



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
January 27, 2016
5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, C Daubert, B. Twyman, D. Reed, J. Slifko

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, R. Johnson, D. Pottiger

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:07 pm by Ms. Reed.

I. Reorganization Matters

- Paperless agendas and materials

Ms. Kelleher explained that a decision was made several years ago to move to a paperless agenda. She explained that over time, more Councilors are requesting paper copies. She put the paper copies of this evening's Committee of the Whole (COW) and regular meeting agendas on the table to illustrate the amount of paper used to make for hard copies. Council noted that this is too much paper.

Ms. Kelleher explained that using the dual system is inefficient as staff must take the time to link and upload the documents for the paperless agendas and also take the time and use excessive amounts of paper to produce the paper copies. She suggested that the COW agendas be distributed in paper form and that the cover sheets showing the headings for the regular meetings be distributed in paper form as well. She stated that all supporting documents for the regular agenda will be loaded paperless to reduce the amount of paper and staff time required to prepare the agendas. Council agreed with this approach.

II. Snow Event update

Mr. Johnson stated that Public Works has been working in 12 hour shifts since the storm began but will be back to 8 hour shifts by the end of the week. He stated that employees need time to rest and be with their families. He stated that snow removal continues.

Ms. Reed questioned the procedure for snow removal. Mr. Johnson stated that removal began in center city and along BARTA routes first. He stated that there are also problems at many intersections and vehicles cannot make turns. He stated that Schuylkill Ave and Perkiomen Ave will be addressed after center city is complete. Next will be 9th St and 13th St with a concentration on widening intersections City-wide.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that some two way streets become one way temporarily until there is enough room for cars to pass one another. She described the situation on many streets in District 2. Mr. Johnson stated that this has been done in the past.

Mr. Twyman questioned the storm plan. Mr. Johnson stated that emergency meetings were held during the storm.

Mr. Twyman requested a copy of the snow plan. Mr. Johnson stated that he will provide the current plan. He stated that most information relative to this storm was being provided through press releases.

Ms. Reed stated that Council requested the snow emergency plan be updated in 2010 but that it was not completed. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed and stated that a former managing director had been working on it when he left the City and that there was no follow up.

Mr. Slifko described the excellent snow emergency plan drafted by former Public Works Director, Michael Mucha, in 1998.

Mr. Johnson stated that Public Works does have a winter response plan and that was followed. He stated that there is no plan for snow removal.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that Penn St was closed during the evening rush hour creating problems for downtown workers heading home. Mr. Johnson stated that he has been working to coordinate with the outside contractors but that timing has been challenging.

Mr. Marmarou questioned where the snow is being dumped after it is removed. Mr. Johnson stated that it is being dumped behind the Penn Optical building at 212 S 8th St and on the parking lot at Egelman's Park.

Mr. Twyman questioned if an emergency was declared. Mr. Johnson stated that a snow emergency was not declared but that the City did declare a disaster to recoup some funding for snow removal. He stated that calling a snow emergency has residents move their cars to allow for curb to curb plowing. He stated that this becomes problematic if there is no transportation for people to return to their homes after the snow emergency has been declared.

Ms. Reed suggested that the snow emergency be called sooner. Mr. Johnson stated that this will be part of future event planning.

Ms. Reed stated that even under the original forecast of 12 – 18 inches an emergency should have been declared.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed and noted the need for action before the event begins.

Ms. Reed stated that overall Public Works did an outstanding job. Mr. Johnson thanked Council for their compliments. He stated that he is reassessing the approach to snow events. He lauded the work of public works, fire, and police and stated that most streets remained open during the entire event.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that residents' expectations are high and that they need to be patient and help one another.

Ms. Reed stated that the perspective gained from the 1996 storm was helpful. She stated that many of Reading's transient residents may not have experienced that storm and the delayed clean-up efforts. She stated that she hoped that there was community spirit in all neighborhoods with people helping one another.

Mr. Twyman and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that they saw a lot of community spirit. Mr. Johnson agreed and stated that residents also helped plow drivers when they were having problems.

Mr. Marmarou stated that residents shoveled snow into an alley that serves residents and Nativity Lutheran Church. He stated that this will be problematic.

Mr. Johnson stated that a local PennDOT crew has volunteered to assist with snow removal since the local highways have been cleared. He stated that they will provide two 8 hour shifts at no cost to the City.

Mr. Waltman arrived at this time.

Mr. Johnson stated that the City will soon begin removing space savers in parking spaces.

