintenance. Rather than creating efficiencies, Aqua will add costs while undermining the viability of the system. Please put an immediate halt to this sale.

Dr. Kathleen McLaughlin, 554 Stanbridge St.

Dear Council,

It concerns me that you are still considering selling our, yes *our* and not *your*, sewer plant. By selling this **public** utility you are selling out your constituents. Based on the information available, it is clear that by selling the sewer plant you are more interested in profit than people.

We currently live in unstable times, where many are facing joblessness, loss of income, and other uncertainties. Having the price of water rise is not something that the public needs or wants. Public utilities are there so that everyone can afford to have basic necessities. For example, if I wanted to travel with public transportation, it is there. If I didn't want that I have many options, but I still have access to something that benefits the general public. Do not take this public utility away from the public.

How can you fathom that you are acting in the best interest of the community when you are monetizing a system that exists for public benefit, for something that humans need as a basic necessity? Leave the public utilities for the public, and keep them away from privateers.

Katie Gingerich, 707 Stanbridge St.

Hello! My name is Katie Gingerich, I'm a recent college graduate and I've lived in Norristown for the past 16 years and was raised here. I'd like to express that as a citizen of Norristown, I strongly oppose the privatization and sale of the sewer system. I've seen other communities where well intentioned development ends up hurting community members, because it is implemented in a way that incentivizes outsiders and companies to make money for themselves without thinking of who their actions are affecting - or simply not caring about it.

I love Norristown and my neighbors and want to see the town grow, develop, and succeed. However, I know that this can only happen when actions are taken from those who are accountable to citizens and who are trusted by citizens. AquaPA is neither accountable to Norristown nor trusted or voted in by Norristown citizens. Please think carefully when giving the power to raise utility rates for citizens to those who have no obligation to those citizens! Thank you.

Lauren Hughes, 1004 Arch St.

As a property owner and lifelong resident of Norristown, I am disappointed with Municipality leadership.

Each council person was elected by residents to act in our best interest. However, failure to inform residents of your intent to sell our local Sewer Authority, that will directly impact residents financially, is incomprehensible.

I have knocked on doors throughout the community and the residents do not know anything about this proposed sale. I've spoken to

local business owners and they know nothing about the sale.

Why wouldn't you speak to the residents / business owners in your community and truly consider their thoughts and concerns?

The fact that my sewer bill will increase and I had no notice is ridiculous. The fact that the seniors in our community, on a fixed income, will be forced to come up with extra money each month is ridiculous. The fact that landlords will have to increase their rent to cover the 100%-200% increase, is ridiculous.

I cannot speak to the reasons behind the sale because all that myself and others can get from select council members are boilerplate bullet points that they can't even explain in detail beyond what they copied and pasted. Other members are using scare tactics like: "the local Sewer Authority is unable to support development" when they never even been to the sewer plant nor can they say what is needed from the sewer authority; "the sewer authority will cut off your water if you don't pay your bill" which I know for a fact is NOT TRUE.

Council members, STOP using MACHIAVELLIAN maneuvers like amending the agenda at the last minute or when you think people aren't paying attention and try going out into the community, you claim to represent, to speak with residents to see how we feel about the sale.

I can honestly say I have never paid attention to council actions but after the ignorance of last month's meeting, I am paying attention and encouraging anyone who will listen to pay attention as well.

You want our feedback when proposed developments are happening yet when there are issues that will affect us financially, you don't want us to know.

To the council members I know personally and the ones I don't know at all, if you care about your legacy as a council person and your personal relationships with people in the community that worked hard to get you elected, you should be stand up and work with your community in making decisions that will affect us all.

Thank you!

Becky Bowersox, 823 W. Oak St.

I am writing to express my opposition to the Council's decision to sell the Norristown Municipal Waste Authority to Aqua America. While the municipality will receive a large sum of money for the sale, the long-term financial impact on Norristown's residents is a great concern. This decision should not have been made without input from the community. As a registered voter and homeowner, I want the Council to know that I oppose their decision and will encourage others to do the same. I hope that this decision will be reconsidered before it is too late.

John Milligan, 1729 DeKalb St.

My name is John Milligan. I am a resident of Norristown and the president of the Greater Norristown NAACP. I am submitting these comments to express my concerns about this Council's plans to sell our sewer treatment plant and disband the Norristown Municipal Waste Authority.

