



Minutes
City of Coatesville
Regular Meeting – 1 City Hall Place, Coatesville, PA
Council Chambers
Monday, May 12, 2025

Council Present: President Lavender-Norris; Vice President Carmen Green, Councilwoman Khadijah Al Amin, Councilwoman Charrisse Allen, Councilwoman Tiniera Turner-Green, Councilwoman Villa Hunt and Councilwoman Fran Scamuffa

Council Absent:

Staff Present James Logan, City Manager; Roberta Cosentino, Assistant City Manager; Chief Jack Laufer, Police Department; Chief Peter Huf, Fire Department; Robert Jefferson, Solicitor; and 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

Ms. Al Amin motioned to approve the April 28, 2025 Council meeting minutes; Vice President Green seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

Approval of Accounts Payables

Mrs. Hunt motioned to approve the accounts payables; Ms. Al Amin seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

Presentations

There were no presentations at this time.

Discussion Items

1. Comcast Franchise

Mr. Logan explained the Comcast franchise. If you recall, we did kind of a multi-municipal review of a franchise agreement that we had with Verizon. We hired a company called the Cohen Group to do that. Their job was to look at all of the franchise agreements that various municipalities have provided to see and to confirm that we all are getting what is due to us. So now that that has been completed, there was an audit done on Verizon. Actually, it came back positive. And now, all of the municipalities or a lot of the municipalities are getting together to see if they like to hire Cohen again to do one for Comcast.

And at this particular time, I'm still reviewing it. I'm calling up a few other municipalities to see if this is something that they want to do. There're various rates, if you look in your packet. It shows you what the various tiers are based on the number of municipalities that will join in with how to reduce the costs that it will be apiece. But we do have a relationship with Comcast that might be a little bit better than with Verizon, and I think what I would like to do before we consider entering an agreement with other municipalities, have the conversation with Comcast directly and see if we can save seven or eight thousand. So I just wanted to bring it to your attention. And if you have any questions about what the franchise agreement is and what it reflects, we're happy to answer. And Rob was involved with our first decision to kind of go with Verizon's.

2. Placement of Items on Sidewalks

President Lavender Norris asked Rob, seeing as we don't have information for 4.2, do we need to table? Because we don't vote. Mr. Jefferson explained 4.2 is not a not a voting item, so you don't need to table it. It can just be-- we'll just move on to the next.

Citizens Hearings – Regular Action Items Only (3 Minutes)

There were no citizens comments on regular action items only.

Ms. Al Amin motioned to close citizens hearings on regular action items only; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

Regular Action Items

1. Receive and consider a motion to approve Richie's Water Ice – "For special consideration during summer months (Dates). Allow Picnic Benches in front/near entrance of Richie's during business hours only"

Ms. Al Amin motioned to table Richie's Water Ice – "For special consideration during summer months (Dates). Allow Picnic Benches in front/near entrance of Richie's during business hours only"; Ms. Scamuffa seconded the motion. Motion tabled 7-0.

Vice President Green motioned to close action items; Ms. Al Amin seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

Reports

1. Solicitor

Mr. Jefferson announced he provided a more detailed attorney-client privilege to support the council. Since council's last meeting, I want to provide an update that the closing for the Maple Avenue parcels will occur on May 14th, 2025. All of the city's information has been provided to land services. So we are on the right track, and everything has been provided. The city will soon be the proud owner of three new parcels. It's my recommendation that the city contact its insurance provider, and now, the city will be responsible for the maintenance of the properties. So that is a good step forward; communicated and continued to communicate with outside counsel regarding land development matters; provided an opinion regarding the exemption of real estate tax. I attended the meeting of the Coatesville City Zoning Hearing Board; provided several opinions regarding a known dilapidated property; communicated with outside counsel regarding a billing matter, and communicated with outside counsel regarding Millview Basin. That is my report, unless there are any questions.

2. City Manager

Mr. Logan joked I have about three pages here. [laughter] I provided comments on real estate and personnel matters early in executive meeting. And for the public meeting, just a few bullets. Last week, I was part of a group that attended the press conference. We had representation from three of our council members. Thank you all for coming out for that. The effort there was to stress and to request the need to have SEPTA services continue providing services in the Coatesville communities when in the city of Coatesville. It's my understanding that the press release was very successful. The press conference was very successful. And we hope that Harrisburg has received the information favorably, and Governor Shapiro here will have an opportunity to either pass the budget, [concept it?], or at least get our leaders together

to come up with a resolution for it. There is a list of the reduction of services, when they will start. Please look at that in your packet. It's the last one, if I'm not mistaken. And if it's not, or if you don't have it, you can go on SEPTA's website, and it'll actually list some of the reduction in services with it.

We had a discussion with DCED regarding the parking garage on 3rd Lincoln Highway, and that continues to move forward. DCED requested building plans and project management documents, which we did provide with the assistance of complementary partners. We are working with the developer in the final construction figures, and we're very excited that we are moving forward with that.

Next item, PSATS conference was last week-- or the first week of May. I'm sorry. We met with [Marcus Allen?]. I attended with Julius Scott, who's from our public works department. We met with over 400 municipal leaders, managers, supervisors. We had an opportunity to look at everything from equipment. Some of our workshops [completed?] discussions about sustainable planning, communication zoning, single-family homes, and merging and regionalizing police and fire departments. So it's a very well-attended conference, great place to get more ideas, and it was perfect.

PECO tree trimming work on 82. I think a lot of you have seen that. They've cleared a lot more than we thought they were going to clear. But it looks great over there. You can actually see the sky [crosstalk], which is great. And we've been in touch with people. I think they're preparing to put up electrical lines along 82, so you'll see some of that work being done in the near future. We do have on our agenda to form or to begin forming an opioid committee. Many of you know that the City of Coatesville, along with a number of other municipalities, received a settlement to establish various awareness programs and training in relation to the opioid epidemic. Chief Laufer and Lieutenant Ollis, they all will be joining us. I think we have some council members that expressed interest as well. And we will be reaching out to other nonprofit organizations that already provide these services either in the City of Coatesville or in the region to get their expertise to see in what direction we should go in at this particular time. There's room at the table, so if there are any other council members that want to be included, please let me know.

Roberta, I think she's going to share with you guys about the Small Water Sewer Grant application, so I'll let her do that. May 15th at 8:30, many of us will be attending the Rebecca Lukens award event. Once again, May 15th at 8:30. And let's see. Last two items. I handed out an executive-- the small business briefing on tariffs. A number of us worked with and know small businesses here in Chester County in this particular community. That particular briefing on tariffs will kind of illustrate what the impact on small businesses is going to be. And our efforts continue to be to enhance new business development here in the City of Coatesville, but it is going to get tougher, I think, for a lot of small businesses. And that leads me to working with, as I mentioned before, having a partnership with Delco Community College to launch a trades program. And we will be working with Truist Bank on our entrepreneur program this year as well. So in spite of these things that are happening that may be a challenge or barrier to some small businesses, we are going to continue our efforts to help create this conspiracy.

Last thing is the PA American Water Main Project. Are you going to talk about that? You just want me to finish my bullets? So the PA American Water Main Project, it's an installation that will begin this week, Lincoln Highway from South Church Street to North Church Street, and it's going to take approximately three days to complete. So you will see some traffic detour signs and some flaggers out there. But once again, it's a water main installation project with the American Water Relief Fund, completing a three-day project. Single lane closure for that. And I think I may have sent this out to you all already, but there will be some minor delays to be expected. And then the last bullet is check our website for community events. We are in the summer months right now, and there's a ton of events going on. So please check our website and the calendar. Thank you.

