



Minutes
City of Coatesville
1 City Hall Place, Coatesville, PA
Regular Meeting – Council Chambers
Monday September 27, 2021

Council Present: President Lavender-Norris; Councilwoman Khadijah Al Amin, Councilwoman C Arvilla Hunt, Councilman Edward Simpson
Council Absent: Vice President Carmen Green, Council Person Nydea Graves, Councilman Donald Folks,
Staff Present James Logan, City Manager; Anthony Verwey, Solicitor; Richard Troutman, Finance Department, Chief Jack Laufer, Police Department; Ruthann Mowday, Administration;

President Lavender-Norris announced Council held and Executive Session earlier to discuss personal real estate legal matters.

Approved Minutes

Ms. Al Amin made a motion to approve the September 9, 2021 and September 13, 2021 meeting minutes; Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of Accounts Payables

Mrs. Hunt made a motion to approve the accounts payables; Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Al Amin questioned page 6 of 32, invoice number 0115000, repairs to a 2020 RAM pickup truck. \$2779. The question is, what is it for? 2020 should be under warranty. Mr. Troutman explained it was an employee had an accident. And part of that cost \$2000. The insurance covered 1700 and change. Ms. Al Amin questions 8 of 32, we made a payment to Modena Fire Company, what was that for? Mr. Troutman replied it was for \$100. They were accidentally billed, and for whatever firefighters get training. We are reimbursing them. Ms. Al Amin questioned page 12 of 32, it was my understanding for the Grand Prix that we are a sponsor, but not the physical organizer. There were a couple of invoices in our last account payable, and now in this package there's a total of \$36,235. Will we be reimbursed that money? I thought we were just a sponsor. Isn't the actual organizers of the Grand Prix, don't they? I thought the City made money off of the Grand Prix. And obviously, this does not include staff, Public Works, Police Department. So will this money be reimbursed? Mr. Simpson stated the City did solicit sponsorship. I think we're in excess of \$80,000. Ms. Al Amin stated okay. Well, I just don't remember... When we do the Unity Day, we always approve a budget for that. And we did approve for the Grand Prix to take place, but I don't ever remember a budget being put before council for us to approve. And 36,000 is certainly more than we spent on Unity Day. And it was my understanding. Mr. Simpson explained it was over \$80,000 that went into the fund to pay for those expenses. We raised \$80,000 in sponsorship money that went into the general fund to pay for those expenses. Ms. Al Amin stated okay. Well, I don't see anywhere in here that it's reflected that the City received that money. That's the reason I was asking, and that's why I asked if it was reimbursed. I know we're a sponsor. Mr. Troutman explained a couple of comments, the Grand Prix is as part of the annual budget package, last year we actually did put in front of council for approval, the budget for the Grand Prix. Previous years, it was not. So last year, there was a separate fund for the Grand Prix that collects the proceeds that Mr. Smith and others have affirmed reference. And also, there are certain expenses that we were responsible for that were also

budgeted. So that budget, loosely speaking, was plus or minus \$100,000 in different types of revenue and different types of expenses. And you would see that on each month, you would see the summary in what I refer to as the circle square financial statement. There's a section for Grand Prix, just like there is for debt service.

Additions, Deletions or Modifications to the Agenda

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

Presentations

1. David's Drive 831 Proclamation

President Lavender-Norris read the Proclamation. Whereas, the City of Coatesville recognizes people who make an impact, and play a role in the lives of Coatesville residents, and whereas, David's Drive, 831, DD831, was created in 2010 in memory of David Turner Junior. DD831 is dedicated to fulfilling the needs of our veterans and the underprivileged in order to perpetuate the memory of David Brian Turner Junior, by impacting people's lives positively in his name. And whereas, DD831 provides funding to honor veterans while including the City of Coatesville Police Department in ceremonies, parades, and clothing drives. David's Drive 831 is a 100% volunteer-based charity, holding fundraising events throughout the year, relying solely on the generous and caring contributions from the people and businesses in the community. DD831 will continue to fund and support projects that will help the people of Chester County. And whereas, DD831 generously provided a new basketball goal to be placed on the renovated court at Patton Park as part of the Patton Drive basketball project. And whereas, DD831 donated approximately 70 bicycles to the City of Coatesville Police Department for the Catching Kids Doing Something Right initiative. And now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the City council of the City of Coatesville recognizes and salutes David's Drive 831 for their partnership and collaboration with the Police department for approximately 10 years, to positively impact area veterans and Coatesville families. Proclaimed and enacted, this 27th day of September, 2021.

