

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
DECEMBER 21, 2022**

**MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER**

A regular meeting of the Council of the City of Chester was held on the above date at 10:06am with Mayor Kirkland presiding. A prayer was said followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called and the following were present:

Elizabeth Williams
William Morgan
Portia West
Stefan Roots
Mayor Thaddeus Kirkland

Mayor Kirkland asked if anyone in the audience had any comments on Agenda items only.

The City Clerk proceeded with the reading of the Resolutions.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby promote the following individuals to the rank of Acting Corporal/Detective, Chester Police Department, Department of Public Affairs, effective December 26, 2022, with a ninety (90) day probationary period.

Kyle Battinieri
Astrid Cottrell
Robert Ticknor

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Morgan, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, Morgan, West, Roots, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: 0

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby appoint the following individuals to the position of Patrol Officer, Chester Police Department, Department of Public Affairs, effective December 21, 2022, with a one (1) year probationary period. On a full-time basis, with all benefits applicable thereto.

Kelly Dodgson
Ryan Galiczynski
Andrew Kuhlmeier
Brett Foster

FURTHER, said Patrol Officers are required to reside in the City of Chester for the first five (5) years of employment and must submit proof of residency to the Human Resources Department within 3 months of this date of hire. Thereafter they maintain their residence within 50 miles of City Hall.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Morgan, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, Morgan, West, Roots, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: 0

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby reappoint Roderick Powell, as a member of the Chester Housing Authority Board, term to expire December 31, 2026.

On motion of Councilor West seconded by Councilor Morgan, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, Morgan, West, Roots, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby engage the services of Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney, PC, to provide legal services as outlined and detailed in the engagement letter, dated December 5, 2022, to represent the City of Chester and City Council, in connection to the proposed modifications to the Amended Recovery Plan.

FURTHER, it does hereby Authorize the Mayor to execute said engagement agreement for and on behalf of the City of Chester.

FURTHER, said engagement is contingent upon final approval of the City Solicitor.

On motion of Councilor West seconded by Councilor Morgan, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, Morgan, West, Roots, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby engage the services of Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney, PC, to provide legal services as outlined and detailed in the engagement letter, dated December 5, 2022, in connection with the City's bankruptcy proceeding.

FURTHER, it does hereby Authorize the Mayor to execute said engagement agreement for and on behalf of the City of Chester.

FURTHER, said engagement is contingent upon final approval of the City Solicitor.

On motion of Councilor West seconded by Councilor Morgan, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, Morgan, West, Roots, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby ratify the submission of an application to the Black Equity Coalition Community Ambassador program, to assist with the City's desire to provide outreach and educational services regarding COVID-19 and flu mitigation in the City of Chester, in an amount not to exceed \$10,000.

FURTHER, said grant shall be in effect from December 9, 2022 through December 31, 2023.

EVEN FURTHER, that it does hereby authorize the Mayor to execute all documents necessary for and on behalf of the City.

On motion of Councilor West seconded by Councilor Morgan, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, Morgan, West, Roots, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: 0.

Swearing - In of Patrol Officers

**Kelly Dodgson
Ryan Galiczynski
Andrew Kuhlmeier
Brett Foster**

Swearing – In of Corporal/Detective

**Kyle Battinieri
Astrid Cottrell
Robert Ticknor**

Swearing – In of Chaplains

**Chaplain Reverend Rosetta Carter
Chaplain Apostle Nick Timmons
Chaplain Elder Julie Hice-Carter
Chaplain Bishop Febus Hunter**

Mayor Kirkland recognizes Ms. Cottrell. His English Teacher.