Ms. Reed noted the need for Council to receive a final report of expenses related to the storm. She questioned if there would be an impact due to the State budget impasse. Mr. Johnson stated that he will provide the report to Council and that he was unsure if the State budget impasse would affect emergency funds.

Mr. Slifko questioned how PennDOT became involved. Mr. Johnson stated that they reached out to the City once their work was complete.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that there were rumors that the National Guard would be assisting. Mr. Johnson stated that the City must first use a series of State approved contractors before the National Guard would become involved. He stated that this is not economical for the City and that the National Guard has not been released for this storm.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if local industries could assist. Mr. Johnson expressed the belief that they are still performing their own clean ups.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Public Works for all their efforts.

Mr. Slifko requested an update at the regular meeting to keep the public informed. Mr. Johnson stated that he would be happy to give an update.

Ms. Reed stated that Council needs to know the new protocol in the absence of a Managing Director. Mr. Pottiger stated that he has no information about this. Mr. Younger stated that in the absence of a Managing Director the point of contact would be the Mayor.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested clarity on the chain of command.

Reorganization (continued)

- Appointment of Vice President

Mr. Slifko nominated Ms. Reed, seconded by Mr. Marmarou.

Ms. Reed thanked Council for their support

- Appointment of City Clerk

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz nominated Ms. Kelleher, seconded by Mr. Slifko.

- Ratification of Council Policy and Procedure Handbook

Ms. Kelleher explained that this handbook provides Council with relevant sections of the Charter and the Administrative Code and the procedure Council uses to meet these requirements.

Mr. Twyman requested a copy of the previous Handbook. Ms. Kelleher stated that she will provide the last edition.

- Council Committees

Mr. Twyman, Mr. Slifko, and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested serving on the Finance Committee.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that since the City's finances are at the core of all City business that important financial issues should be addressed at the COW. Ms. Reed agreed and stated that Act 47 issues are critical to the City.

Mr. Daubert stated that he would like to maintain the committees. He questioned if all financial issues needed to be COW topics. Ms. Reed expressed the belief that they are all COW items.

Mr. Slifko suggested that some items may be COW but that the entire meeting does not need to be.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that all of Council attempt to attend Act 47 meetings. Ms. Kelleher stated that this causes Sunshine Law issues if more than three Councilors attend.

Mr. Waltman suggested that budget issues be discussed earlier in the year. He expressed the belief that the City has paid a high price for its recovery so far but that it is on a good path.

Ms. Kelleher suggested that Mr. Mann continue attending the Strategic Planning Committee meetings with Act 47 updates to Council.

Mr. Waltman suggested that the Finance Committee review this issue. He stated that Committees can be restructured as necessary.

Standards of Living Committee will be Mr. Marmarou, Mr. Daubert, and Ms. Reed.

Mr. Twyman requested clarification on the Committee meeting schedule. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained the meeting schedule:

- ⇒ First Monday of the month – Nominations & Appointments Committee at 4 pm and Strategic Planning Committee at 5 pm
- ⇒ Second Monday of the month – COW at 5 pm and regular meeting at 7 pm
- ⇒ Third Monday of the month – Nominations & Appointments Committee at 4 pm and Finance and Standards of Living Committees at 5 pm
- ⇒ Fourth Monday of the month – COW at 5 pm and regular meeting at 7 pm

Mr. Marmarou, Mr. Slifko and Mr. Twyman will serve on the Nominations & Appointments Committee. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that some interviews occur at the COW depending on the importance of the appointment/reappointment.

- Other Council appointments

The list of boards and committees which require Council representation was reviewed. The following Councilors will serve as noted:

- ⇒ Code and License Appeals Board – Councilor in affected District
- ⇒ Strategic Planning – body of Council
- ⇒ EAC – Slifko
- ⇒ Diversity Board – Waltman and Twyman
- ⇒ LRA – Marmarou, Daubert, Waltman

- ⇒ BPRC – Twyman
- ⇒ Rec Commission – Goodman-Hinnershitz and Daubert (Twyman to fill in as necessary in their absence)
- ⇒ Audit Committee– Finance Chair
- ⇒ Capital Planning Committee – Finance Chair
- ⇒ Revenue Committee – Finance Chair
- ⇒ RATS – Slifko and Reed
- ⇒ BCAP – Waltman
- ⇒ Main St – liaison – Reed (Twyman to fill in as necessary in her absence)
- ⇒ BCCJAB (Berks County Criminal Justice Advisory Board) – Marmarou
- ⇒ School District Work Group – Daubert and Twyman
- ⇒ Reading Eagle Public Safety Committee – Goodman-Hinnershitz and Reed

Mr. Twyman suggested that a new committee be formed to allow for community conversation. Mr. Daubert and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz supported this idea. Ms. Reed stated that it would be helpful to have direct communication with the community.