Chief Laufer stated we wanted to take the opportunity to recognize Joy and Dave for their contributions to the Coatesville community. And it all started a little over 11 years, I guess, in 2010, with the untimely death of David Junior, who passed away from an undiagnosed heart arrhythmia. And it was at that time that they wanted to recognize his devotion. He worked at the VA here in Coatesville, and they wanted to recognize his service to the veteran community, so they started David's Drive as a 501C3 non-profit. And the 831 stands for... I'll see if I can get this right, it stands for eight letters, three words, and one meaning. I love you. That's what the 831 stands for in the David's Drive 831 non-profit. They truly have carried on David Junior's legacy in serving the veterans in our community. And as a result of that, it has sort of grown into servicing all those in the community that are in need. And certainly, we appreciate everything they have done for the citizens of Coatesville, and those that the Police department comes in contact with and can impact on their lives. And it's really only through their generosity and their hard work in raising the money, and enabling us to give away 70 something bicycles to those in the community that we want to recognize, whether it's Catching Kids Doing Something Right, or whether it's children of a veteran that is being treated at the VA, but it gives us the opportunity to reach out and touch those lives. So we are fortunate to have them here in the Coatesville community, and recognize them for their service. So once again, thank you, and we were more than happy to the proclamation.

2. Strategic Plan Highlight

Mr. Troutman explained we are getting a little context and prepping for what's going to be a series of events which includes around the strategic planning process. And so, this as far the background for everybody's benefit, we got a grant from Pennsylvania to assess several factors, specifically to achieve fiscal sustainability. And in context, to reverse recent trends, where we've had to have deficits. What this is going to, it's going to help us prepare for the presentations, budget decisions, and information. So, with that, you have the written text that was provided. What we're going to do here is a couple of quick slides about where we were, where we are, and where we expect to be. The first slide, and I'll move fairly quickly, is we were at the top of mountain in 2002 when we got 38 million from our reserves. And I can send the slides out. Next is, we have about three million and the rest of it we've used. Largely, roughly, as I understand, a third of it went for various real-estate issues, purchases, and the rest of it has generally been used to fund deficits. And there are a lot of reasons why we've had those deficits. I'm going to show you two of the larger ones. What we have here is one major factor, has been the real-estate assessment. I'm not talking about real-estate tax rates, this is the assessment on the property. The blue line is what we've actually seen since 2007. It has been in degradation every year. Every year, the City has been worth less, loosely speaking, on property. If you look at the top line, if we would've had a 2% increase, which is not an unreasonable presumption to think about, that's a 95-million-dollar gap today. Which is about a million dollars' worth of taxes. We all know we have deficits, if we would've had a normal trajectory, a reasonable trajectory, we would've had more money to work with. This is one of the major reasons, not tax breaks, assessment. Next. Second major factor. The black line is what our current pension costs would be if we just had to deal with this year, next year on itself. The red line is what we've been dealing with paying prior years. Every year, we're paying for prior events and prior issues. And I can talk about why those are, but the big picture here is that has grown to be about \$458,000 a year, every year. We're spending more each year in our pension costs to pay for prior years than we are paying for the current year. We have deficits, and we're chasing our tail, whatever euphemism you want to use. This 815,000 is in the MMO for next year. That's how much we're paying for past years. We're chasing our tail every year. So that's why we're talking about a fix, and we have a fix that's part of the strategic plan to address that. And that will make everybody's life more realistic on each year, we actually can plan on current year current costs. Big issue there. And by the way, generally speaking, one of the major reasons is we have two aggressive assumptions in our pensions plan model. The pension commission addressed that this year in a major way, it hasn't solved all of it, but that's one of the reasons why you have your... In the MMO, you have that in there, is we've addressed part of the two aggressive assumptions, but there's other factors that have gone into why, but that's the biggest.

What have we been doing with the shaved off red off of our mountain? We've been using to fill up our deficits. But the good news, so it has been as low as a million dollars a year. In 2020, we have a balanced budget, a breakeven. It came from a couple of one-time events, some initiatives that were implemented, and from economic trends that started reverse. That degradation started to basically flatten out. We're seeing higher median incomes, so there's some good things that are running a base for that. And that takes the where we are, now where is the expectations? If you look at the starting point on the left, you're going to see we dropped down. We still have a structural deficit to start with. And if we look at inflation, you'll see the sloping red line downward. That's what life would be if we don't figure out how to fix it. That's what the strategic plan was about, how to fix it. Again, we're not going to go into a lot details, it's just laying the foundation. Between initiatives, recommendations, economic trends, development, we now have green. It's filling in that gap. The strategic plan

comes back with a plan that addresses fiscal stability sustainability. You'll see a little bit of a blue cap on a couple of those lines, that's actually a modest surplus that's projected, that you'll see in the plan when you get it. So that's we're expecting through 2031, to be able to balance our budget. Now, take it to the last slide.

It's basically the same slide, but you'll see that there's some has marks in reference to tonight, and also a grid iron on the top with that above, were called funds for infrastructure. We're actually projecting more than a breakeven type of scenario, we're projecting that there will be funds available to pay for infrastructure, that will be the different types of things that were listed in your specific documents. So that's really just a high level overview on the planning process and what you should expect to see in detail from the strategic planning report.

Discussion Items

1. Meeting Minutes

There was no discussion on meeting minutes.

2. Domestic violence purple ribbons

Chief Laufer explained that every October for about the last six or seven years, we along with the DVCC Domestic Violence Center of Chester County and the Purple Ribbon campaign for the month of October. So around October fourth, we'll be out with the Domestic Violence Center putting the purple ribbons up on the highway, in recognition of the domestic violence month, and we'll place our ribbons on the poles.

3. Virtual Meeting options and required attendance

President Lavender-Norris stated considering that virtual meetings are not an option for us without there being an emergency declaration, right? Mr. Verwey replied yes. If the local municipality declares a state of emergency you can go virtual, if the governor declares a state of emergency you can also go virtual, at least during the term of the declaration.

Citizens Hearings – Regular Action Items Only (3 Minutes)

There were no citizens comments on regular action items only at this time.

Mr. Simpson made a motion to close citizens hearings on regular action items only; s. Al Amin seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Regular Action Items

1. Receive and consider a motion to approve Point and Pay contract

Mr. Simpson made a motion to approve Point and Pay contract; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Troutman explained that in conjunction with the introduction of SmartGov, this is the module, this is the vehicle that would allow us to take in and process online payments. We don't have that feature or offer right now, you have to come to the window. This is the vehicle we would use, the software, if you will. We don't have the software. This is the contract that we would be entering into. To allow us to do that vehicle. It's one of SmartGov's integration partners. We have high, high, high certainty that it will work. Mr. Verwey explained it's a pay-for-service. So, each time someone uses it to pay their bill. Each time

someone uses this service to pay their bill, the cost is actually absorbed by the person using it. There's a percentage of the payment that's used to pay that fee. Mr. Troutman explained the percentage is 3% of the cost of the bill. If they pay online. If they come to the window is no extra cost. The pay for point covers anything that we process in-house. It would be virtually everything in Codes, if not everything in Codes. And it would be a few things that are done that are outside of Codes, special events, or for example, we collect solid waste for a limited period of time, for a couple of months. So that would be one of the options. We have a number of people that don't like coming into the office, and we don't have a way for them to stay online. And this is bringing us into the 21st century. It is something that in conversations with others that are using, for example, SmartGov, they have this type of mechanism. And it's been very popular especially for the contractors Because they don't want to take downtime during the day, when they could be out doing servicing their customer.

2. Receive and consider 2022 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO)

Mrs. Hunt made a motion to approve the 2022 Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO); Ms. Al Amin seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Troutman explained this is the annual approval that's been requested as required by Act 205 for Pennsylvania pensions. It's been calculated by the actuary. And as I mentioned earlier, it's twice as high as we expect it to be moving forward, but for right now, we can't change it.

Ms. Al Amin made a motion to close action items; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Reports

1. Solicitor

Mr. Verwey announced earlier this evening as noted, we had a executive session during which we discussed legal issues and personnel matters. On behalf of the City, I have worked on personnel matters since our last meeting. I have also addressed real-estate taxation issues, particularly those involving the hotel. It was sold this past week. I've worked real-estate matter generally involving the City, including solar leases. I've worked on real-estate issues related to the flats, more specifically in regards to certain easements that are held by the City on those properties. I've worked on ordinance amendments for the zoning ordinances, on behalf on the City. And also my team worked on a motion to quash the subpoenas issued to the City Police Department, that was issued at the last minute. And I'd just like to thank Rob Jefferson and my office for getting on that and getting it done, to get that subpoena quashed, so the City did not have to produce an exorbitant about of documentation.

