

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL MINUTES
NOVEMBER 6, 2024

The Council Meeting of Wednesday, November 6, 2024 was called to order by Council President, Thomas Lepera, at 6:30 PM in Municipal Hall Chambers, 235 East Airy Street, Norristown, PA.

There was a **Moment of Silence** followed by the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

The following Council members were in attendance:

Rebecca Smith
Rashaad Bates
William McCoy
Lauren Hughes
Dustin Queenan
Thomas Lepera

Also in attendance were:

Leonard Lightner, Municipal Administrator; Patrick Hitchens, Acting Municipal Solicitor; Norristown Police Chief Jacqueline Bailey-Davis; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning and Municipal Development; Lt. Nick Dumas, Norristown Police Department; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Amanda Ciarlante, Assistant Finance Director; Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works; Keith Gordon, Code Enforcement Manager; Thomas O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief; Bri'Ana Hawkins, Recreation Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a **motion by Councilman McCoy, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the Minutes of the October 15, 2024 Council Meeting. **The motion passed 6-0.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council President Lepera announced that Council met in Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss personnel issues.

PRESENTATIONS – None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilman Queenan announced that there is a translator in the back of the Chambers for the Spanish-speaking attendees.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Catagnus, The MSS Lodge – Mr. Catagnus said that due to the lack of Police presence, they almost didn't have the Feast procession. He said he hopes the Police will come to the forefront for the next procession to not allow parking in front of Holy Saviour.

Yvonne Platts – She said the issue with the lack of a parking space for the Police Chief has been resolved. She said that the decision-making process should be looked into. She said there should be more dialogue with the Public Comment. She also provided a quote from a Professor at the University of Alberta regarding racism. She invited anyone interested in meeting the first Wednesday of every month at 6 pm for a prayer circle for the Chief.

Nathan Merritt, 610 Sandy Street – He came regarding the denial of a handicapped parking spot for his mother. He said she was told to park in the grass. He said he is a licensed contractor who does work for the Municipality. He said there are many cars on their street and fire trucks can't get through.

FINANCE

Presentation of the Proposed 2025 Municipality of Norristown Operating Budget

Kathy Pfister, Finance Director, presented a Power Point which included:

- Overview of 2024 Status
- 2025 Fiscal Projections
- Council Input
- Status (Interest Earnings, State Aid, Property & Casualty Insurance)
- 2025 \$855,331 Revenue Gap
- 2025 Revenue Summary
- Taxes, Permits & Licenses, Interest & Rent
- Miscellaneous Revenue Charges & Fees for services
- Revenue Trends – Property Taxes, Other Local Taxes
- 2025 Department Summary
- 2025 Expenditure Summary
- 2025 Proposed Budget Estimate
- Budget Trends 2020-25
- Balancing Options: Reduce Expenses, Increase Taxes by 1 mil, Use Fund Balance
- Public Meetings and Final Adoption

FIRE

Resolution 24-107: Authorize the purchase of emergency management equipment to enhance public safety and municipal operations at approved festivals and events.

Thomas O'Donnell provided an explanation of the equipment being purchased. He said that the community-oriented ARPA Funds can be used and due to the MOU, the funds can be carried over or the CIP Funds can be used.

There was a discussion between some Council members and Finance regarding the use of ARPA Funds. Mr. Lightner provided an explanation of the Funds and the use of the barrier for public safety.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve Resolution 24-107. **The motion passed 5-1 with Council Vice President Queenan voting nay.**

Resolution 24-108: Authorizing the submission of a Grant Application to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) requesting \$167,148 in Local Share Account (LSA) Grant Funding for the purchase of two mobile camera trailers.

Administrator Leonard Lightner noted that these camera trailers can be moved and used for crime watch.

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 24-108. **The motion passed 6-0.**

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

Resolution 24-111: Request for Municipal Council to approve the purchase of Brine Equipment in the amount of \$52,696.00 from Stork's Plows

Mr. Lightner said that the funds were already set aside in the CIP. He said that the control-release allows it to be more efficient and helps with controlling the leaking.

