

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
JULY 12, 2023**

**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 10:02am 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

WHEREAS, the following individuals have requested a handicapped parking zone:

1. Herschel Garrett, Sr., 30 East Mowry Street, Chester, PA 19013
2. John Palmer, 520 Highland Avenue, Chester, PA 19013

WHEREAS, after a thorough investigation by the Department of Public Works, it has been determined the aforementioned individuals have met all of the required criteria and have a need for said handicapped parking zone.

NOW, THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby authorize the proper City officials to install a handicapped parking zone in the Unit Block of East Mowry Street, and in the 500 Block of Highland Avenue, in the City of Chester.

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

WHEREAS, the City of Chester hired Daniqwa Plummer as the full-time Purchasing Manager, Department of Accounts and Finance, effective April 24, 2023, for 37.5 hours per week, with no benefits and a sixty (60) day probationary period; and

WHEREAS, said employment is contingent upon successful completion of a sixty (60) day probation from the date of hire; and

WHEREAS, the City is required by law to offer said employee medical benefits after sixty (60) consecutive days of employment, which was completed on June 23, 2023; and

WHEREAS, after serious consideration, it has been determined that the probationary period should be extended for an additional sixty (60) day period.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby extend the probationary period of Daniqwa Plummer as the full-time Purchasing Manager, Department of Accounts and Finance until August 22, 2023. If said employee fails to meet the job expectations after the sixty (60) day extension period, said employee will no longer be eligible for the position and will be subject to termination from said position.

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

Councilman Roots said, there should never be a time when you extend the probationary period of an employee when its' been proven that the candidate was not eligible in the first 60 days. It sets a horrible precedent. It disrespects those who have gone through there probation periods successfully. I cannot and will not support this. No.

Mayor Kirkland said, it is important that we encourage persons to want to get better at what they do; encourage them and provide them with the proper training needed so they can complete the task for the job that they have been given. So, that is why we are extending this probationary period. Yes

Councilman Morgan said, it is important that we don't just dump our people to the side. This is the land of opportunity. We have home grown people here, qualified, eligible and knowledgeable to do the position. We had an extensive conversation about this on Monday. We came up with the decision; we did not want to get rid of this individual. We know this individual possess a great amount of qualities to do this role. We decided we wanted to extend the probationary period to make things right, so we can have the best qualified person to continue to do this position here in the city of Chester. He thanked Council for approving this resolution.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Chester hired Thelma Evans as a Code Enforcement Officer, License and Inspection Department, effective July 17, 2023, for 37.5 hours per week, with benefits and a ninety (90) day probationary period; and

WHEREAS, said employment is contingent upon said individual successfully completing a ninety (90) day probation from the date of hire; and

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

FURTHER, if said employee fails to meet the job expectations within the ninety (90) day probation, said employee will no longer be eligible for the position and will be subject to termination from said position.

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

Councilman Roots said, again, we have a situation where an individual was released from the job; job opening came up; they applied for the job. There were other applicants who didn't get an opportunity to interview. They should have had an opportunity to interview. I did interview Ms. Evans. No

Mayor Kirkland said, Ms. Evans has been working through Covid, here in the City of Chester; with no benefits. She has worked in every possible position, from cleaning the building, to working in the field. She has been a diligent and faithful worker and I'm proud to support her; the rehiring of Ms. Evans. She has done a great job in the past, and she will do an even better job in the very near future. Yes

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby appoint the following individuals to the position of Temporary Laborer/Per Diem, for the Public Works Departments, effective July 17, 2023, at the rate of \$13.62 per hour, with no benefits, not to exceed 29 hours per week.

Jose Montanez

Douglas Smith

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 employment of Christina Foster as a Monitor, for the City's 2023 Summer Food Program, Department of Public Property and Recreation, at the rate of \$12.00 per hour beginning July 10, 2023, and ending August 25, 2023, with no benefits, not to exceed 20 hours per week.

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 employment of the following individuals as Interns for the Finance Department, beginning July 17, 2023, and ending August 18, 2023, not to exceed 25 hours per week.

Damien Dickerson, Jr.

Taaliyah Allen

FURTHER, compensation for said Interns will be made by the Chester Education Foundation.