Mr. Twyman suggested that it be the Citizens Initiative Committee and that Councilors attend depending on the issues and which District the issue is located in. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this could be valuable. She suggested that items brought to Council by public speakers could also be discussed.

Mr. Waltman stated that this Committee will be added to the Council schedule and adopted by resolution once the details have been worked out. Mr. Twyman stated that he will have the details prepared by Council’s next meeting.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this will also be education for the community. She expressed the belief that Council does an enormous job and that it goes well beyond part time.

III. Agenda Review

Ms. Kelleher distributed a copy of the resolution ratifying the declaration of disaster. She stated that this will need to be added to this evening’s agenda.

Council reviewed this evening’s agenda including:

- Ordinance amending Public Participation by making corrections regarding Special Meetings

Ms. Kelleher explained that an error was discovered during the review of the Council Handbook. She stated that currently the Code assumes that all Special Meetings will be held at 7 pm. The proposed language removes that assumption and allows for citizens to register for public comment until the start of the meeting.

- Ordinance amending the 2016 Position Ordinance

Ms. Reed stated that the amendment eliminates the Business Analyst position. She questioned if this would affect the City's financial processes and gains made by evaluating procedures. Mr. Pottiger stated that he was unsure. He stated that he did not know the skill set of the Staff Assistant.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested the job description of the Staff Assistant. Mr. Pottiger stated that he has the job description and will provide it to Council.

Ms. Reed noted her preference to table the amendment until the information is received. Mr. Slifko stated that tabling this amendment also affects the proposed budget amendment.

Mr. Waltman requested information on the Community Development Coordinator. Mr. Pottiger stated that he did not have information on this position.

Mr. Daubert requested the information before the regular meeting. Mr. Pottiger stated that he will provide what he can before the regular meeting.

- Resolution denying the appeal of the COA at 835 Rose St

Mr. Daubert stated that the property already has vinyl windows on the second floor that were there when the property was purchased.

Mr. Twyman stated that the owner is a realtor. Ms. Reed agreed and stated that he also understands that he lives in an historic district.

Ms. Reed stated that the standard of quality of properties must be maintained in historic districts.

Mr. Slifko stated that the windows chosen are a different type from the second floor and do not look authentic.

Ms. Kelleher stated that she did follow up with the Reading Berks Association of Realtors Government Affairs Director.

- Ordinance amending the 2016 Position Ordinance (continued)

Mr. Pottiger provided job descriptions for the Staff Assistant and the IT Data Analyst.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted her concern with creating new positions without job descriptions. She noted the need for those filling positions to have the qualifications needed.

Ms. Reed questioned if the Community Development Coordinator would be assuming some responsibilities assigned to the Downtown Development Coordinator. Mr. Pottiger stated that it would not be at this time. Mr. Johnson expressed the belief that this position would be taking on the responsibilities of the CD Confidential Secretary.

Mr. Slifko stated that the memo from Ms. Snyder explains that duties in Community Development would be transferred and combined.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that there are many responsibilities in CD and noted the need to protect the City's federal funding.

Ms. Reed reminded all that Council has no impact on these positions after this action.

Mr. Waltman stated that requesting job descriptions is not unreasonable. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed and noted the need for clear communication.

Mr. Younger reminded Council that this amendment is tied to the proposed budget amendment.

Mr. Waltman stated that he agrees with all the recommendations except the CD Coordinator. He suggested that the ordinance be amended to remove this position from tonight's action and re-introduce it for action at a future meeting after the information has been clarified.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she is concerned that the job description for the Staff Assistant does not have an educational requirement. Mr. Twyman stated that this is implied. Ms. Reed stated that there must be clarity to avoid future ambiguity.

Mr. Twyman questioned who wrote the job descriptions. Mr. Pottiger stated that he was unsure.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the job has high level responsibilities. Ms. Reed and Mr. Marmarou requested clarity.

Mr. Waltman stated that many job descriptions do not include an educational component but that an education is required to get the skill sets necessary to perform well.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that the new Human Resources Manager do a full review of job descriptions.

Mr. Waltman agreed and stated that the full review should be completed before Council considers the 2017 Position Ordinance.

IV. Executive Session

Mr. Waltman announced the need for an executive session on legal matters. Council entered executive session at 6:38 pm and exited at 6:55 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk*