



Minutes  
City of Coatesville  
Regular Meeting – 1 City Hall Place, Coatesville, PA  
Council Chambers  
Monday, March 14, 2022

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Council Present: President Lavender-Norris; Vice President Carmen Green, Councilwomen Charrisse Allen, and Councilman Donald Folks Councilman Edward Simpson  
Council Absent: Councilwoman Khadijah Al Amin, Councilwoman C. Arvilla Hunt  
Staff Present James Logan, City Manager; Charles Huston, Assistant City Manager; Robert Jefferson, Solicitor; Richard Troutman, Finance Department; Chief Jack Laufer, Police Department; Ruthann Mowday, Recording Secretary

President Lavender Norris announced an Executive Session was held earlier this evening to discuss personnel, real estate and legal matters.

### Approved Minutes

Vice President Green made a motion to approve the February 28, 2022 meeting minutes; Mr. Folks seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

### Approval of Accounts Payables

Mr. Simpson made a motion to approve the accounts payables; Mr. Folks seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

### Presentations

#### 1. Police Promotions

Chief Laufer announced the opportunity tonight is to fill two existing vacancies that we have in the ranks of our supervision within the Police Department. We have two vacant corporal positions that we tested for through the civil service process back in the fall, and we have elected to fill those positions here in the beginning of 2022. I can remember way back when, don't let the gray hair fool you, but when I was first promoted from trooper to corporal, I can remember thinking that when I would report for my shift as a trooper, the only person I was really concerned about was myself. But when you get promoted and take on a supervisory role and a leadership role within the department when you report for that same shift, it's different because now you accept the responsibility of what goes on during your shift, not only the incidents that you're involved with, but now you have to be worried about the incidents that the other officers are involved with, how they're being handled, and how the city is being represented. So, it's a totally different responsibility when you assume the leadership role within the police department. So, we don't take it lightly when we make a promotion to the rank of corporal. Corporal is the first line supervision, the first link between the officers and command, and they're out there when we are all home asleep in bed. So, the whole responsibility of the city rests upon their shoulders. They are it. They represent us, the police department. They represent counsel before the citizens of Coatesville. They are the face of the city at night when we are all tucked in sleeping soundly. So, it's a huge responsibility, so we don't take it lightly. Our two candidates tonight that are being promoted to corporal, I'd like to have them come forward. Mike Raech and Kirt Guyer, please. Officer Raech has been acting corporal for about a year now because we carried a vacancy because we didn't have a current civil service list from which to promote from. So, he has been acting corporal, assuming the responsibilities of the corporal, and working as a platoon supervisor or shift supervisor for about a year now. So, it's our pleasure to be able to recognize him officially after having scored well on the corporal's test back in the fall. And Kirt Guyer, Detective Kirt Guyer, has been with the department-- Mike's been with the department for 19 years. Detective Guyer's been with the department for 13, most recently in the Detective Unit. But there's not much of a pay difference between detective and corporal, but there's a big

responsibility difference. So, Kirt has elected to leave his position in the Detective Unit. We're sorry to see him depart from the Detective Unit. He has a lot of experience in major case investigations, is a federally sworn task force officer with ATF, and has represented the department very well in his role as a detective. But he has elected to take on that additional level of responsibility, accept the promotion to corporal and return to patrol where he'll be able to impart some of that experience that he has gained in the Detective Unit back into patrol with our young officers on the street. Likewise, when Mike was a little younger, he was also in a Detective Unit and so we have two experienced officers here tonight that we're proud to promote to the rank of corporal. And at this time, since Mike has 19 years and is a senior officer, we'll ask Judge Hines to come up.

As his wife held the Bible, Corporal Michael Raech was sworn in by the Honorable Judge Gregory Hines.

As hi wife held the Bible, Corporal Kirt Guyer was sworn in by the Honorable Judge Gregory Hines.