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

WHEREAS, The WorkPlace is an organization that prepares people for careers that strengthen the workforce for employers; and

WHEREAS, the WorkPlace sponsors the MaturityWorks program, which provides paid training to help people age 55 and older; and

WHEREAS, The MaturityWorks program is funded by the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration under the Senior Community Service Employment Program and participants are provided to 501© (3) non-profit agencies, community-based organizations, or government agencies free of charge; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chester has determined there is a need for additional office support in the License and Inspection Department.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby ratify the placement of Maturity Works participants, to provide clerical support to the Department of License and Inspection, for no more than twenty (20) hours per week, beginning July 3, 2023, and ending August 22, 2025.

FURTHER, it does hereby ratify the execution of all necessary documents to ensure the City's compliance with the above-mentioned program requirements.

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

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation ("PennDOT") has a Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside ("TASA") Program that provides funding for projects and activities defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities and trails that serve a transportation purpose; and

WHEREAS, TASA requires that the applicant for TASA funding cover all pre-construction costs including engineering and design for eligible projects; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chester was awarded \$50,000.00 in funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and \$60,000.00 in Coastal Zone Management (CZM) funds to develop final design documents for a trail connection on the unit and 100 blocks of Norris Street; and

WHEREAS, TASA covers 100% of the construction costs of approved projects.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby authorize the submission of a pre-application and, if approved, a full application to the TASA Program for the construction of a trail connection on Norris Street as part of the East Coast Greenway.

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 approve and order payment of a series of bills and refunds as prepared by the Department of Accounts and Finance and as shown on Expenditure Approval List dated June 22, 2023, through July 3, 2023, attached hereto and made a part hereof, subject to approval from the Department of Accounts and Finance.

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:

The City Clerk proceeded with the reading of the Ordinances.

**BILL NO. 15
ORD. 12, 2023**

AN ORDINANCE LAST AND FINAL READING

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CHESTER, DELAWARE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, ENACTING NEW ARTICLE 106, ENTITLED "REALTY TRANSFER TAX", OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF CHESTER PENNSYLVANIA, 1978, AS SUPPLEMENTED AND AMENDED, TO PROVIDE FOR THE PURPOSE, INTENT, APPLICABILITY, ASSESSING PENALTIES AND INTEREST THEREON AND, SEVERABILITY OF A REALTY TRANSFER TAX FOR GENERAL REVENUE PURPOSES IMPOSED ON THE TRANSFER OF REAL ESTATE OR INTEREST IN REAL ESTATE SITUATED IN THE CITY OF CHESTER IN THE AMOUNT OF 1.5% TO BE DIVIDED EQUALLY BETWEEN THE CITY OF CHESTER AND THE CHESTER UPLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES INCONSISTENT THEREWITH.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Morgan, Bill No. 15, 2023 was passed on its Last and Final Reading. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, Morgan, West, Roots, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: 0

Councilman Roots said, he wanted to go on record that he recommended a 1% realty tax.

Presentation

Fire Commissioner William C. Rigby IV (Attachment #1)

Covid 19 Update Ms. King (Attachment #2)

August 9th Community Conversation (Attachment #3)

Free Fans next week to Senior Residents Contact Rosetta Carter (610)447-7700 x7955
Home Test Kits and Narcan can be picked up from the table downstairs at any time.

Presentation

Michael McGuire Chester Noise Abatement Project (Attachment #4)

Councilman Morgan had a question in regards to the Chester Noise Abatement project. He asked, in regards to CSX, if the barriers are constructed, would that increase the noise that is coming from the train as they travel through the residential area?

Michael McGuire says, no, that would disappear in the distance. If horns are blurring 3 in the morning you may hear it.

Mayor Kirkland's comment. This is something that the residents have been looking forward to for decades. We appreciate the stepping up now and moving forward with this project so we will have a quieter community.

There were questions from community members (Inaudible). There will be a follow up community meeting at a later date.

Public Comment

Delores Shelton says, she appreciated the presentation about the Chester Noise Abatement Project. She said, CEP has been on this for years. She was concerned about the street fire crackers during the 4th of July. She said something should be done about them. She said, she called the police and they never came. She said, the mind - set of the young people need to change.