COVID Update by Rosetta Carter, Director of Community Health Education Services and Dr. Ronald Renzi, President of Chester Health Advisory Board (see attachments #1 and #2)

Public Comment

Livia Smith says as I read different things in the newspaper it looks like the Tales of Two Cities. If anybody has ever read that understands what I'm talking about. I've seen an article and I see that individuals are claiming that the Receiver is the savior for the City and he is not. I have seen personally and as it states in this article "I am certain the Receiver was sent here to leave us in better shape than they found us". This was a statement from Councilman Roots. They've been here for a while...more than two years. They knew the City was in financial situation at that particular time but did not bring anything to help. So, I cannot see their purpose of bringing us into better conditions. I also see that with the new guy being here of one-year states that we need "professional management". Well, you have to be here to manage the situations that are at hand. When I read the Third-Class City Code and The Home Rule Charter my understanding that it's setup that the Mayor and Council are Heads of Departments. To make a change of day-to-day operations that means you must change those two documents and until that happens that it continues the way it is. So, I'm saying to say this compromise is something that goes between bodies of people and in order to compromise you have to understand the state of the City as it has been in the years that has taken the City to get to the point they are especially with their pensions. That has been something that has been on going for years and it was not from the current government. So, I just want folks to realize when you read stuff and you folks that are social blogs and social media type of people, please read things in its entirety before you make decisions. Stop basing things on your personal feelings about people and look at the total ness that is going to be the positive (inaudible) for the City of Chester.

Andre Simms, Executive Director of a Non-profit Day One Day Two says there is a crisis. The news likes to paint our young people are criminals. The problem is our Schools are underfunded, we don't have mental health resources, etc. There are meetings every Third Tuesdays with the Board of Managers and they are planning to reopen Lima Detention Center under a new name and a new administration. Then he speaks about the Town Hall Meeting (**see attachment #3**). We need to divest from the criminal justice system and invest directly to the Communities. My non-profit offers a skewer of programs from emotional intelligence. We have a program that pays young artist to create socially responsible music as a way to combat the cultural problems which are here now. We need support and we need help!

Councilwoman West says I saw Mr. Simms on the news this morning about his organization and I'm interested in finding out about more of your Organization. I would like to be supportive because I do believe that we need to have those programs.

There are some programs around. So maybe we can meet with you and tell you about some of the things that are going on and here from you what you are proposing.

Ida Jones says I was previously a Property Manager for a young lady that there is a threat coming from either L & I or maybe the owner. L & I called me on Monday to tell me that they were going to put a notice on the People's door (but L & I know that I'm not involved with the property no more) and they have to depart Friday. First why are you calling me and second of all why tell these People to get out by Friday? They haven't spoken to anyone in three months about who the Owners are because we've been going back and forth with L & I to get help.

Mayor Kirkland says is this a property in the City.

Ms. Jones says yes. 318 E. 9th Street.

Mayor Kirkland says let us speak with Mr. Collins.

Amin Abdul Salim says once we know what we are doing its simplicity. Professionalism from man and simplicity from God. Connect us with our Lord. (Inaudible) coming down still trying to promote professionalism. Bottom line to rethink again. God said (inaudible) look spirit. We have to come together and rethink.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilwoman Williams says none.

Councilman Roots says I just want to thank the people involved in Toys-for-Tots Program. I also want to thank the Commissioners Gretskey and Rigby. They both applied for Grants with the Delaware County Interactive Gaming Revenue Authority and each of the Fire and Police Department will receive \$2500 which they turned directly to the Toys-for-Tots Program which resulted in the purchase of 49 bicycles that were given out in addition to all the other toys. The Authority I just mentioned...I saw an article in the Daily Times about Harrah's and how internet gaming is virtually saving the Casino. There was a 73% increase in on-line gambling right there at the Casino. One percent of that money goes to the County which is distributed throughout the County and more than \$150,000's of those dollars have come to the City of Chester and as long as I'm on that Board we are going to continue to direct money to the City of Chester. Bikes have been given away all across the City this year. There was one event earlier that the Chester Upland Soccer Group did. They called it the Bike Rodeo last month down the Waterfront. I see that there will be an event tomorrow on the Avenue of the States at M.J. Freed where more bikes will be given away.

Councilman Morgan says Happy Holidays!

Councilwoman West says Happy Holidays! I too had a concern about comments made by Councilman Roots in the newspaper. You started January of this year...your first term as Council person. We all pledged our support. I heard the Mayor tell you that he has an open-door policy and if there is anything that you need by way of support that his door is always open to you. We all felt and feel that way. I don't think there has been anything that you asked for in terms of a need for your Department that we haven't agreed to and voted on. I just would like to ask that in moving forward that if...you said that you're the new kid on the block and you've been here for a year and you noticed all the bad decisions...you haven't commented on anything good that has happened...you said we make bad decisions. You didn't say what the decisions were but you said we make bad decisions. We're not perfect. I've worked under other Administrations and no one is perfect. But what we all tried to do under the Butler Administration, Linder, Kirkland is we all strived to work together. We don't always agree. But we do have conversations. So, I'm asking is if you...it would be nice if you would come and talk to us if you have anything any concerns about any decisions we are making. Your compromise that you wrote up was a compromise after you saw the rebuttal from Mayor and Council to the Receiver about some modifications that he wants to make to his original plan about the day-to-day operation. You disagreed with what we said and you wrote up some other things and then we disagreed with what you said instead of us sitting down and having a conversation. There seems like there is a lot of discussion between you and the Receiver. Maybe more with him than with us. That's just my opinion. I could be wrong. But in terms of the Receiver...when he first came here it was with a promise from, he and DCED the Board from the State (who sent him here), that there would be an amount of money to help us out in the amount of \$15 million dollars. We never seen that money. Let me tell you what we've

seen. We've seen a lot of Consultants being hired by the DCED and the Receiver's team. Who come here and they've been meeting with us asking us questions about the conditions and the different things that we were doing in our perspective Departments and we've always been cooperative. We were given a direction that we cooperate. But what they did was send people that who were making money. They would come and meet with us on a weekly basis and then we give them the information and then they write it up in a Report and give it back to the Receiver. Well, I think we should have gotten some of that money. Because we told them what was going on. I would have liked to see more help coming from the Receiver. But every since he's been here...he's been here in an effort to tear down the current Administration and I don't think it is always professional. I think it's personal and he wants to change our form of government. He wants to take away the administrative duties of the Mayor and Council. Which means that in order for me to get something done I'll have to go and communicate with my Public Works Director, who then in turn will communicate with the COO and then the COO goes to communicate with the Receiver. Well, what am I'm here for? Because I know you the Community...when you call me, you want me to get an answer or fix it. You don't want me to have to go through a chain of people. I have a reputation for being responsive. Have there been somethings that have fallen through the cracks? A couple of things. But I go right back to it. My staff and I are on point. Just like the other people here in City Hall. Our People in City Hall...some are your relatives and friends that have been working here for years. Now all of a sudden, we're incompetent. Anytime the Receiver goes out for a position we have to hire a company to scout for us when we have intelligent, educated, well bred people right here in Chester. We want to give our People an opportunity at these jobs. Just because it's a COO or CFO or something like that...we have people in Chester who would be qualified or at least get an interview...give you an opportunity to come in and interview. But they look to the outside and all of them are from outside of Chester too. Go figure. I've always been supportive and I will continue to be supportive of my Colleagues and I would like the same consideration and respect and not be accused of making bad decisions. I'm not perfect. But I am good at what I do.

Commissioner Rigby says on behalf of the Director of Public Safety, Mayor and Council. On behalf of the upcoming weather that we have for the Holiday Weekend. It's going to be really cold and windy. If we have some folks that are a little less fortunate and don't have a place to go we have a partnership with the Salvation Army. You can reach out to the Fire and/or Police Department if you can't get taken care of. Please try to practice some safety this weekend. We just don't want to have any tragedies. Merry Christmas!

Councilwoman West says for those persons that we see out on the Streets, how do you handle that?

Commissioner Rigby says we ask if folks will go in. Often times they don't want to go in. So, we can't make them go in, unless there was a State of Emergency. We also have some connections with the County. We will get everybody some help.

Councilwoman West says the Housing Authority as well with the Community Center?

Commissioner Rigby says yes, we do. They are kind of our backup. 911 if anyone needs any assistance, especially over the Holiday Weekend, no matter how minor it may be.