## 2. OIC - Enclave

I came about like five weeks back now, and now we're on our fifth week of the Enclave. [inaudible] last week. They'll actually finish up this Wednesday. And for those who might not have known what the work Enclave was, it's a five-week paid ambassador program for individuals that live in 19320. And basically, they got 9 out of 15 hours of the week. They will be outside cleaning up different areas. So, we committed to Lincoln Highway first through Fourth Avenue and also some of the parks in Coatesville. But we were able to partner with public works. And so sometimes if they clean up the parks, they would give us different areas. So, we would visit like Valley Road or Church Street or wherever else there might be a big pile up of trash. And we could only have one person with us tonight in the Enclave, but it was a really great experience for them. A lot of them talked about like just being outside cleaning up, other people, seeing what they're doing, other neighbors coming and joining them to clean up. So, I talked about the 9 out of 15 hours, but then 6 out of 15 hours each week they would get paid professional development, so they did a lot of team building. Each week, we would focus on a different character pillar, responsibility, trustworthiness, this week is citizenship. So, we'll actually have Lieutenant Alice with us tomorrow. All the participants will be registered to vote. And then on Wednesday we'll have state rep Dan William's office come and just really meet and engage with them. So, it's been a really great program, everyone from all different walks of life, and I'm really proud of them. Shila, you want to say anything? She's really shy, and she's the youngest in our group, but even she has grown so much through the process. And we were able to actually hire on one person with the OIC staff to continue helping the work efforts of the Enclave. Ms. Shila announced her favorite part was just getting out there, and cleaning up, and experience different things. President Lavender orris presented Ms. Shila with the Certificate of Recognition from the City.

## **Discussion Items**

### **1. Minutes**

There was no discussion on meeting minutes.

## **Citizens Hearings – Regular Action Items Only (3 Minutes)**

There were no citizens hearings on regular action items only.

Vice President Green made a motion to close citizens hearings on regular action items only; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

## **Regular Action Items**

1. Receive and consider a motion for second reading and adoption an ordinance authorizing the City of Coatesville to sell the City's property located at 99 North 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Coatesville, Chester County, Pennsylvania, to the Coatesville Youth Initiative, a Pennsylvania Non-Profit Corporation, for purposes of constructing and maintaining a new community center to carry out the programs and mission of the Coatesville Youth Initiative, for a sale price of ten dollars.

Vice President Green made a motion to approve second reading and adoption an ordinance authorizing the City of Coatesville to sell the City's property located at 99 North 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Coatesville, Chester County, Pennsylvania, to the Coatesville Youth Initiative, a Pennsylvania Non-Profit Corporation, for purposes of constructing and maintaining a new community center to carry out the programs and mission of the Coatesville Youth Initiative, for a sale price of ten dollars; Mr. Folks seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

2. Receive and consider a Resolution authorizing official action relating to receiving a statewide local share account grant for the Ash Park Master Plan Implementation Project

Mr. Folks made a motion to approve a Resolution authorizing official action relating to receiving a statewide local share account grant for the Ash Park Master Plan Implementation Project; Vice President Green seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Logan explained at the local share account, it's a statewide grant of, basically. The PA racehorse development and gaming act in act 2004-71 as a minute provides for distribution of gaming revenues to the Commonwealth Financing Authority grants. These grants or the eligibility for these grants can go to municipalities. This particular grant will allow the City of Coatesville to submit an application for improvements of the Ash Park project.

3. Receive and consider engagement letter with Gawthrop Greenwood with corrected fees.

Ms. Allen made a motion to approve an engagement letter with Gawthrop Greenwood with corrected fees; Mr. Folks seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Logan explained this was just a minor amendment to the engagement letter. I think, the previous one, it has been in reference to our solicitor fees and the managing partner fees. So just wanted to break it out so it's to provide you with a little bit more clarity. If you look on page two towards the bottom, it gives you that breakout.