There are many reasons why this transaction raises concerns. However, in consideration of this public comment period I will describe just a few:

- I read the Municipal Waste Authority's most recent financial statements. They are profitable and fiscally sound, while also providing Norristown residents some of the lowest sewer rates in Montgomery County. It is arguably the most valuable asset that the people of Norristown own, a part of our 40 acres. Why would we sell it? Our history is full of stories where people of color once owned assets that are of tremendous value today. Let's not repeat that part of history.
- There are reliable estimates that Norristown residents' sewer rates could double or even triple. Springfield Township sold their sewer facilities five years ago, and now many of them regret it. Their rates have tripled in 5 years. If that were to happen to Norristown, Aqua could recover their entire investment in just 6 years. Our annual sewer rates would increase from approximately \$5 million per year to \$15 million per year, a \$10 million per year increase. Indefinitely! These rates could result in many low-income homeowners facing water shutoffs and higher rent for renters.
- There is talk of the proceeds of the sale being used for economic development and other projects that lack a clear direct benefit to current residents. People should have assurances that the sale is going to enhance their quality of life more than the cost incurred by the loss of the sewer plant.

So, as a resident of this community and out of concern for the lower income residents of Norristown, I ask you pause on this transaction, and hear from the community.

Brendan Greiser, 1761 North Hills Dr.

We don't agree with the sale of the sewer plant. It should stay public. It's what's best for everyone in Norristown.

Ali Sherbany (part of the Norristown Company, 208 DeKalb St.)

Following Mr. Jones termination from East Point Georgia, his successor, Earnestine Pittman, claims he left the city with major "high utility rates". He was sued over the legality of the method by which the rates were raised.

Upon his termination, council and members of the community, insisted Mr. Jones not receive any part of his severance package.

According to a forensic audit, that including Mr. Jones time as City Manager, there were over \$200M of purchase orders without a single itemized invoice. In one example, a company was overpaid \$4M off the books.

According to a source, upon realizing there was an ongoing investigation, a series of events were orchestrated to artificially justify his departure.

Mr. Jones previous previous employer, Jackson County GA, terminated his contract as well. There is speculation he may have corrupted and implicated those working around him, which is why his severance package was over 3X his contract amount. Despite fear of being 'squeezed', the county still wanted him out.

Norristown gave Crandall a second chance.

...But, It seems Crandall Jones is at it again with the sale of Sewer Plant. We believe the sale of the plant is rooted from corrupt intent. Until we are able to address his history, Mr. Jones shall cease any effort to sell the Sewer plant. Norristown can't afford to lose the public source of revenue, nor the doubling of community utility costs.

Selling the Plant to bankrupt the mismanagement will only hurt Norristown.

With disappointment,

Ali Sherbiny

Rachel Fecho, 715 Noble St.

Right off the bat, I am shocked and appalled that our Council President thinks it's appropriate to bring up a surprise agenda item in the dead of night in regards to the highly contested sale of our Waste Authority. I'll paraphrase because the recording of this meeting is being denied to the public: "Oops I almost forgot," said Derrick Perry when introducing Ordinance 20-13. It has been repeatedly stated that this Council cares about transparency, but this unacceptable and unethical behavior proves otherwise.

I also want to comment on Heather Lewis arguing "Nobody's being reminded that currently our sewer authority can put a lien on someone's property. They can kick someone out of their home." Are you telling us that Aqua America won't also have this right? Is the ultra wealthy for-profit water company just going to let bills go unpaid and shrug their shoulders? Will they have the ability to turn off the water? How many times in the past 4 years has our waste authority issued a lien and ultimately kicked anyone out? Have you asked the authority? Have you ever been to an authority meeting? Have you ever brought forth your concerns to the board in regards to liens and evictions? These concerns of yours are currently under local jurisdiction. Your vote to sell to Aqua is giving up the ability to address these concerns you raise. When I said during the last meeting that you'd be "long gone" by the time we feel the effects of this sale, I didn't mean gone from Norristown, I meant gone from Council. I know that you are Norristown residents, which makes it all the more shocking that you are consenting to this deal, which will be bad for you and your families in the long run. What I meant was, when the rates ultimately rise and local control is gone, you will no longer be on Council, and maybe you are hoping that no one will associate you with this bad deal. We can guarantee you that we will be sure everyone remembers. I ask for you again to reconsider your vote and work towards overturning ordinance 20-11.