3. Assistant City Manager

Thank you, Madam President. I also have several pages that I'll read very slowly. [laughter] I'll shorten my intro. We would welcome any opportunity to communicate, answer questions, and resolve issues with any non-English speakers. [foreign]. We have some fairly large news today to share. Today, the bids for Ash Park closed. So, we did receive at least a few bids that I know of, so we'll be meeting with our engineers later this week to review those and look at the numbers and see where we've landed. So we'll have more to share with that. But as you know, just as a reminder, we do have several levels of funding on this project. Everyone from DCNR is our largest funder. We also have community grants that come through the EPA and some county-level funding and local-level funding as well. So it's a fairly complex project, funding-wise, with some very hard deadlines. So we're doing everything we can to just keep on track with that. But I'm looking forward to construction starting hopefully in June. But we'll know more at our next meeting.

As Mr. Logan mentioned, we did, this month, submit our application for the PA Small Water & Sewer grant. And then you know that, a couple of weeks prior to that, we did submit a CRP application. And these were complementary applications for quite a large inlet project that we would like to see done in the city, in the range of about \$400,000. As you also know, last week was our first, First Friday here in the city. It was, I would say, a big success, a lot of fairly large turnout of people. Thank you very much to the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Public Works Department, all who helped to make that happen. I also will mention, last year, we purchased some fencing for several events for the city, but we were able to use that fencing for the first-time last Friday. And I think it looked great and worked out really well. So, I think that was a really good investment for the city to make.

Also, we did meet earlier today with Shakira from Second Century Alliance, and she shared with us some of her hopes for working on a project in the gazebo area. So, we'll continue to talk to her about those plans and some funding that's available that she may be taking the lead on applying for, which we would welcome the help for to accomplish that. So, we'll continue talking to her and bring you kind of those plans as they evolve.

Also, in your packets, you'll see the code report for this month. Very happy to continue to see the code department really making a lot of headway with rental licenses and inspections. As you know, this is one of the largest projects for the code department to keep on top of. We've been hitting our goal and exceeding our goal every month so far this year of 150 inspections every month. Rental license notices of violation will be going out in about the next week or so. What that means is that people who we know are renting properties have not paid their

rental license yet. So they'll be receiving a notice of violation in the next-- about a week or so.

And then, next month, we'll be doing the same thing with business privilege. As you can see from the report, we've had a pretty good rate of return on those, but there are still a fair amount that are delinquent as well. And code enforcement continues to be able to resolve most of the cases that they open without going beyond the alternative citation process. So as long as we can resolve issues before getting to state citation level, we consider that a success. And they're still seeing a variety of cases, but as you can see from that pie chart towards the end, the largest majority of cases we continue to see are trash and abandoned vehicles. And pretty soon, we'll start seeing that grass and weeds number creeping up as well. But these are things we continue to try to communicate about via our website, via even just issuing the citations. A lot of times, those end up being very long conversations with folks about what are our rules, and why are they seeing this for the first time. So downstairs, if you could overhear the conversations, a lot of them are just, "Yes, these are the rules of the city. This is what we've been trying to accomplish for a long time. And we need everybody to cooperate."

Unwrapped mattresses continue to be a major problem throughout the city, and that is not something that is resolved easily. We do have to address each one, one at a time and separately. So we do issue citations for those. And I believe the trash company is also marking them that they need to be wrapped. So anything you can do to kind of help communicate that is always helpful. We do have it on our website, and I believe we've had a post about it as well on Facebook.

And oh, last but not least, we are seeing a similar number of permits coming through from last year. I checked last year's report at this time of year, and we're about on par, but we are looking at a couple of pretty significant projects coming to completion. So hopefully, in the next few months, we'll be looking forward to seeing Andrea's Jazz Cafe, Steel City Brewing. So lots of good things on the horizon.

