

**CITY OF DUQUESNE  
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2020  
CITY COUNCIL  
WORKSHOP MINUTES**

**6:32 pm**

The Meeting was called to order by Mayor Nickole Nesby followed by the Pledge of Alliance and Prayer by Eric Ewell.

**Present:** Richard Scott Adams, Rev. Tim Caldwell, Terra Henderson-Murphy, Elaine Washington, Mayor Nickole Nesby

**Others Present:** Douglas Sample, City Manager, Maureen Strahl, Controller, Myron Sainovich, Solicitor, Kristen Maser Michaels, Act 47 Coordinator, Lieutenant Shaw, Code Enforcement, Marian Marko-Eberle, Executive Assistant

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Approval of Minute(s) –
2. Bill List – April 14, 2020

Mayor Nesby stated she had some concerns on voting on the Approval of Minutes(s) and Bill List due to only receiving the documents the day before Monday, April 13, 2020 and did not have time to review.

**I move to approve the Minute(s) and April 14, 2020 Consent Agenda.**

**First:** Councilperson Henderson-Murphy **Second:** Councilperson Washington  
**MOTION carried: 3-0 with Mayor abstaining.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Accounts and Finance

**I move to make a motion to extend the Tax Extension for 60 days due to the Coronavirus (Covid-19).**

**First:** Councilperson Henderson-Murphy **Second:** Councilperson Washington  
**MOTION carried: 4-0**

Mr. Sample stated he would notify Mr. David Bires, Treasurer, tomorrow, Wednesday, April 15, 2020 of the Tax Extension for 60 days due to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) emergency.

2. Administration – **NO REPORT**

3. Community and Economic Development
  - a. Polish Hill Playground Grant

\*\*Mr. Sample update the Council and Mayor that a Grant was being applied for toward new playground equipment and that Council will pass a resolution at the next meeting.

\*\*Mayor Nesby asked Mr. Sample if anyone has talked to the Engineer about Polish Park Hill being affected by the Expressway. Mayor continued to say her understanding is that the good fields or telephone wires were not to be impacted. Councilperson Henderson-Murphy spoke up to say that Duquesne Light doesn't see any problem/s with the wires when checking with the Public Commission.

\*\*Mr. Sample then spoke on the issue of saving a Grocery Store in the City of Duquesne, which will be closing. Mr. Sample stated he would be willing to send a draft of a letter that the City of Duquesne is all in to keep a Grocer in the City. Councilperson Washington commented that she has no problem with the letter.

\*\*Councilperson Henderson-Murphy made a request that if she, Councilman Caldwell, and/or the Mayor are available they would like to be invited to the next meeting.

**I make a motion to move forward on saving a Grocery Store in the City of Duquesne.**

**First:** Councilperson Henderson-Murphy **Second:** Councilperson Washington  
**MOTION carried 4-0**

4. Public Safety
5. Public Works
6. Water Department

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Accounts and Finance
  - a. Allegheny County Southwest Tax Collection Delegate

\*\*Mayor Nesby brought up about not being appointed as the Allegheny County Southwest Tax Collection Delegate. Councilperson Henderson-Murphy asked what the Mayor did not understand since Mr. Sample is representing the City of Duquesne. Councilperson Henderson-Murphy went on to state that Mr. Sample is the primary delegate and you, the Mayor, are secondary. Solicitor Sainovich felt the impact to the Mayor being a delegate is that she wants understanding of what is going on. Both Councilperson Henderson-Murphy and Councilman Adams could not understand the problem since the group only meets once a year. Mayor Nesby did not care if the group met once a month, she asked to be the delegate representing the City of Duquesne. Mayor Nesby added she wants to be able to voice an opinion and speak for the City.

Mr. Sample interjected that the purpose of the meeting in March 2020 was to appoint a Tax Collector. It was recommended that Jordan Tax Service would stay on board for the City of Duquesne due to the work Jordan's Service has done in the past for the City and there would be no increases. Per Mr. Sample the vote will be in October 2020. After a back and forth discussion as to why the Mayor wants to be the delegate, Mayor Nesby asked for a Resolution by next meeting.

## 2. Administration

**I move to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Teamsters Local Union No. 205 representing the City of Duquesne Clerical Employees and the City of Duquesne from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022.**

**First:** Councilman Adams **Second:** Councilperson Washington  
**MOTION carried 5-0**

## 3. Community and Economic Development

### a. Resolution – CDBG Funds Request for the Demolition of 129 S. 1st Street

**I move to adopt Resolution 20-08 to request emergency funding to demo the structure at 129 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street from CDBG Program.**

Mayor Nesby proposed the question if there was a way to get money from the Finance Company affiliated with 129 S 1<sup>st</sup> Street now the City is demolishing the building? Solicitor Sainovich stated this was in a depository setup. Mr. Sample asked Councilman Caldwell to speak on this issue. Councilman Caldwell stated that all the Grant money was used and because no City money was used no money will be given back. Councilperson Washington asked if the property was still under the owner's name.

**First:** Councilman Caldwell **Second:** Councilperson Henderson-Murphy **MOTION carried: 5-0**

### b. Resolution – Declaration of Emergency for 129 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street

**I move to adopt Resolution 20-09 declaring the demolition of 129 S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and emergency that needs to be demolished immediately.**

**Mr. Sample mentioned that the Motion was done last meeting. This meeting is for the vote.**

**First:** Mayor Nesby **Second:** Councilman Caldwell **MOTION carried: 5-0**

## 4. Public Safety

**\*\*Mayor Nesby recommended some assessments be worked on and tested in City of Duquesne as well as updated information from City and Health Department. The areas recommended by Mayor Nesby are Fire, Police, and Emergency just to name a few.**

**\*\*Mayor Nesby then thanked Tammy Pratt, Emergency Management Coordinator, for all the work and updates she has been providing to the City of Duquesne's City Manager, Council, Police, Fire Department, and the Mayor herself during the Covid-19 emergency.**

**\*\*Mayor Nesby asked about getting funding from the Government (FEMA) for the loss the City is taking from not collecting water bills.**

**\*\*Mr. Sample mention about going back three (3) years to review garbage and water reports to get an idea of what the City is losing. Mr. Sample suspects to see a report by next month.**

**\*\*Mr. Sample brought up the fact Chief Dunlevy, Police Chief wants to hire two (2) Police Officers; Stephen Veers and Hunter Scherf. Mr. Sample proceeded to say the Police Department is short three (3) officers, therefore, Chief Dunlevy requests a motion to offer conditional full-time employment of positions for Police Officers mentioned above.**

**\*\*Councilperson Henderson-Murphy asked to see records of the two (2) perspective officers in line for hire. Councilperson Henderson-Murphy's reasoning is just to avoid any issue these officers may have from somewhere else even though a brief Biography on each of these officers was provided by Chief Dunlevy. Mr. Sample suggested applicants provide resumes. Mr. Sample interjected into the conversation that the Civil Service Commission is actively involved to assist in the selection of highly skilled and motivated officers.**

**\*\*Councilman Adams inquired as to how many police officers are currently on the Police Force in the City of Duquesne. Then Councilman Adams asked why there was such a turnover of Police Officers. Councilperson Washington asked if when a Police Officer leaves the Police Force is there an exit interview. According to Lieutenant Shaw "no." Councilperson Henderson-Murphy suggested each departments should have a different exit interview process. Upon further discussion, Ms. Maser Michaels of Act 47 was asked if the budget constituted the number of officers within the City of Duquesne. Ms. Maser Michaels responded by saying "she believes its okay." Both Ms. Maser Michaels and Solicitor Sainovich made comments that with the Coronavirus emergency it may behoove the City to have a few extra Police Officers on board in the event an officer or two (2) would test positive to the Coronavirus. Councilman Adams ended the dialogue just saying his main concern is to make sure the people of the City of Duquesne and property is the main focus and well protected.**

**I move to approve the hiring of two (2) Police Officers.**

**First: Councilman Caldwell Second: Councilperson Washington MOTION carried 5-0**

Public Works

**I move to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Teamsters Local Union No. 205 representing the City of Duquesne Blue Collar Employees and the City of Duquesne from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022.**