Mayor Kirkland says, to prohibit fire crackers would take an act of the Legislature; at one point in time firecrackers couldn't be sold to local residents; the law has changed. There is so many fireworks going off throughout the city, it is hard for the police to be in each of those spots at one time. He agreed with Mrs. Shelton that the mind-set of the young people need to change.

Cheryl Sudler says, she was there representing the Chester Water Authority. She had four paid interns with her who are legal tax payers. She wanted to expose them to how laws are made and to let them know that if they have a problem, they can bring it to council meeting, so others will know what's going on. She said, council meetings are also aired on Facebook Live.

Mayor Kirkland says, not only if you have a problem; but if you have a great idea you can bring that as well.

Councilman Roots says, correction; the council meetings are no longer on Facebook Live. It is on Chestercity.com.

Councilman Morgan thanked Ms. Sudler for her comments.

Harry Crawford handed Mayor Kirkland pictures of holes that are up and down Carter Lane. He also asked if anything can be done with Murphy Ford's parking lot; where the school was. He said, it is now a tractor trailer parking lot.

Mayor Kirkland referred to Michael Galante, City Engineer.

Mike Galante says, he will meet with L & I to see if they have obtained any permits to park trucks there. If not, they will be issued a letter. Mr. Crawford's second concern was high grass at 3301 Carter Lane.

Councilman Roots asked if the grass was his only complaint.

Harry Crawford says, yes.

Jayci Mollichella thanked Mayor and Council for allowing her to speak since she is not a resident of Chester. She says, over the last week herself along with Carla Stevenson have rehabbed the Ellsworth playground. She says, they improved the quality of living for the residents and children. She also thanked Councilwoman West and the public works department for their assistance. She thanked Zulene Mayfield, Chef Lamont Harris, Brother Tony, the residents of Ellsworth Street and surrounding area. In regard to animal control, she has been working to return lost and found animals. She has been working to help with the animal control situation due to the city's lack of resources. She asked Commissioner Gretsky and Mr. Mark Alexander to come forth to present them with two micro chip scanners. She said, this would help pet owners to get their pets back, although all pets are not chipped. She offered training on how to use the micro scanners. She said, she would like to work with Councilwoman Williams and the Parks Department where they can improve the quality of living in the parks in other areas of the city.

Commissioner Gretsky says, we're in the final stages of rapping something up in reference to dogs. Everything will be put out on Chester Police face book and all of social media. We have a plan in place. It will be addressed shortly.

Livia Smith asked, are you going to deal with wild life also?

Ken Shuster, City Solicitor says, yes; that will include wild life as well; one contract for dogs exclusively and one for wild life.

Livia Smith asked, are the new hires required to live in the city of Chester?

Mayor Kirkland says, no not all of them. Sometimes there is a need for persons with certain expertise and we have to go outside the city to find those persons.

Livia Smith asked, are the police and fire required to live in the city for 5 years?

Mayor Kirkland.says, yes.

Seiffiddin Simpson says, there was a grant program through Career Link paying up to \$1,000.00 for summer camp. He said, he was at the County Council meeting and they were given \$150,000.00 and less than \$26,000.00 was used for Chester. They had a on-line process. His pet pev with the program was they were giving the grant to people that were trying to return to work. If you had a child that couldn't afford \$675.00 to go to the Boy and Girls Club summer camp, you didn't qualify for the grant. He would like City Council to look into that for next year. In regards to reentry in the City of Chester. He said, he reached out to Mr. Dowery but he never answered his email or spoke to him personally. He would like to see someone in the city to start monitoring the statistics that are nationwide in regards to reentry.

Amin Abdul Salim says, he picked up a book titled "Here Comes Your King Now Riding In On A Donkey; a depiction of Jesus riding in on a donkey. He says, they will threaten you with poverty; vote your consciousness. What's done for us will have to be done by us. Good to know that God is in charge. People come up and think they're in charge. We have to stay connected with our Lord.

Anita Littleton comment – We should not equate residents not knowing things to having lack of involvement in the community. This is why we have council meetings; if you don't know the subject matter, you come to get educated on what's happening. Also, she says she has noticed an influx of people coming into the city with a level of drug and alcohol use. She sees new faces of people who ae drug addicted. She is concerned about the children in the city. She just wanted to make Council aware. She asked about the building of the Upland marijuana facility being halted.

She was concerned about the upkeep of the grounds at that facility now that the project has been halted. She said, she and the residents are concerned about rodents that may come due to the lack of maintenance to the property. She would like Council's assistance in reaching out to the borough to make sure that that doesn't become an issue. The property at 334 W. 9th St.; the landscaping is not being kept up on that property. She said, her husband has been maintaining it but she does not want him to continue doing that. She would like someone to find out what's going on with that.

Councilman Morgan says, all marijuana facilities across the state has been halted. He says he couldn't give full details as to why.

Jamie Cottman thanked Mayor and Council for being there for his family, whose brother had been killed. He says he's raising money for the arrest of the person(s) responsible for killing his brother. He asked for continued support from Mayor and Council. He says, this will not be laid to rest until the person or persons are incarcerated.

Mayor Kirkland offered condolences to Mr. Cottman and his family. He says, we started an award system almost 8 years ago; no one has taken advantage of it. Hopefully one day we'll get some folk to step forward and take advantage of it.

Gilda Colder was concerned about the removal of trees behind Wallingford Estates. She says, these are large trees; the property is over grown where wild life is living. (Inaudible)

Mayor Kirkland asked Solicitor Shuster, is there anyway we will be able to assist in the removal of the trees and bill Wallingford Estates and/or site them?

Ken Shuster, says, yes. (Inaudible)

Councilman Morgan asked Councilman Roots if he has had any contact with the property owner.

Councilman Roots says yes, he has made contact but hasn't heard from them. They have been made aware years ago of the issue. There is a line of trees that are across from the fence line of all the homes in the row. As the trees get older/wetter, their falling onto her fence and others. Best case scenario is to have a relationship with Wallingford management that they would cut the trees down. He said, from his understanding, they have never been cooperative with the city efforts or the residents who have made contact with them. A stronger stand can be placed but it's their property, their trees.

Ken Shuster recommended he and Mr. Alexander chat and that a notice and citation be sent out to the property owner.

Mayor Kirkland thanked Ms. Colder. He says, they will try to move expeditiously on this matter.

Duane Lee, Director of Parks and Recs thanked the public works, police, fire and the parks departments for an awesome July 4th event. He says, we have been blessed many years with this event every 4th of July. He says, we have the NFL clinic down Memorial Park on Monday from 9-2. for the youth up until Friday. Also 7th Street basketball courts clinic which starts 6pm. There's plenty of things to do in the city of Chester.

****Public Comment addresses are in the City Clerk's Office**

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilwoman Williams None

Councilman Roots None

Councilman Morgan says, on tomorrow, July 13th there will be a community meeting update on the American Rescue Plan at 5pm. The presentation will be live streamed on the website.

Councilwoman West thanked the Mark Alexander and the public works department for all their hard work. (Inaudible)

Councilman Morgan says, since I've been in this role on Council, I've done a lot of good things for the city and the employees. When we have good people, smart intelligent young people in our community, I think it is important that we assist them with employment. He says, he is a huge supporter of local employment. Everyone deserves a second chance and the opportunity to be properly trained. It's not right for an employer to just look to automatically terminate an individual if they haven't necessarily been properly trained. It's very hard to get a job, especially to get paid for what you think your worth. I'm glad that the Council was able to extend the probationary period for that resolution for the one employee.

Mayor Kirkland says, come down to Ethel Waters Park for the Oldies but Goodies every Tuesday at 6pm. He thanked Mr. Lee for the 4th of July celebration in Chester Park. He said, he was there with his grandchildren and dog. He thanked the residents for looking out for one another that day. He says, starting this Saturday will be the Food Truck Festival; downtown Chester along with the crash boys starting at 12 noon. The food truck festival will begin at 5pm. Events will start from 12noon – 9pm. He thanked Ms. Sudler for bringing the young people who are working as interns at the Chester Water Authority.

There being no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50am.

Respectfully submitted,

JULY 12, 2023

Joan Neal, Asst. City Clerk