2. City Manager

Mr. Logan started with Route 30 and 82. Many of you have seen that we're making tons of progress on it. We're looking to build up that project by the end of October. They're currently working on the South side sidewalk, and the expansion, or I should say the widening of First avenue, to cross the main highway. The bids for the train station have been released. We are actually moving quickly on that. I think we should be started... And this is the old train station. The exterior work should begin by the end of this month, or I think November. We want to get it in before the snow starts. Moving onto the Streetscapes, the City's \$127,000 withdraw request, we'll submit it to DCED, and waiting fulfillment. We've submitted the required form to DCED authorizing a direct deposit of those funds. And I just want to note that 70% of this amount will be funded initially with a balance on the grant. And we're

looking from first to third, so there may be additional funding available.. So we're going to monitoring that. And thank you Rich and Collen who have been working together to make sure that these funds have been released. And we are working with Cedarville as well as the state to look at the design work of the Streetscape project. Let's see.

Other things, so it's updates. And one important update, certainly September first, we know that we all suffered from remnants of Hurricane Ida. The City has been working closely with the county and FEMA to identify repair work, and rebuild our storm water management system. Last week... The weekend before last week, excuse me. FEMA, they were looking at property management first, and then the second day they apparently were looking at infrastructure damages. So we are working here along with Chip and Rich, the Fire Department, Police Department, their consolidating all of the expenditures that we suffered on property damage. At least the report did back in June. And we will be submitting that before the county. Last week, I don't know if you that FEMA Disaster Recovery Center opened, that's located at Ashbridge Square. That's 945 East Lancaster, East Caln Township. That will operate from Monday to Friday, from 10 to seven P.M. Saturday from 10 to five, until further notice. So, if you happen to have anyone that knows or that has suffered damage, they have to go there. We are still accepting those applications, but we would prefer that people got to the Disaster Recovery Center. They will be there, they all take all of your documentation and process it. To date, 1041 have filed claims from a FEMA individual assistance program in Chester County. We do not have specific numbers for residents that are coming from Coatesville. The last thing I just want to make a comment on regarding the September first, there's been several rumors going around the City saying that Fifth and Sixth avenue, the inlets are clogged, and everything, that's why that's backing up. Those drains, that storm drain is not clogged. Our Public Works guys, they go out before the storm hit, they go out after the storm hit, there's nothing in there. The problem that we have with the drain system is small, they're small. And they need modification to happen. When we have rains like we had on June eighth and September first, the amount of water that is going into our system is not sufficient enough to move water as quickly as we would like it to be on Fifth. We hope the county, with our efforts in bringing all this data together for them, we hope they will help us identify possible funding so we can modify our system. And we can kind of avoid some this flooding issues that we're having.

3. Assistant City Manager

Mr. Huston stated as has been the case for the last few months, we'll do a COVID update first. We are currently in Chester County listed as high. Two weeks ago, we were substantial. But looking back, the county actually re-rated us two weeks up to high. So we've now been high for four to five weeks consecutively. So last meeting when I reported we were substantial, the county has now revised that number upwards. So, we've been high now for a while. It's now four weeks in a row we are listed as high. The incident rates have risen to over 600 per week in the last two weeks. We were down in the 500 range before. The percentage of positivity, we actually lowered only because the number of positives were matched against 12,000 tests. The week before, there was 600 tests against 9000... 600 positives against 9000 tests. We increased 3000 tests, so even though the number went up, the overall percentage still came down, but we're still considered high. Coatesville School District, we remain in the top five, but we did fall out of the top three. Westchester schools have actually jumped over, so it's actually interesting that Westchester School District has moved ahead. Vaccination rates are currently at 59%, that is only one percentage point higher than two weeks ago. 69 overall, which is only up from 68. We still need vaccinations here in Chester County. And

just as a reminder, the City hall has returned to normal, we've talked about that. Here you see with the masks on us tonight.

James talked about the rain, we just had a storm this past Thursday. We got four and a half inches instead of the two to three they were calling for. But for all intents and purposes, our system handled it well because it didn't rain in one shot, it rained over a period of time. It gave our system a chance to catch up and get through. We were blessed in this storm that we didn't catch it all at one time. So that is about it from me, other than there was an OIC opportunity here coming up this Saturday, from noon to five at New Life in Church Christ Fellowship. It is at Fifth and Lincoln, so the OIC is having an Opportunity fair for those looking for working in Coatesville.