4. Police Department

Chief Laufer thanked Madam President. The complete report is in your packet tonight. Just a couple of our usual key highlights for the month of April from-- calls generated through county radio was 2,108, and that was down from March, when we saw 2,440. And also, calls received through our front desk for the month of May was 1,158, and that was down from the-- I'm sorry, that was down from the month-- for April, it was 1,692, I'm sorry, down from 1,158. We had zero Narcan administrations for the month of April, which that's only the second time we've ever had zero, and the other was December of last year. So, hopefully, that's somewhat encouraging. We like to see that.

We did have a busy month for car seats. We had 13 car seat checks and installations provided by our certified car seat technicians for the month of April. April is also DEA Take Back Month. Lieutenant Hollis coordinated the take back for the city, and we destroyed 60 pounds of medication that was in our deposit boxes here at the city for the six months from-- because October and April are the two months for DEA Take Back. So since October to April, we had 60 pounds here just for the city alone. And as I always say, when you think about the weight of one pill, that's a considerable amount of medication.

We had our Coffee with the Chief program for the month of April at the Second Century Alliance, and that was also teamed up with the domestic violence-- or Sexual Assault Awareness Month for the month of April, where we put the ribbons out. And then we had our most recent Coffee with the Chief on May the 7th, and that was at the CYWA. They were very gracious hosts and had a nice spread for us, and that was well-attended. Our upcoming one is going to be hosted, Pete. Thank you for hosting at the library. That will be on June the 4th. And then we'll take the months of July and August off for the summer months for vacation season, and we will resume in September.

Also, a reminder that this is Police Memorial Week, where we recognize those officers that gave the ultimate sacrifice in a line of duty. There are a lot of ceremonies across the country and the main ceremonies in Washington DC at the Police Memorial Wall this week. And also, this is click it or ticket time of the year. We partner with PennDOT and with Chester County Highway Safety. So the officers will be out there on overtime, paid for through the grant money, looking at people that are not clicking. And they don't always receive a ticket, but obviously, our goal was to ensure compliance and try to get everybody buckling up. And Madam President, that's my report.

Ms. Scamuffa asked I've been seeing posts going around - and I don't know if it's true or not, but I figured you would know - about, in June, they're starting the cellphones being hands-free. Is that accurate? You have to be hands-free? Chief replied not that I'm aware of. I don't believe they've passed that law in Pennsylvania yet.

Citizens Hearings Non-Agenda Items Only (3 Minutes) – Residents/Tax Payer/Property Owner

There were no citizens comments on non-agenda items.

Ms. Al Amin motioned to close citizens hearings on non-agenda items; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

Special Events

There were no special events at this time.

Council Comments

Ms. Turner-Green thanked everyone for coming out. Good night.

Mrs. Hunt wished everyone a good evening. Thank you for coming and spending the evening with us. Again, I want to thank our amazing staff for all that you do on the daily to keep things running. And to my colleagues, as always, it's a pleasure to be in your presence and to work alongside you. Everybody, please have a good night and a safe trip home. Thank you.

Ms. Allen thanked everyone for coming out. Good night.

Ms. Al Amin thanked everyone for coming, and have a good night. Safe travels home.

Ms. Scamuffa said I'll stay with everybody else, thank you so much, everybody, for coming out. And I hope you have a great evening. And we'll see you in a couple of weeks. Have a good night.

Vice President Green said I'm just thankful to be here for another two weeks. Thank you to the Police Department for keeping the streets safe, and we're praying for you guys for [inaudible] summertime. And have a great night.

President Lavender Norris thanked everyone for coming out. Thank you to our staff. Thank you to our colleagues

Chief Laufer announced our solicitor and I just checked real quick. Believe it or not, it has not been very well advertised, but June 5th of last year, Governor Shapiro signed the law, which would take effect within one year, which would be June 5th of this year. It is hands-free now in Pennsylvania starting June 5th. Yeah, but it really has not been very well advertised.

Adjournment

Ms. Al Amin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 pm; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.