Mayor Kirkland says I just want to make some comments on some of the things that have been written by the Receiver and Mr. Kapoor pertaining to myself. It was said that I had some type of Cadillac or Mercedes Health Plan coming from the City. What it did not tell you was this... (1) I don't put the Health Plans together for the City, not my Department. (2) For four (4) years I never accepted the Health Plan for the City. (3) I worked in the House of Representatives for 24 years. I have a real nice Health Plan coming from the State. It really bothers me. I guess sometimes they throw stuff up against the wall to see what will stick. That won't stick. It bothers me when it looks like Mayor and Council are not being cooperative or working with the Receiver. When he first got here I invited him into my office. I shared with him the Chester Water Authority Plan that I've been working on for 2 ½ years and I said this is our way out. This was not selling the Water Authority, it was working along with the Water Authority. I placed it in his hands. I have copies if anyone would like it. I shared with him the conversations I had with Aqua and with American Water. Those Plans were very financially lucrative. I asked him \$410/\$430 million dollars...that should be able to help us out tremendously here in the City of Chester. He walked away with both of those Plans and ideas. I willingly provided him with those. But now we find ourselves in Court and him saying it's not enough. What I would like to know is what is enough? Tell me what's enough. He talks about the IRS problem. They met in my Office so that they might here from the person from the IRS. The person on the phone from the IRS said "having this issue and that issue...if you clear up this and clear up that in the Finance Department" because all this money we are talking about is simply penalties..."we will take the penalties away". Mr. Kapoor was in my Office when we had that conversation. But to go and place stuff in the Papers (inaudible) court documents saying that the City will owe all this money. It's not true. It's hard working with people when you can't trust them and when they blatantly lie on you or to you. They brought on board a Chief Financial Officer whom I totally disagreed with. I

disagreed with it because I did my homework. I saw were this individual had their own IRS problems. I saw were this individual had their own financial problems. I saw this individual also had financial problems when it came to a Charter School that she was Chief Financial Officer at and the Charter School failed, collapsed financially. I pleaded with him...please don't do this. He did it anyone and for the first time since I've been here, we got jammed up with our payroll. We missed payroll. Can you imagine missing the payroll for Police Officers, Firefighters and other Employees here in the City that have to pay their bills. Not once but twice because he didn't want to listen to reason. Then the same individual walked off the job and was not reprimanded. How many of you can walk off a job and still have that job when you go back? So, these are the type of things that we're dealing with here trying to right the ship. I was out for a while and when I came back... a very good friend of mine...the first Female Police Officer in the history... she was our Chief of Staff over at the Police Station, she was the COO when I got back. A position she never held, never aspired to hold. She was appointed to that position by the Receiver. It was very upsetting to me because I was like there was no conversation with myself. So I had to do something that I did not want to do. I had to terminate the individual because she was in my Department. She and I later talked and once again I'm in Court again and the Judge said "the Mayor has the authority and the right to terminate the individual". After some discussion I brought her back, she's a good friend and she's a good worker. Now she's in what I called forced retirement. These are the things we're dealing with and it troubles me because many of the persons who should be an employee in this place in this City are Chester Residents that the Receiver basically said no (inaudible) and brings in his own. Now we're going to be in Court probably be in Court more times than none. We could probably use that time and that money to better our City. It's unfortunate. I don't know what the Receiver makes. I don't know what his team makes. I do know that they have an extremely large budget. That money could have been used to help the City. Our goal is to continue to work together to make sure that we move our Community forward and we help Chester Residents. We have some good talented persons here. I hope you make yourselves available. I'm going to do a series of Town Hall Meetings and in those Town Hall Meetings I will be talking about our progress here in the City. Progress...not this Court stuff and not this crazy stuff because if you keep telling a child that he/she is no good that they are worthless, that they are meaningless...they'll eventually believe that of themselves. You will never ever here me talk down this Community. It will not happen. I've been here all my life. I love this Community and I raised my kids in this Community and my grandkids in this Community. One of the proudest moments of my life is when one of the Councilpersons from Philly, President of the Council, and some of his Colleagues came here to Chester and said "how did you and your Councilmembers reduce crime like that by 60 something percent"? We told them by Partnerships and working together. Sixty percent is not good enough. We want it to be 100%. That's when we'll be extremely happy. Have a blessed Christmas! Have a great New Year! Love on one another!

There being no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35am.

Respectfully submitted,

DECEMBER 21, 2022

Candice Newsome, City Clerk