Mr. Folks made a motion to close action items; Vice President Green seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

## Reports

1. Solicitor

Mr. Jefferson thanked everyone it is very much appreciated. I have prepared a more detailed attorney-client privilege report for Council. Since Council's last meeting, I provided and continued to provide legal advice to the city regarding a potential amendment to the zoning ordinance. I attended the zoning hearing board meeting on March 1st, 2022, for the application of the Friends Association. I received status communications from the city's insurance carrier and solicitor regarding litigation. And I continue to work on an appeal to the Commonwealth Court.

2. City Manager

Mr. Logan announced this is going to be a little long, tonight. In executive, I provided an update on real estate projects. In addition to the report, I just wanted to bring to everyone's attention that PennDOT has

hired a consultant. The consultant is Vernon Land Use, LLC to conduct a Citywide transportation impact study. The study is designed to examine the ripple effect of the new train station in connection to the other City developments. A series of interviews have been scheduled and conducted to ascertain information on how the train station will impact the City. Today, a dashboard of community development and investment projects have been listed to help develop potential community and economic assets associated with the Coatesville train station construction. If any of you ever was bored in the evening, and if you ever went to City's website, you can look at what a train station or how a train station impacts the community. It is believed that when a transportation system like what we are going to have in a community like Coatesville or any community, there is a real estate uptick between 8 and 14 percent. So, we hope that what this new train station is going to do because it will bring more people into the City and offer those who are seeking to live here an opportunity to move about from the City into other areas of the county and beyond. So, we're very excited about this impact study. Moving on. The City continues to pursue funding for the Coatesville parking garage capital stack. Our Econ partners continue to identify funding opportunities that has currently resulted in \$8.5 million projected funds to build the garage. Plans for the garage are at 90% design completion. There may be some modifications moving forward. Due to COVID, things have changed in the commercial space. People are staying at home, but we still think that we're on track with the projected numbers for the parking spaces. The City will also soon release a full list of construction and Citywide projects to kind of support-- I shouldn't say support. Complement our development here in the City and that particular list is going to be part of the dollars, sorry. And we'll provide that list within a week or so, that will be posted on our website. We'll give everyone a snapshot of what the City entails or plans to do with the grant money. I'm happy to reannounce the partnership between CYI and the City to build a state-of-the-art community center. We're very excited. As you heard a little bit earlier for the second reading, we are moving forward with this particular project. It is a wonderful endeavor that we are happy to be part of, and soon the community will be able to embrace it as well. I would like to thank our council members for supporting this transaction, and Mr. Earl Johnson for supporting me and the City to push this vision, to bring back this much-needed facility on the East End. So again, thank you, council members. And thank you, Mr. Johnson. Our public affairs representative, Vincent Miles, has been touring and working with our City Council members to help identify some of the challenges and opportunities in our City. For those of you who have not met Vincent Miles, he holds a Master's in Public Administration, and he will be putting his education to good use here in the City, to help shape new policy and legislation with our council members.

If you have an issue or ideas you would like to share with Vincent, please contact him [vmiles@coatesville.org](mailto:vmiles@coatesville.org). And once again, that's [vmiles@coatesville.org](mailto:vmiles@coatesville.org). Let's see. We will be looking to host a hiring event, hopefully in spring with Penn Medicine. With the closure of the hospital there's been a tremendous need for professionals to work in healthcare. We want to work with Penn Medicine. They've been doing some wonderful things here in Coatesville, so we're looking forward to planning another hiring event - Mr. Folks, hopefully, you'll be on hand to help recruit - and we're looking forward to working with them this spring on that. This month we will also explore introducing a farmers' market to our pop-ups in the City, along with the retail pop-up in shops this summer. We wanted to have the farmers' market right before COVID hit, but as soon as it did hit a lot of the farmers kind of were hesitant to come out. But we look to introduce a farmer's pop-up version as a pilot here in Coatesville, so be looking for that.