**First: Councilperson Washington Second: Councilperson Henderson-Murphy MOTION carried 5-0**

5. Water Department – **NO REPORT**

Councilperson Washington, at this time, stated that she was concerned the City may have a problem with people moving into properties without proper inspections. Mr. Sample explained

that due to the Coronavirus emergency inspections have been placed on hold. Mr. Sample asked the Board and the Mayor if they wanted to offer temporary water as long as the building/s were in good condition until inspections were able to resume and at this time of emergency. Councilperson Washington mentioned she wanted to know who would be responsible should something happen to anyone. Councilperson Washington then suggested having the landlord sign a waiver to protect the City. Solicitor Sainovich mentioned about a contingent approval as long as the Water Department staff could vouch for the property. Solicitor Sainovich stated he didn't think problems would be a concern due to the fact landlords know and should know rules and regulations. Ms. Maser Michaels asked how many requests were there to move in, at this time. Mr. Sample responded "one." Ms. Maser Michael offered to research models of other communities and report back to the City Manager, the Board Members, and the Mayor. Councilperson Washington thanked Ms. Maser Michaels.

\*\*Mayor asked to see the changes. Mr. Sample stated that the changes were part of the packet mailed to Council the previous Thursday.

**I's 5 Nays 0 MOTION passes 5-0**

**At this time, Mayor Nesby made a correction to the Collective Bargaining Agreement above where she stated the date was January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021, but the time frame of the contract for the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Teamsters Local Union No. 205 representing the City of Duquesne Blue Collar Employees and the City of Duquesne if from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022. Mayor Nesby asked this to be approved unanimously.**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

\*\*Ms. Pat Bluett of the Boys and Girls Club spoke up to say that due to Covid-19 she is very concerned about getting people throughout the Mon Valley to fill out the Census of 2020. Ms. Bluett asked for everyone to please talk to his/her neighbor and anyone else to fill out his/her Census information. Ms. Bluett made a point to say that at this time the response of the Mon Valley is very low. She concluded her comments by saying that Mon Valley needs the money, which includes the City of Duquesne. Councilperson Henderson-Murphy inquired as to the submission deadline of the Census of 2020. Ms. Bluett then mentioned the Census of 2020 can also be done online.

\*\*Mr. Eric Ewell proposed that there be a Proclamation for Kirby Johnson for the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) Saturday in July of 2020. Mr. Ewell asked who he could work with to setup such a special Proclamation Day to honor Mr. Johnson. Mr. Ewell continued to say that Mr. Johnson played an important role in the City of Duquesne. Mr. Ewell added that Kirby Johnson was a goodwill person and a good neighbor to all. Mr. Ewell stated he would like to see a special day planned for people to come together with activities, entertainment, etc., but most of all to acknowledge keeping Mr. Johnson's name alive.

\*\*Councilperson Washington spoke up to say for those who do not know Kirby Johnson, Mr. Johnson was raised in Duquesne had his challenges, but raised independent. Mr. Johnson was very instrumental in always doing something for someone or just something in the City, as well as in the community of McKeesport. Councilperson Washington stated it would be a special honor to Mr. Johnson having his own day. Mr. Ewell then mentioned that the significance of July 2, 2020 is actually Mr. Johnson's birthday.

\*\*Solicitor Sainovich directed his response to Mr. Ewell saying that he would be happy to work with him to declare such a request and put the Proclamation Day in motion. Solicitor Sainovich asked Mr. Ewell to send him a biography on Mr. Johnson so he could do a nice write up on Mr. Johnson, making the Proclamation Day an even more special event. Solicitor Sainovich offered his email to Mr. Ewell (sainovichlaw.com) in order for Mr. Ewell to submit Mr. Johnson's biography and to keep the communication lines open between himself and Mr. Ewell.

\*\*Mayor Nesby asked Solicitor Sainovich if he would do this for all other requests of Proclamations. Solicitor Sainovich said "yes" and that he would be glad to recognize people. Mayor Nesby would like to see the following recognized to start with just to name a few:

\*\*The 25 years of service of the City of Duquesne's Fire Department

\*\*The Eagle Scouts

\*\*The National Department of Negro Women

\*\*And the fact that Duquesne has their first female Sergeant

Solicitor reiterated all he needs would be biographies sent to him to follow through.

## ADJOURNMENT

7:36 pm

**I make a motion to adjourn this meeting.**

**First:** Councilperson Henderson-Murphy **Second:** Councilman Adams

**MOTION carried 5-0**

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Nickole Nesby

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Marian Marko-Eberle