4. Finance Director

There was no report at this time.

Citizens Hearings Non-Agenda Items Only (3 Minutes)

Garrich McComsey

Mr. McComsey stated he was here in July, and I'm having issues with the neighbors I'm attached to at 116 Pennsylvania Avenue. When I was here last, I spoke to Chief, Carmen... I'm sorry Carmen isn't here tonight, Mrs. Green. But the issues have continued. And they've escalated. I'd like to address Chief for a moment and just say that your officers have been terrific, because what's been happening is the noise that's being generated. The gentleman who owns the property believes there's four people in this house. There's been nine people in this house since last year. And I explained that to him when we had the sewerage issue, if you remember, Mr. Logan, when I was in February of 2020. It continues on Friday night, I had Officer Kemmerle come out, after a significant period of him banging on the door, the excessive noise, not noise, excessive noise where my house is shaking, literally, went on for three hours. I wait until it's two and a half hours before I call anyone, and I pretty much have a panic attack before I call you guys because you have much more to do than deal with my issue. But I'm not going to have another stroke, I'm not going to sell my house. I've been in that 54 years, but I don't know how much more I can take. The officer came out, renter came to the door, claims harassment for calling the Police, claims it's a race issue because I'm calling the Police. The harassment is coming from that side, but I told Officer Kemmerle, and I'll tell you because I need this to get out there, I will not knock on any doors, I will not bang on walls, I will not turn up my TV, I will not fight noise with noise. I didn't get where I am today in business, my career, and my life by having conflict with anyone. That's your job. Officer Kemmerle said, "You're doing exactly what you're supposed to do. You call us 10 times a day if you have to." And I won't do that, because there is a limit that I will eventually be pushed out of my home. But I'm asking, and I won't go into the details, but that's where we are now. On Saturday I got a call from the landlord, the owner who threatened me on a voicemail. So here's my request tonight for Chip and the Chief, this week possibly, if either you, separate or together, have 10 minutes you can spare me in your office, I'd like you to listen to the voicemail. Because part of the voicemail was basically, "If you don't stop calling the Police on my renters, I will get Section Eight, and you'll regret that." I don't care if he puts 100 people in the house. You just have to be respectful. It's not about harassment, it's about respect for who you live next to and who you're attached to. So what I'm asking is I'd like to meet with both of you at some point, listen to the voicemail, and then in your presence, one of your both of you, I will call him because I refuse to deal with this man. I will call him, and then it will be on the record, and I will tell him what the issue is and ask him to resolve this. And that, I think, is a reasonable way to do it, a professional way to do it. President Lavender-Norris suggested meeting with the Chief to discuss the

Ms. Al Amin made a motion to close citizens' hearings on non-agenda items; Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Special Events

There were no special events at this time

Council Comments

Ms. Al Amin thanked everybody for coming out, safe travels home, and have a good night and because the heads over there looking at me, they're just looking at me... I don't watch football, for the record. I guess I'm the odd-ball out. So everybody, have a good night.

Mrs. Hunt stated well, I would just like to say, go Cowboys! Have a good night.

Mr. Simpson stated since everybody is acting like that, I'll bring out the constitution and start reading that from front to back. Thank you everyone for keeping everything brief tonight. Thanks for coming out. I'd like to thank to everybody that helped with the Grand Prix we had. And especially with Mr. Logan and Ms. Mowday, and all the work that everybody did, and the Chief and everybody has put into this event, I want to say thank you.

President Lavender-Norris acknowledged how awesome the Grand Prix was, it was a wonderful event. And it was just good to be back out again. Kudos to all that were involved, and the majority of you are here. So, thank you, thank you, thank you. And then also yesterday was the first Coatesville Black Media Renaissance event, and that too was an amazing event. Live entertainment, a DJ, food, art, vendors, it was a wonderful event. Everybody that came out was very much pleased. And I just thank God for the opportunity to share in our community with our community. With that being said, God bless you all. Have a safe night, and I bleed green this evening, go Eagles! God bless, and have a good night.

Adjournment

Ms. Al Amin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 pm; Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

This meeting will be conducted live and posted on YouTube the following day on the link below:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1u3VUIQr4r0xII0xvIHmvA>