And then one final note. And Chip, he is on the line. He may be listening in and he may even address some of this tonight. One of the things I do is, I try not to complain much as the City manager about the challenges we have with trash, and abandoned vehicles or legally parked vehicles blocking alleys throughout this community. But tonight, I will. This summer, this City has a lot planned for its residents in the community and the surrounding area. And people want to enjoy coming into the City because of those new features in our parks and the new activities that we have planned for our children. But there's going to

be one problem, and I will hear about it like I hear about it every year, and we'll see if we don't pitch in to help it. And that problem is trash and abandoned vehicles. Now, when it comes to the traffic issues, yes, we have some challenges with our contracted hauler. They've been missing a lot Lots of pickups due to COVID and just sometimes, it's no excuse. But I have to ask our residents to please help us manage this. This is just not Eagle's responsibility. It's not our responsibility. Oftentimes, I drive the alleys, I see trash outside of the totes. I see furniture that is being dumped in this community. And this community is not a-- it's not a dumping ground. And it really pains me when I see this. We have our Public Works guys out there. We have community residents, Wendy Whittaker. I know she's on the call tonight. She assembles people to get out and help clean up trash. Mini McNeil does the same thing. There're folks here tonight. They all chip in to clean up for people who fail to be responsible for the trash that they make in this community. And I have to say I'm just a little tired of it. So, if we want to make this City great, if we want to change things in this community, we have to work together, we have to work through, and we have to report or point out the trash and abuse of abandoned vehicles and trash in this community. We are working with members of the community and local nonprofits to implement neighborhood cleanups. We'll continue to do that. But it's really a matter of people getting together and working together to get rid of this trash. And I do have a message for the young people. I haven't forgotten about you. Our Public Works Department cleans up the parks that you play in every day because a lot of you ballers can't find the trash can. When you go out, you expect the parks to be clean so you can enjoy them. But you don't want to take pride and responsibility to clean them up. Now, imagine walking on the court -you and your boys- and you want to play a full-court of basketball, only to find that it's nothing but trash on it. That's not how we do it here in Coatesville. So, I'm asking you, young people, let's work together, clean up your park so that you can have something to look forward to when you get out there the next day or the next week to play. I hope to see some of you in the parks this year to enjoy some of the music, the basketball tournaments, the family unity days. And let's just keep the parks clean. Thank you.

3. Assistant City Manager

Mr. Huston explained he is going to go out of his normal order and jump right in after James. This past week in a week and a half or so, we've had six major dumping reports from Mount Pleasant Road all the way down into Blackhorse Hill on Colfax Street. So, I'm going to reiterate with James. We try, Eagle tries. Jules is out there with Public Works. But two or three of these piles were unbelievable-- large couches, chairs, bed frames. They look like apartment cleanouts or house cleanouts. We need you to call Eagle or call a hauler to have this taken away, not just find some convenient alley to drop this stuff into. That costs the City money, time, and effort to recoup that. Yes, we know we have some contract issues. And as James mentioned, they're out there. We are in the process of bidding out 2022 through 2025. So, we'll see what our vendors may come in with that. But in the meantime, this is your City, folks. You see it, pick it up, put it in a bin. Put it in a tote. We have over 100 cans around the City from Lincoln Highway back into the park system. Any help you can be to keep the litter going into the trash cans would be really, really appreciated. So that's a quick follow-up on James back to my usual COVID. In a surprise move, the county has adjusted their measuring tool. In the past, they were doing a whole bunch of different graphs and charts. As of March 4th, the county has transitioned to using the CDC numbers for counties throughout the United States, and they're only using three measures: new cases per 100,000 people, hospital admissions per 100,000 people, and inpatient bed utilization throughout the county. As of this week, Chester County has gone from moderate to low community level counts of COVID, 52 cases per 100,000. That's about 250,000-- I mean, 250 people out of the 500,000 Chester County residents have reported new cases this past week. Hospital admissions were only 5.8 per 100,000. And the inpatient bed utilization among the hospitals in Chester County - yes, we only have the two official - was only 2.5% of inpatient beds dedicated to COVID. So, the CDC has dropped Chester County into one of the low categories of COVID transmission, so that is very good news. However, CDC still recommends washing your hands, keeping distance, wearing masks when in crowded conditions. You do

not have to wear them outside, but please wear them inside. And our mandate in the office still goes forward until City Council meets to discuss our future plans there. So that's a quick COVID report.