Additionally, the gas lighting of VP Rebecca Smith was inappropriate. "And as far as Vice President Smith, with the inconsistencies: We open and close agendas all the time. So this is not an opportunity to insult, or try to associate, or belittle opening the agenda for this topic and not another topic or tabling another topic and not this topic," said Heather Lewis. The inconsistency is found in tabling a lesser vote because it wasn't on the agenda, but proceeding with the waste authority vote. This is not normal. Plain and simple. If you still believe it is, please point to a time when an agenda item of this magnitude was introduced at the tail end of the workshop meeting unannounced. Why not go through the normal channels of introduction? Your colleagues had every right to question the proceedings as did the few members of the public who were still attending the meeting.

I agree with Valerie Scott Cooper "I really hope and pray that everyone sits back and takes a step back on how things were said tonight. It's disgraceful," she said. It is disgraceful. The introduction of 20-13 did not have to be conducted this way, and Mr. Perry's insinuation that there would be retribution to Council members who disagreed with this vote is gravely concerning. It's becoming clear that there is serious dysfunction in our municipality, perhaps reminiscent of Crandall Jones' time in Georgia.

Finally, this governmental body is holding virtual meetings and not sharing the recordings of every public meeting. The standard practice of recording your first meeting of the month and not recording the second is questionable to begin with. This is especially concerning when all meetings are virtual and easily recorded and shared. Why the secrecy?

How many people have you heard from supporting this deal? I haven't met ONE, in the dozens I've spoken to since May. Listen to your constituents, represent us, do right by us. It is your duty and your privilege to do so.

Maccabee Hirsh, 1745 North Hills Dr.

Council members,

I ask that you overturn ordinance 20-11 and stop aggressively seeking to disband the Norristown Waste authority with ordinance 20-13. The decision to table the asset purchase agreement on August 12th by our authority was to weigh public opinion. I can appreciate that. Why can't you? Why do you continue to rush this through with no regard to ever increasing public opposition? I've spoken to hundreds on this issue. We want critical analysis of this dealing. We want a study on how this will impact our community, businesses, and residents. We want documents supporting your due diligence over the past two years. We also want you to appropriate the money properly before moving further with the sale. The wish list of items that is being touted as potential uses for the money cannot be properly funded with 50 million. How can we the people properly weigh in with (emphasis) a POTENTIAL list. Besides, after this one-time payment is burnt through, we are left with ever-increasing sewer rates from a for profit corporation that has no roots in Norristown. This is money that will be paid back by ever increasing sewer rates forever. No one elected you to sell out every Norristown resident and business to Aqua America. In my opinion, this is not the hard choice, it's the wrong choice. Norristown can be different in not joining this monopoly scheme that Aqua America has hatched up. I hope you become the North Star that other communities around South Eastern PA desperately need right now. It's not too late to adjust course. Just say no to this corporate takeover of our PA water systems.

David McMahon, 721 Haws Ave.

This letter is directed primarily to the members of the public who are here tonight but may not have participated in the very last moments of Council's last workshop session. And so we would like to share an update on the state of the sewer sale. We would also ask those members of the public to follow closely tonight how the issue of the destruction of financial records will be handled. For example, will there be a breakdown and explanation of the types of records destroyed versus digitized or spared altogether - especially those documents from 2017, the year Council members often reference as the start of exploring the sewer sale process?

At their last meeting on August 18, Norristown Council moved to dissolve the Norristown Municipal Waste Authority. That action took place less than a week after the Board of the Authority paused, for only a month, the purchase process that would have surrendered our last public utility to private corporate ownership. Those of us in Norristown Opposes Privatization Efforts, or NOPE, had been urging members of the Sewer Authority Board to use that time to create a way for ratepayer opinion to be entered into the decision making process. Though the future is uncertain we hope there will be an opportunity, however slim, to still do that.

But in what we have viewed as yet another tactic to minimize and undercut public involvement in a momentous decision with profound public impact, the Council President Derrick Perry altered the published agenda at the last possible minute to add dissolution of the Authority to the night's work. And until checked by the Municipality's solicitor Sean Kilkenny, the Council president was about to proceed to a vote without even comments from Council members, let alone the few residents still attending the meeting. Two Council members strongly opposed the effort, Council Vice President Rebecca Smith and Councilmember Hakim Jones, who both voted no and we appreciate their willingness to speak for residents and ratepayers on what seems a retaliatory measure.

This also appears to us as just more steamrolling and blocking residents' ability to meaningfully participate in their local government. This sale will have a real and direct impact on the ability of long time residents to continue to live here in Norristown. Among the many reports on this topic, we specifically brought to Council's attention a recent report by the NAACP's Thurgood Marshall Institute - Water/Color: A Study of Race and the Water Affordability Crisis in America's Cities. Sales such as this contribute to the decrease in Black homeownership, driving many from their homes.

As has been shown by how this deal is unfolding in Norristown, it is clear there needs to be some way for the residents affected by these sales to have a direct voice in these decisions. It is afterall, their rates and fees over the years that have created the very assets now being stripped from them. Profit-taking corporations, executive pay, and shareholder dividends are given priority over the needs and best interests of Norristown's residents.

Our organization, NOPE, wants there to be some form of direct public and ratepayer input on this momentous and permanent sale. In fact we maintain that far from being a "sale," it is in reality an \$82 million debt to a water company that the community will pay for over the years through increased sewer rates. Rates that even Aqua PA's public presentations show as dramatically increasing. We think everything about this been has been coercive. Beginning with a first virtual public hearing so technically flawed that residents could neither see nor comment on the slide show presentation, the very coerciveness inherent in a private for-profit sewer monopoly residents cannot not opt out of, to now this latest move to dissolve an Authority which is fact run by volunteer members of the community. We want the residents listening tonight to know that next action dissolving the sewer authority can be repealed directly by the public. We can follow the guidelines established in the Norristown Home Rule Charter and by collecting the signatures of 1261 registered voters in Norristown we can directly repeal the forthcoming Ordinance 20-13. If we couldn't get heard early in the process, we can make certain we get heard now. Talk to your friends and neighbors. Together we can stop this. Look for town halls and upcoming neighborhood meetings at stopthesewersale.com

Jonathan Haggard, 807 Hamilton St.

I have heard some of the concerns about the sewer sale. I believe that the residents of Norristown deserve to hear more about the advantages and disadvantages and have the chance to voice our input before a decision is made.

Rebecca Kreider, 707 Stanbridge Street

To the Municipal Council:

As a 15 year Norristown resident and homeowner, I strongly oppose the privatization and sale of the sewer system. I would fear the long-term risks associated with such a sale. Contractors' commitments are to themselves and their profits, not to the improvement of the community or the well-being of the citizens. By contrast, well-run governments are responsible to pay attention to quality, affordability and sustainability on behalf of their constituents. Thank you for listening to the voices of the community.

Mr. Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator, asked to respond to Mr. Shirbiny's public comments and wanted to add to the record that the statements are false, conjecture and libelous.

Mr. Sean Kilkenny voiced his support for Mr. Crandall Jones saying he is "by far the best I've worked with" and noted that he was present when Council deliberated in Executive Session regarding the hiring of Mr. Jones.

Council President read another 2 more Public Comments that came through:

S. Elliesberg (sp?). "I am reaching out about the chronic problems with Mascaro's. I have attached a picture of the end of my block and what it looks like today after they came through to pick up the trash. What you see here is what it looks like every single week. My neighbors and I have to walk around the block after they come through to collect trash that gets thrown along the sidewalks and the street. In addition, there are many cans that they just won't empty so they sit there completely full week after week. And this is just one block. It doesn't even account for the alleyways and other streets they are collecting trash from. This is completely unacceptable. They are a vendor contracted in the Municipality so they should be held accountable when they are lacking in the job done correctly. You, along with your fellow Council members, voted to award them a \$2.9 million contract back in April. To me, this does not look like getting the job done right and not much spent well. If you're going to elevate Norristown to be a place where people want to work and live, this has to change. I am curious as to what Council is going to do to address these issues with Mascaro. I can't remember trash collection not being an issue. I have reached out to Mascaro in the past only to be told they don't care. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this issue."

Kaden Beegle, 1109 W. Washington Street – He expressed his rejection of the privatization of the Sewer System. He doesn't believe it is appropriate. He just recently purchased his home about six months ago and the sewer charge he has each month has been extremely affordable and very much appreciated for the fact that it has been so low. He doesn't feel that the sale of the Sewer System is a benefit to the community. He feels that it comes off as more of a pay day loan for the community. He feels it is selling access to the people. He said he didn't see any communication going out to the people. He has not heard of a single person in support of this happening.

Municipal Administrator

Resolution 20-75: Destruction of Records

Mr. Crandall Jones stated that the Finance records from 1999-2017 and Police Department records from 2002-2011 no longer serve the public interest and there is a request to dispose of them in accordance with the Municipality Records Manual.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Lewis, seconded by Councilman Lepera**, to approve the destruction of the records. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion on Sewer System

Mr. Crandall Jones provided a presentation regarding Council's goals for sustainability and viability. He noted

that one consideration was the sale of the sewer system. There were also other projects to consider. He noted that proceeds from the sale of the sewer system would go toward a one-time investment that can bring recurring savings or recurring revenues and long-term tax burden relief for residents. He reviewed the Potential to Sell timeline. He added that the proceeds from the sale could provide a renovation/expansion of the Recreation Center, Fire Department Consolidation, contribute to unfunded pension liability and reduction in EIT rate, scholarship endowment for Norristown high school students. He provided information about Middletown Township's \$40 million investment fund.

Mr. Jones noted that the Ordinance will go through the 30-day advertisement period and it will be taken into a vote by Council at the next Workshop on September 15th or the October 6th meeting.

Public Comment

Antoinette Johnson – She noted there are many issues that need to be addressed as to why Council feels the Sewer Authority needs to be sold. She received explanations from 3 Council members but didn't really get a reason as to why outside of a prepared statement regarding Municipal development that this was planned following a conference that some of Council attended. A response she received was "The past 3 years, I have went to every meeting as I have done for Conshohocken and Plymouth Meeting Sewer Authority." She said she was surprised by that response. When she asked the Authority Board representative...

(Council President was cut off.) Councilman Jones continued reading the email from Ms. Johnson:

..."essentially, there is a lack of public awareness regarding this subject. I have been told this has been in the works for two years. I have never heard anything about the plan until the vote showed up during COVID when the residents were confined to their homes and information was limited. I can't see why this Council wouldn't want their constituents to be well informed with factual information so they can provide feedback pertaining to this situation, especially when the financial burden would be on us. The seniors that I am involved with cannot afford an increase and can't trust the possibility that this Council will be able to offset an increase for their lifetime. You ask for our vote, you get elected and you want feedback when the developers are presenting their project that don't directly affect our bottom line, however, when you have a major issue that will affect every resident, you don't want our input. Lastly, is the deception that Council is displaying to the residents of Norristown. The Plant isn't falling into the river – it can withstand development. The townhouses on Dekalb Street prove that additional infrastructure works. Have you told residents that you're selling the land asset that Norristown has? You only do this when you need the money. Is this the way you get the money? On the back of homeowners, tenants and businesses? We end up with higher taxes from it with a 100 to 300% tax increase for us. Other communities that have sold their plants aren't happy. I won't even go into detail about how Councilman Perry introduced the subject about dissolving the Authority Board when it wasn't on the agenda at your last meeting. Deceptive. This needs to be tabled. Residents will be standing up, speaking out and fighting back against the sale of the sewer plant and dissolving of the board that has ran the facility well. Thank you."

David Hodo – "Dear Council. My name is David Hodo. I'm a former Councilman-at-Large of Norristown. I address you tonight regarding the issue of selling the Sewer Treatment Plant and abolishing of the Sewer Authority. This is not the first time there has been a discussion of the sale of the Sewer Plant, in fact, there were some discussions during my tenure on Council from 2006-2009. At that time, it seemed to not be in the best interest of our town to quick sale such a valuable and necessary Norristown possession for short-term dollars today but at the expense of a long-term financial debt load on our future young and elderly. If Council has really done its homework and due diligence on this matter, then why have you done such a poor job informing the residents, the people you represent, about the pluses, the minuses and the possible gray areas of the sale? What have you as a Council, as a team, really done to totally investigate and inform yourselves of all the facts so that you can without a doubt stand before we, the residents and citizens, and state that this is a must-do action for the good of Norristown?"

Departmental Reports

Monthly Reports from the Police Department, Fire Department and Code Enforcement to update Council on August 2020 activities.

There was a **motion by Councilman Lepera, seconded by Councilwoman Lewis**, to table the Departmental Reports. **The motion passed unanimously.**

ADJOURNMENT

There was a **motion to adjourn the virtual Council Meeting by Councilwoman Lewis, seconded by Councilwoman Smith. The motion passed unanimously.** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Roseann M. Santangelo, Clerk of Council