

January 9, 2012

BRIDGEPORT CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

City of Bridgeport
County of Harrison
State of West Virginia

WORK SESSION:

At 6:00 p.m. Bridgeport City Council met in work session in the Conference Room of the Bridgeport Municipal Complex.

REGULAR SESSION:

At 7:00 p.m. Bridgeport City Council met in regular session in the Council Chambers of the Bridgeport Municipal Complex at 515 West Main Street.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor James R. Christie; Recorder Mario D. Blount; Councilors Darrell Bowen, Melissa S. Matheny, Robert L. Greer and John S. Wilson Sr.

COUNCIL MEMBER(S) ABSENT:

Councilor Diana Marra was present for the work session, but was excused from the regular meeting. She returned for executive session.

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager A. Kim Haws, Assistant City Manager Keith Boggs, City Attorney Dean C. Ramsey, City Clerk Julie Perine, Personnel Director Jim Smith, Police Chief John Walker and Fire Chief Chuck Feathers.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Invocation was given by Recorder Blount, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the December 12, 2011, regular council meeting were unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Recorder Blount, seconded by Councilor Wilson.

REPORT BY MAYOR:

Mayor Christie reported on the opening of MedExpress Urgent Care Center on Jerry Dove Drive and SAIC Software in Charles Pointe, both creating new employment for the city. Medical Park will host an open house Thursday, January 12.

A Harrison County Mayors Association meeting will be held Wednesday, January 11 at Clarksburg City chambers.

Mayor Christie also reported a successful "Lights on Drugs Walk" held in Bridgeport on December 21.

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A resolution was read in honor of recently retired City Clerk Judy Lawson, who gave 32 years of dedicated service.

REPORT BY CITY MANAGER:

Mr. Haws introduced recently hired City Clerk Julie Perine.

He advised counsel members of the upcoming West Virginia Municipal League Conference, to be held January 30-31 at Charleston Marriott Town Center.

Mr. Haws reported that the city continues to work with the WV Department of Highways regarding the signalization at the intersection of Philadelphia Avenue and Main Street.

He also reported on the sidewalk improvement project. In-house design work has been completed and submitted to the state for approval. Approval is expected within 60 days of submission, after which further improvements will take place. The next phase will include new sidewalks and lights in the vicinity of the Main Street/Philadelphia Avenue intersection, new lights extending as far east as T&L Hotdog.

Final touches on the new recreational complex are progressing slow due to wet, muddy weather conditions. The complex is expected to be completed in time for local sports groups to utilize it for spring sporting activities.

The Neighborhood Preparedness Program is underway, dividing the community into neighborhoods to act independently in the event of an emergency. An organization meeting will be held 6 p.m. January 17 at the Benedum Civic Center. Eight or nine neighborhood captains are in place to date.

An appeal process for the recently instituted fire fees will take place 6 p.m. January 17 at the Municipal Complex Conference Room.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS:

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

M.A. "Al" Hefner asked the council's support for the upcoming school bond, which includes construction of a new Johnson Elementary School.

Councilor Bowen made motion to support the bond. Motion was seconded by Councilor Wilson.

Councilor Matheny read comments prepared by Councilor Marra, stating that the proposed site for construction of Johnson Elementary was in a flood plain and on an already congested school campus. Completion of the project would not only require extensive studies, but also jeopardize ball fields, playground space and further complicate drop off/pick up system. She feels building the elementary school in a swamp will negatively affect the future of Bridgeport High School.

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Vote was taken for council to support the bond. Vote carried, without opposition of those present.

Zandera Jewell of Shinnston expressed opposition to a fire fee being charged to residents outside city limits. She and her husband have not asked for protection and feel they should not be billed for services. Jewell said many people are so financially strapped that they are forced to choose between food and medicines. The fire fee is one more added expense.

Don Smith also spoke against the fire fee charged to residents outside city limits. He asked Chief Feathers to report on a meeting which took place between Feathers and Boothsville Assistant Fire Chief Andrew Knight regarding restructuring of first due area.

Chief Feathers reported that the Harrison County Commission was the representative in that geographical area and that Smith and fellow residents would need to go to the Commission and advise them of their wishes in order to change the first due area.

Renalda Winkie of Hinkle Lake spoke against the fire fee.

Patty Johnson, Rt. 2, Saltwell Road, spoke against the fire fee.

Tim Cotter of Brushy Fork Road thanked Council for its support of the upcoming school bond and spoke in favor of the fire fee.

Residents who live in the Bridgeport vicinity but outside city limits still benefit from its recreational amenities and quality schools, he said. Property values are higher because of those aspects and he feels \$150 per year is money well spent, knowing that quality fire services and state-of-the-art equipment are assessable, he said.

Bill Robinson of Shinnston spoke against the fire fee. He asked Council why the volunteer fire department was no longer in existence, being advised by Councilor Greer that the majority of volunteer fire fighters stopped volunteering. Greer said assessing the fire fee is not about making money for the city, but rather fulfilling an obligation to protect area residents.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None.

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At 8:10 p.m., Recorder Blount made a motion that Council enter into Executive Session to discuss matters with legal counsel pursuant to the attorney/client privilege. Motion was seconded by Councilor Robert Greer and unanimously approved

No action was taken during Executive Session.

Councilor Greer made a motion to return to regular session at 9:20 p.m. Motion was seconded by Councilor John Wilson and duly approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

(Continued) Upon entering into regular session, a motion was made by Councilor Marra and seconded by Councilor Greer to approve General Fund Budget Revision No. 5 for contracted services for the City's portion of funding "Connect Bridgeport." Motion passed on roll call vote 5-2, with Mayor Christie, Recorder Blount, Councilors Marra, Matheny, and Greer in favor, and Councilors Bowen and Wilson opposed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m. on a motion by Councilor Bowen, seconded by Councilor Greer, and unanimously approved.

PREPARED BY:

Julie Perine, City Clerk

APPROVED:

Date

MAYOR

RECORDER