A couple of things coming up. As far as construction, we just got a request for meeting with Valley Township. Valley would like to meet regarding Wagontown Road and the money that's become available from the county, so that should probably start late spring, early in the early summer. So, you might see Wagontown Road construction. It's not open anyway, but you'll see that construction going on, as well as getting the project started up on East Glencrest moving as well with the county funding. So that's a couple of projects ongoing. We survived another major two-inch snowfall, so we appreciate the fact that nature gave us a break this winter. But please keep an eye on what's going on, and again, go back to the beginning. Do what's right for the City, and help us keep the place clean. Thank you.

#### 4. Police Department

Chief Laufer announced the complete statistical package is in the package tonight for council. Just a couple of highlights. Our number of 911-generated calls for service were down slightly from 1,751 in January to 1,710 in February. Also, our total calls received at the front desk, including the 911 calls plus other calls for service, were down to 2,398 for February, down from 2,447 for January. A couple of other highlights. We had three Narcan saves for the month of February. We did seven car seat checks and installations of free car seats for our residents installed by our car seat technicians. We continue to participate in the DA's Task Force on Race and Justice, now called PAC 19320. We also have continuing involvement in the Alliance for Health Equity Collective Impact Cohort and the School Safety Task Force. And our Youth Aid Panel continues its excellent work in diverting our youth from more serious criminal charges to the Youth Aid Panel for disposition with Corporal Antonucci running that program. Just wanted to briefly comment on some of the shootings that we've had recently here in the City. Most recent, the four-year-old death from, I guess, almost three weeks ago now, which resulted in the accidental shooting of a four-year-old child here in the City. It has officially been ruled an accidental shooting by the Police Department, the county detectives, the District Attorney's office, and the coroner's office. And we did make an arrest today. Unfortunately, the 18-year-old brother was charged today with involuntary manslaughter and related offenses involving the purchase of a gun and then failing to secure that weapon so that a four-year-old could discover it and accidentally shoot himself. Really, what more can you say about gun violence in the City than what that says? But there's more to it. Unfortunately, this past weekend, excellent job by our patrol officers. On a vehicle stop, we arrested two juveniles and one adult for possession of a stolen handgun, three ghost guns, seven extended magazines, and a lot of ammunition. And the disturbing part of that story, other than the facts on the face of it, is one of those juveniles still playing with guns, still playing with ghost guns, stolen guns. One of those juveniles was one of the juveniles that was present and involved in the shooting death of our football player in 2021 above Community Lane. So obviously, he has not learned a lesson with the death of his best friend and continues to involve himself in the illicit drug trade and gunplay here in the City. So, I don't know how we tackle this problem. The arrest is not the answer. It's the result of the problem. Arresting the 18-year-old in the death of his 4-year-old brother is not the answer to the problem. It was just simply the result of the investigation and the existence of the guns here in our City. But it really takes more than the Police Department. It takes the entire community. It takes all the entities within that community. Clergy, family—everyone, teachers, everyone, a village, to try to make a difference in our community with regard to this problem. Because the number of shootings that we have had in the last couple of months, it's on the uptick. We hope it's not a trend that's going to continue into the warmer months here in the summer. But we are actively and aggressively doing our part to try to stem that tide or stem that trend. But we are asking for the help from the community here. And I think those two most recent cases really illustrate what we're up against. Madam President, that's my report, unless there are any questions.

