

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
DECEMBER 13, 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 7:02pm 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

On motion of Councilor Morgan, seconded by Councilor Williams, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as submitted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, Morgan, West, Roots, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: 0.

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. Deborah Jackson, 36 West 8th Street, Chester, PA 19013
2. Dorothy Mae Summers, 1202 Keystone Road, 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 West 8th Street, and in the 1200 Block of Keystone Road, in the City of Chester.

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

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Chester City Council approved Resolution #209-2023, on November 22, 2023, which is amended to read as follows:

WHEREAS, the City of Chester hired Jeffrey Dzielak for the position of Staff Accountant, Department of Finance, effective December 13, 2023, for 37.5 hours per week, with no benefits and a sixty (60) day probationary period; and

WHEREAS, said employment is contingent upon said individual successfully completing 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 is completed on February 12, 2024; and

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

FURTHER, if said employee fails to meet the job expectations within the sixty (60) 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 Morgan, seconded by Councilor Williams, 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 Briana Nickerson-Banks for the position of Clerk, Licenses and Inspections, effective December 18, 2023, for 37.5 hours per week, with no 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

WHEREAS, the City is required by law to offer said employee medical benefits after sixty (60) consecutive days of employment, which is completed on February 16, 2024; 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 Morgan, seconded by Councilor Williams, 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 Sonya Sutton for the position of Payroll Specialist, Department of Finance, effective December 26, 2023, for 37.5 hours per week, with no benefits and a sixty (60) day probationary period; and

WHEREAS, said employment is contingent upon said individual successfully completing 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 is completed on February 23, 2024; and

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

FURTHER, if said employee fails to meet the job expectations within the sixty (60) 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 Morgan, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted.

Councilman Morgan says at the last Council Meeting, there was a question about individuals being hired (if they were Chester Residents) there were individuals that we interviewed from Chester but they necessarily weren't fully qualified for the position. Anyone who is a Chester Resident we always try to keep their Resume/Application on record. The individual that was just read is one of those individuals. She came in and interviewed for another position and didn't

really fit for what we were looking for in the Finance Department. Something else came available, so we reached back out to her and now we have another Chester Resident in the Finance Department.

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 Jamiel Cottman, as a member of the City of Chester Zoning Hearing Board, to fill the unexpired term of Patricia Lewis West, term to expire December 31, 2026.

On motion of Councilor Morgan, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted.

Mayor Kirkland says that I ask that we keep Ms. Patricia Lewis-West in our prayers. She was severely injured in her home and is unable to continue as a Board Member but she is a well-respected individual in this Community.

The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, Morgan, West, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: Roots.

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby appoint Susan Dennis, as a member of the Stormwater Authority of the City of Chester Board, term to expire October 28, 2028.

On motion of Councilor Morgan, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted.

Mayor Kirkland says Ms. Dennis has been a very active person within the Chester Community. She is an Educator and she will do just fine (inaudible).

The following vote was taken: Yeas: Morgan, West, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: Roots. Abstain: Williams

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby appoint Elizabeth Williams, as a member of the Stormwater Authority of the City of Chester Board, term to expire October 28, 2027.

FURTHER, appointment shall take effect January 1, 2024.

On motion of Councilor Morgan, seconded by Councilor West, the above Resolution was adopted.

Mayor Kirkland says once again, proud to (inaudible) City Councilwoman Williams as she goes into her next phase of Public Service as a member of the Stormwater Board. You know Councilwoman Williams is a hard worker, she cares deeply about her Community and she is committed to the work that she does here in the City of Chester.

The following vote was taken: Yeas: Morgan, West, Mayor Kirkland. Nays: Roots. Abstain: Williams

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Chester owns various police vehicles that are no longer in usable condition and the cost to repair those vehicles greatly exceeds the value of the vehicle; and

WHEREAS, each vehicle has been dismantled for usable parts and based on their age, condition, and mileage, it has been determined that each vehicle has an estimated worth less than \$1,000; and

WHEREAS, Murphy Ford has stored the vehicles for the last two years at no cost to the City; and

WHEREAS, Murphy Ford has requested the City allow the vehicles to be donated to a local trade school for educational purposes.

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

That it does hereby authorize the police vehicles listed on the attached sheet be decommissioned and are approved to be used to either repair current vehicles in the fleet or be destroyed by a local vendor to be determined by the Chester Police Department.

FURTHER, all markings and identifiable emblems shall be removed from all vehicles.

FURTHER, it does hereby authorize the proper City officials to take all necessary actions for the proper transfer and disposal of the aforementioned vehicles in accordance with the Third Class City Code and final approval of the City Solicitor.

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

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Chester City Council approved Resolution #28-2022, on February 23, 2022, which is amended to read as follows:

WHEREAS, the property located at 420 Avenue of the States (the "Property") is submitting an application to the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (the "LCB"); and

WHEREAS, under the Pennsylvania Liquor Code, the property qualifies for the issuance of an Economic Development Liquor License by the LCB; and

WHEREAS, the owner of the Property desires to open a restaurant with a liquor license; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the City of Chester believe the issuance of such a license to this Property for the purpose of economic development is in the best interest of the City and support the development of Property into a restaurant with a liquor license.

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

1. That the City hereby approves of the application by the owner or tenant of the Property to the LCB for the issuance of an Economic Development Liquor License, and provides its consent for the use of said license at the Property.
2. The appropriate City official(s) are hereby authorized to execute and deliver any such documents as may be required by the LCB with respect to the foregoing consent and approval.

On motion of Councilor Morgan, seconded by Councilor Williams, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Williams, Morgan, West, **(before Councilman's vote he says (he rereads the last Whereas up to the word City) and then says I wish there was an opportunity for you guys/people/citizens of the City to have an opportunity to chime in on this as well some type of hearing. I'm not sure if everybody in the City would like to see liquor on the Avenue of the States. But this has been before us before and since I haven't heard any comments from anybody between the times this was first issued and today, I personal do support a liquor license for this establishment. Roots, (before Mayor's vote he says we have a Restaurant down here that is already serving liquor. I don't know if they have a license but they have folks bring their own bottles and also they serve liquor right downtown. Mayor Kirkland. Nays: 0.**

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby authorize the Department of Accounts and Finance to refund the sum of \$204.50 to Adriane Johnson for a Construction Permit Application Fee that was applied for in error, for the property located at 324 E. 20th Street, Chester, PA 19013.

On motion of Councilor Morgan, seconded by Councilor Williams, 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 authorize the Department of Accounts and Finance to refund the stated amount to Corelogic Tax Services, LLC, which represents a refund for the overpayment of Property Taxes, for the following property:

<u>Refund Amount</u>	<u>Property Address</u>
\$272.08	2520 Edgmont Avenue, Chester, PA 19013

On motion of Councilor Morgan, seconded by Councilor Williams, 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 Lists dated November 8, 2023, November 9, 2023, November 13, 2023, and November 17, 2023, attached hereto and made a part hereof, subject to approval from the Department of Accounts and Finance.

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

Mayor Kirkland recognizes Mr. Shakur Abdul-Ali. Mr. Shakur Abdul-Ali provided some coats/outerwear for our First Responders. I also want to recognize newly elected Councilman in the Borough of Eddystone, Reverend Ronald Hughes. He is also a Chaplain here and he is the first African-American ever elected to the Council in Eddystone. Congratulations!

Presentation

Eric Bayne, Workforce Development Executive Director - Workforce Development Update (see attachments)

Public Comment

Jack Starr says I own 807 ½ to 841 W. 5th Street says I'm here on concerns of my Tenants, which several are in the audience about Jake's Tree Service. They're working 24/7 and my Tenants get no peace. He has over 60 Employees. There is no

Parking. The noise. He's also buying/knocking down four (4) house down the street, which he is moving his lot down the street too, to extend his yard. I don't know how you knock down Residential houses and make them Commercial. Amtrak owns the property behind that and it was fenced and he decided to take the fence down and put a garage up next to that. He just wants to take over and do whatever he wants. There's no signs posted that it is a 24-hour Business. He has basically Employees working through the night fixing the vehicles. Several Tenants called the Police and there's Police Reports that had to stop them at 2:30 in the morning from emptying trucks and grinding tree branches and chainsaws. I mean the guy just thinks it's Chester and I do what I want! Somebody has to speak up and do something because nobody...you call over here and they just pass the buck. They don't get no sleep. They can't leave the windows open in the Summer. Someone needs to talk to them and ask them what are your hours of operation? What about all these massive vehicles coming down the street. The wear and tear on the streets. Somebody has to say something...do something!!

Mayor Kirkland says thank you for bringing that to my attention. We have worked with Jake's Tree Removal Services down through the years. One of the things that they was supposed to be doing was parking on their property. They never said anything about 24-hour services. We will make sure that the proper Authorities...because you have brought it to our attention (inaudible) Jake's Tree Removal again for a conversation...Zoning and License and Inspections.

Delores Shelton says I just want to know...we had three (3) employees hired tonight and we're bankrupt. Every time I come to a Meeting they're hiring. Where is the money coming from? Who takes care of cars when they are parked on the sidewalks? When you be remodeling houses and bringing truckloads of supplies to do the remodeling, don't you need a license? I've watched people move out like today and by tomorrow evening somebody is moving in. Is our L&I open 24-hours, so you can get somebody else in? I was impressed with the Landlord and more impressed with Eric. He has always worked and cared about people. Mr. Mayor-Elect, I sure hope you keep Eric on Staff.

Mayor Kirkland says as you know we had a Parking Company in place that wasn't acceptable to some. So now we have to start back from scratch trying to find a new Parking Company to come in. They are working on that and it's a process. Also our License and Inspections goal is to hopefully bring some folks in after-hours...kind of have split shifts so that we can catch some of those violators.

Livia Smith says how many vehicles do you plan on getting rid of.

Councilman Morgan says in that batch, 13.

Ms. Smith says we've had many layoffs here since a period of time and it was indicated that we had no money. Now all of a sudden we have new positions that's coming in. When I was just comparing the positions, these new positions dollars are higher than the persons that were in those positions. Those individuals who received these positons are not Chester Residents. I know we're going through a transition. Mayor-Elect have you met with the current staff to make sure that the transition will go smoothly as you go into your Term of Office?

Councilman/Mayor Elect Roots says no.

Ms. Smith says so there won't be any smooth transition. So, therefore you have a transition team that's working with you to help to make sure that these gaps are filled if you have not conversed with these current Administrators?

Councilman/Mayor Elect Roots says I have a transition team you said.

Ms. Smith says yes I did ask.

Councilman/Mayor Elect Roots says no. You told me I have a transition team.

Ms. Smith says no. I said do you have a transition team?

Councilman/Mayor Elect Roots says no I do not.

Ms. Smith says I'm just hoping that the transition goes well because every time Administrations change that usually happens. But we know that based on your votes all these different times as far as the Expenditure List, you vote no every time on the money and you always say "it is not necessary" and so forth. Let me just say this, because of things that have happened in your

Department that dealt with money that wasn't necessary, the employee has to go to Court to defend that. If you would have saw that you would have picked up that there were some things going in your department that you should have been aware of. I just hope that Mr. Bayne's doing was not a farewell speech because I know there's going to be changes in positions and so forth. I just hope that position will not be taken away because people need help!

John Shelton says we've gone through some trying times and we have done a lot of fighting for Civil Rights. Black folk couldn't get jobs here. I lived through it and fought it. Out-going Mayor and Council who has made some miracle changes with us. We still must fight and push forward. We can't keep hating each other and fighting against each other. We got to do the other. We got to come together as a people and get the best that we can get for all of us. This Mayor and Council has to serve everybody. Whoever we elect, they have to serve...they supposed to serve all the People equally. We have people in here now I understand and I fully don't understand yet, how we got people (inaudible) and get elected and don't live here to represent their City. Some of them have actually lied. We thank you for what you have done. We thank you for the direction. Look at it as it is and you still have to work supposedly for the People together and not separately. We can go anywhere. It looks like that's where we're going!

Brown Williams says do you have any inspectors here in the City to inspect houses and electrical? Last week, somebody moved out of one house on the corner and the next morning new people were in the house. They use to inspect the house before People move in. Now, they don't do that. The house on the corner by me on my side, the people told that man he got to cut down that tree. I just put a brand new roof on my house and there is a pin hole in it because that tree is rotting and the limbs are dropping off it. Who is going to come out and inspect that tree?

Mayor Kirkland says Mr. Williams, we do have inspectors here in the City. I'm not over the Inspectors.

Mr. Brown says who are you'll planning on making the Chief of Police? A young lady got arrested for having reefer in her pocket. You can go into these stores on the corner and buy reefer. I can name ten stores that sell reefer.

Mayor Kirkland says some of these places have what you call medical marijuana. So they sell medical marijuana. In order for persons to purchase medical marijuana, whether the condition they're using the medical marijuana, they have to have a medical marijuana card. If they go to the store with their card for that purchase, they are legally allowed to purchase it. If you purchase it on the street in Pennsylvania, it's not legal as of yet. You asked about the Police Chief. I can say this (if I'm afforded the opportunity to become the Mayor) I promised to reduce crime, put lights on our Streets and cameras up. I put a number up and I said 50% and we reduced crime by 67%. The person that made that happen is standing right back there (Commissioner Gretskey). I do appreciate the work that Commissioner Gretskey has done down through the years in rebuilding. Our Police force has shrunk. It's not easy to police a Community when you don't have the numbers you would like to have but I commend him on a job he has done with the men and women of the Chester Police Department.

Bernadette Raymond says Councilman Roots, I thank you for taking your time and coming up on Beverly Lane to check out the light situation and the big pothole in the alley. They did come and fill the pothole in the alley but they didn't fill it completely. The lights on the 1200 Block of Beverly Lane are all completely out. Now we are having car break-ins at night. So I want to know what are we going to do as far as our lights on Beverly Lane? We also need speed bumps because they speed up and down the street. Then you got the three wheelers, the motorcycles and it's constant especially in the summer time. So we need to know what can be done as far as the lights and speed bumps on our block.

Councilman Roots says you did the first right thing and bring it to our attention, to my attention. I went up there and saw a hole. I saw it a lot darker than I expected to see. I took pictures and I passed it on to the people here in City Hall who handle the lights. I will tell you that lights has jumped up on my priority list of issues that need to be handled in this town. I get a lot of feedback from people that are asking about the lights that are out and they just don't seem to get fixed. If Mike Galante would like to come up and talk about the process.

Mike Galante, City Engineer says the City recently did an upgrade upgrading all the lights in the City to LED (inaudible). A lot of these new lights are subject to surges which will put that whole section out. We report that to the vendor that put those lights in. The lights I believe are not under warranty anymore. So they go back to our current vendor. I know when those requests come in they go to the Public Works Department and that gets coordinated with the lighting vendor. So I will make sure that I figure out what's going on, on Beverly Lane. They should have been repaired by now.

Ms. Raymond says to you Roots as coming in as our new Mayor...we the People in Chester don't have a problem of communicating and excepting any Councilmember/Mayor. But what we need you to do is reach out to us. Have a communication with the Residents in Chester and you'll get better feedback and we can solve half of our issues together. But as long as if we bring an issue to you and you wave it off it's only going to make us (inaudible) fixed. So if you can build a relationship with the Residents in Chester you'll have a better outcome.

