

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Special Meeting
December 17, 2015

Call to Order

President Lavender-Norris called the meeting to order at 8:30 pm p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Council members present were President Linda Lavender-Norris, Vice President Marie Lawson, Msrs. Joseph Hamrick, Mrs. Carmen Green, Mrs. Ingrid W. Jones, and Mrs. C. Arvilla Hunt. Staff members present included City Manager Michael Trio, Finance Director John Marcarelli, Police Chief John Laufer and recording secretary Ruthann Mowday.

Additions, Deletions or Modifications to the Agenda

There were no additions, deletions or modifications to the agenda at this time.

Citizens' Hearings – Regular Action Items Only (3 Minutes)

Khadijah AlAmin

Ms. AlAmin stated we need to get the tax base up, but raising taxes is not a step in the right direction. The City of Coatesville has the highest taxes in Chester County. Every time taxes are increased, it decreases the property value. She voiced her concerns on the expenditures and revenues.

Bill Shaw

Mr. Shaw thanked everyone for the dialogue regarding the tax increase/withdrawal from the Trust Fund. He likes the direction the City is moving. The Trust Fund has been turned into a sacred cow. He completely agreed with taking the funds from the Trust Fund. He suggested taking a look at acquiring revenues from our state legislators.

Mr. Wright

Mr. Wright thanked Mr. Shaw and Ms. AlAmin for their concerns. Due to circumstances he was unable to attend the last meeting, but sent a letter. He asked for the City to not increase taxes. He is worried people will be taxed right out of their homes.

Dr. Teresa Powell

Dr. Powell thanked everyone for the work they are doing. A tax increase will not help the community. People cannot afford to live here. If a tax increase is required a minimal increase of 2-3% is an option.

Corra Wilson

Ms. Wilson explained City Council has not had time to review the budget submitted to them this evening. Council needs to look at the budget line by line.

Mrs. Hunt made a motion to close citizen's hearings on regular action items only; Mrs. Green seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Regular Action Items

1. Receive and consider an Ordinance appropriating specific sums estimated to be required for the specific purposes of the City Government as herein set forth, for the year 2016

Mrs. Hunt made a motion to approve an Ordinance appropriating specific sums estimated to be required for the specific purposes of the City Government as herein set forth, for the year 2016;

Vice President Lawson seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-1. Mrs. Jones was the dissenting vote.

2. Receive and consider Ordinance amending Chapter 203 (Taxation) establishing the tax rate for General purposes for the year 2016

Mr. Marcarelli said the original budget had a \$1.7 million shortfall, additional cuts were made to bring the shortfall to \$956,394. He explained the 4 options that were provided to Council to close the gap in the 2016 budget.

- 1) 3.192 millage increase and no withdrawal from the Trust Fund
- 2) 2.433 millage increase and \$361,495 withdrawal from the Trust Fund
- 3) 0.844 millage increase and \$750,000 withdrawal from the Trust Fund
- 4) 0 millage increase and withdrawal \$956,394 from the Trust Fund

Mrs. Hunt made a motion to approve an Ordinance amending Chapter 203 (Taxation) establishing the tax rate of 13.759 mills for General purposes for the year 2016; Vice President Lawson seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-2. Mrs. Green and Mr. Hamrick were the dissenting votes.

3. Receive and consider an Ordinance providing for salaries and wages for personnel employed by the City of Coatesville

Mr. Marcarelli explained the increase of salaries and wages are per the Police and AFSCME contracts, Administration was 2% and the Fire Department contracts has not been completed so an increase was not given at this time.

Mr. Hamrick made a motion to approve an Ordinance providing for salaries and wages for personnel employed by the City of Coatesville; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

4. Receive and consider appointment of Dilworth Paxson as the Pension Boards Legal Counsel

Mr. Hamrick made a motion to appoint Dilworth Paxson as the Pension Boards Legal Counsel; Vice President Lawson seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Trio thanked Mr. Marcarelli for his work on the budget.

Citizens' Hearings – Non-Agenda Items Only (3 Minutes)

There were no comments on citizen's hearings on non-agenda items only.

Council Comments

Mr. Hamrick announced it has been a roller coaster of a year. The Council has done a lot of good things. Discussions have been open and fair. He was disappointed on the budget but supports Council as a whole. We are one.

Mrs. Green had no comment at this time.

Mrs. Jones thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She is not a happy camper but will survive. She quoted "Rights that do not flow from duty well performed are not worth having".

Mrs. Hunt agreed with Mr. Hamrick that it has been a roller coaster year with a lot of ups and downs. This time of year is difficult for Council. We are residents of the City also, just sitting up here. Whatever

we as Council approves affects us as residents as well. If this Council were to deplete the monies in the Trust Fund, people would say we mismanaged the funds. If the City was to continue to deplete the fund and not raise the taxes, when the fund is gone, the taxes would be raised at an overall high amount. Not many municipalities go without raising taxes for years at time. Next year will be better for us.

Vice President Lawson stated the 2015 year had a rocky start. There were a lot of administrative changes this year. She thanked Mr. Trio for coming on as City Manager in August. Mr. Marcarelli had the budget done earlier this year. A lot was done this year as Council together. There were more events held for residents and their families. We will continue to do more for the community. Each year the deficit has gone down. It shows that this Council and administration are serious about turning Coatesville around. Proud of what we have done and what we project to do in the upcoming years.

President Lavender-Norris thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The decisions made by Council are not easy but necessary. We are doing what we feel is best for the residents of the City, I am also a resident of the City. What we decide affects all of us on Council as residents. It is always darkest before dawn. We will get through this. We need to stop saying we can't, but instead we can. I came here to help make the City better for everyone. Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Adjournment

Mrs. Green made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 pm; Vice President Lawson seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.