Mr. Logan asked the Chief, I do have a question. So, when you look at Coatesville and some of the neighboring municipalities, and in light of what you just shared with us, how would you-- and I don't want to use the word rank or rate, but how would you rate us in terms of safety? Chief asked compared to other communities? Well, I think we are the only City in Chester County which presents its own unique problems that do not exist in rural, the more rural townships that surround us and you find in the rest of Chester County. West Chester has their share of gun violence, and Phoenixville. So, it's not that we are entirely unique, but we do face some issues that a lot of the other communities don't. I think the trend continues that the majority of the violent street crime is directed at those that are also involved in the same game. And most of the gunplay that occurs is between---different groups that are all involved in drug trade, trade sales as opposed to innocent victims being subject to street crime, to muggings, to things like that. We don't see that here in Coatesville. So, I think the majority of our residents enjoy a very safe environment here in the City. I don't think they feel afraid to walk the street. I don't think they feel afraid to go out. But it's something that historically Coatesville has struggled with and battled with, and I think we will continue that. Thank you. President Lavender Norris stated I think while you've struggled with and battled with this. I do want to say that we're in a better position. I think your department has made a huge difference in the crime, the help and safety of our residents. There was a time when crime was just rampant here in the City, but I'm grateful and I thank God because we're not in those times anymore. While we still have our issues, like you said, we're not as bad as it used to be.

### **Citizens Hearings Non-Agenda Items Only (3 Minutes)**

There were no citizens hearings on non-agenda items.

Vice President Green made a motion to close citizens hearings on non-agenda items; Mr. Folks seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

### **Special Events**

There were no special events at this time.

### **Council Comments**

Mr. Simpson thanked everybody for coming out tonight and having my back. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Mr. Folks thanked everyone for coming out. Just pray for our City. Have a good night.

Ms. Allen thanked everyone for coming out. Have a good night.

Vice President Green thanked everyone for coming out and tuning in. And so thankful and grateful for our officers that were promoted today. And just thank you, chief, because our streets are safe. I do sleep a lot sounder these days. And Coatesville used to be rough, but I do appreciate all the service that you and Lieutenant provide. Because not only are you bringing the safety aspect, but you're also bringing the community aspect into our City, and I think that that's what makes the difference. Our officers are seeing a little bit differently now with all the many things that you guys do for the community. I tell you, I've got about four badges on my Facebook for sharing Coastal Police Department stuff. You said we share enough you get badges on Facebook. I guess that's what it is. But I do appreciate all that you do, and I'm thankful and grateful for the two promotions that we had tonight. Thank you.

President Lavender Norris stated I am so saddened with the situation with the 4-year-old and the 18-year-old brother. I don't know how the mom's handling it, how she can. I just ask that---we be mindful and just pray for them. The young man, his life is forever changed. His baby brother's gone. And while he may not have been the one that pulled the trigger, it was his weapon. So I don't know what we can do. I don't know what we can say that will

reach them, reach our youth, and even the parents to be more mindful. If my son comes in my house with more money in his pocket than I have in mine and I work and he doesn't, there's a problem. And I'm not asking the parents to be the police, but please be mindful of what your children are doing. Because but by the grace of God, your family could be in the same situation. You could see your child gone and the other one paying the cost for it if we're not mindful. Please, by the grace of God, I'm begging you, be more mindful. Watch the actions of your children. They may be teenagers, but if they're under your roof, it brings it home. I just pray that the entire family can find some sort of peace and strength to get through this together and not fragment. I thank God. I just thank God. Just keep that family in prayer. And keep our police department, our fire department, our first responders, keep them in prayer because they never know what they're walking into. They're going to help, but what's there when they get to the location? Keep them in your prayers. I appreciate you. I thank you. God bless you. Stay safe. Everybody have a blessed night and thanks for coming.

**Adjournment**

Vice President Green made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 pm; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

This meeting was conducted live and zoom.