Amin Abdul Salim says Mayor, you and your Administration have done more than what you see done by the (inaudible) and mercy of our Lord. You have said no to a lot of stuff and sometimes you just have to say no. No, no, no. This is (inaudible) that a child was born on. A lot of stuff can be (inaudible) at all. A lot of stuff is still coming to you but you have to say no, no, no. (Inaudible) we have arrived with you. This new Mayor coming in and if he do not follow the course that's already set that is ordained by our Lord or decreed, he is out of here. So I hope he certainly understands the position that he is in and I hate to see you go. I sincerely pray so that there is no new agenda coming in. Follow God's agenda that we (inaudible) always be in authority with this. We see that liquor is a spirit. We will come into a spirit and we will not need liquor at all. (Inaudible) toxicity. The Lord will be all that we need. There are some that/who cannot travel to our Lord as fastly or quickly. So they need in toxicity. What has to be done for us has to be done by us.

Wayne (Inaudible) says I'm here to speak on behalf of what Eric Bayne has helped me do...not with just the Community Service but when the pandemic ended he helped me get to the Renter's meeting the day of my eviction notice. He got me the funding for it. He has done other things for me (dental appointments). It would be a sorry day to see him go.

Amber Link says I came strictly for Mr. Bayne. I saw Mr. Bayne at a couple of informational and job fairs. I remember he gave me his card and said here come talk to me. I had a couple of domestics some years ago. When I came to talk to Mr. Bayne he was very informational. He helped me. He always answered my phone calls, my emails and what he says holds true. He was like listen, if you don't have it, we're going to get your paperwork in. I'll make sure that it is taken care of and you can just see me later. He knew what he was doing. He was always very professional. He seems like the type of person who cares and after listening to his whole presentation tonight, I have an even greater respect for Mr. Bayne because I have reached out to people before and got no response. So, to have someone who's in your Community who not just says he cares but actually shows it. I just want to give a direct acknowledgement and thank you!

Larry Green says thank you Mr. Eric for helping me with my criminal process. He used his car and gas to make sure that I made my appointments. As Martin Luther King said "I'm Free at Last! Free at Last!!" He went out of his way to help me and I really appreciate you!!

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

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilwoman Williams says Mr. Eric has been working around here hard, long and strong. I have a sign in list and one day I sat down there and counted who has the most visitors and it was Mr. Bayne who had the most. I've watched the Residents come and go in and out of his Office and how happy they are when they leave. So I know he must of solved their problem. I would ask the Receiver to resend what he is trying to send because Mr. Bayne's program, Workforce Development, is needed here in the City of Chester. I know they might have some other ones around here but I haven't seen them do the work that the City of Chester has. He represents the City of Chester and I appreciate him very much and I need the Receiver to resend it. I am asking him to keep our Development here in the City of Chester.

Councilwoman West says Mr. Eric Bayne has done a wonderful job in helping those persons in Chester who need and desire a second chance. All people need (inaudible) a helping hand to change things in their lives and he's done a wonderful job. I have people in my Department (Public Works) who have been helped tremendously by Mr. Bayne. I don't understand why it...am I right to understand that we are transferring the Workforce Development out to the County? Some of our People have transportation issues and not be able to get out to those other areas in the County. With a program like Workforce Development I think we should keep it right here in Chester. We need it. Our People need it. Why make it difficult to get services.

Councilman Roots (none).

Councilman Morgan (none).

Mayor Kirkland says I have had the pleasure of knowing Eric for quite some time. Believe it or not I didn't ask him, never asked him, I didn't even know he knew that I had some stuff in my background. But I opened up the mail one day and I get this big packet with mail in it in my mailbox and they're expungement papers. I started flipping through it and said I did that. Some of the stuff I had totally forgotten about. But, I saw this stack of expungement papers and my record was wiped clean. He did not have to do that. But he did and I'm glad he did. I want you to understand something, what he did not say is usually when you go to a Lawyer you're talking about \$5-7,000.00. If they can get it done. What he did not say is that he has done it for free for nearly hundreds of people in this Community. I want to thank you for making people like my classmate, Mr. Green, Free At Last!!

There being no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:56pm.

Respectfully submitted,

DECEMBER 13, 2023

Candice Newsome, City Clerk