There was a **motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve Resolution 24-111. **The motion passed 6-0.**

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Request Council to approve Community Development Block Grant CARES ACT (CDBG-CV) Substantial Budget Amendment

Jayne Musonye explained that there is \$48,000 that was not used for Legal Aid that must be used as soon as possible. She asked Council to allow Planning to use the funds to help with small business loans. She said that the change would be advertised for 30 days, then if there is

Public Comment, it will be sent to HUD. She said that if approved, they would move forward with the line item.

She introduced Senior Planner, Ngoc Gaiser.

Presentation of proposed FY2025 Community Development Block Grant

Ms. Musonye said that she asked for recommendations in August and ideas from Council. She said that half of the amount is for the Section 108 loan with \$400,000 objectives for the remainder of the Consolidated Plan: Unoccupied Housing, Housing Rehabilitation, Fair Housing Council, Small Business Assistance Center.

She said there is a Public Hearing planned for December 2, 2024 followed by a request to advertise the Ordinance on December 17, 2024. If approved, the information will be sent to the Department of Housing and Urban Development and wait for the funds to be approved by the government.

CDBG projects and request for authorization to advertise a Public Hearing for December 2, 2024

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the advertisement of a Public Hearing for December 2, 2024. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 24-112: Authorizing the execution of an Agreement of Sale and Redevelopment Agreement among Pinnacle Realty Development Company (PRDC), the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority (RDA) and the Municipality of Norristown pertaining to the Redevelopment of the Norristown State Hospital Site

Solicitor Hitchens explained that the Agreement confirms what actually will be built. He said that the Agreement does not go through until agreements are signed and it goes through the Land Development process. He noted that the RDA is in agreement as well as the Municipality and the Developer, Mr. Maris.

Mr. Maris said that they have retained a Professional Planner and they are having meetings to help move the project along. He added they will present proposed overlay approvals before going for Land Development.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 24-112. **The motion passed 6-0.**

POLICE

Resolution 24-90: Resolution to approve Handicapped Parking

There was a **motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve Handicapped Parking Spaces at 320 James Street and 328 East Moore Street. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Police Chief Bailey advised Council that the request from the last meeting for Handicapped Parking that was having approval issues has been resolved.

Resolution 24-106: Council to approve Stormwater Capital Improvement Projects 2024, total sum of \$548,872.25 to G & B Construction

Thomas Odenigbo provided an explanation and noted that this is a CIP Project.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve Resolution 24-106 which will complete the approved 2023 CIP that was not completed due to inflation. The Stormwater Authority applied for the PA Small Water Grant. The Grant will pay four hundred and five thousand, four hundred and twenty dollars and nine cents (\$405,420.09) and five hundred and forty-eight thousand eight hundred seventy-two dollars and twenty-five cents (\$548,872.25). **The motion passed 6-0.**

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Finance

Jayne Musonye presented a Power Point which included Economic Development Projects:

Norristown State Hospital

The Grand at Main & Dekalb – waiting for agreements to be submitted

1 West Main Street – submission of Grant on September 17, 2024

14 West Main Street – windows installed, duct work done, roof work, parking

Blight Remediation Project – once bids are received, will use DCED funds

Arbor Place – being constructed

Benjamin Court – 15 units were sold

Montgomery Park Senior Housing – There was a pre-construction meeting.

Housing Rehabilitation Project – projects funded through CDBG

1020 Violet Street

579 East Lafayette Street – update on November 19, 2024

1340-42 Markley Street – moving forward

Roosevelt Field

Trail Junction Center – construction before year's end

Recreation

Bri-Ana Hawkins presented her monthly report.

She said there was a Public Hearing in October regarding the Elmwood Park Master Plan. The project received a DCNR approved grant. She added there will be a meeting with the Architect regarding demolition of the wall surrounding Roosevelt Field.

Ms. Hawkins said the Department now has a Playground Safety Inspector.

Cody Jones, who is now working with Ms. Hawkins said he attended the Leadership Academy and he is now working on the MLK Park and shared that there will be a welcome event tomorrow at 12 pm. He added there is BINGO and Line Dancing at the Recreation Center.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to adjourn the Council Meeting. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,
Roseann Santangelo