

**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 10:02 AM with Mayor Stefan Roots presiding. A prayer was said followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called and the following were present:

Tameka Gibson
Fred Green
Portia West
Shy'Quan Davis
Stefan Roots

Mayor Roots asked, what are the minutes that we are approving?

Candice Newsome, City Clerk said, two for December, the budget hearing and the Reorganization meeting.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Gibson, the minutes of the previous meetings were tabled due to all members of Council not viewing them prior to today's meeting. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Gibson, Green, West, Davis, Mayor Roots Nays: 0.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Chester City Council approved Resolution #223-2023 on December 13, 2023, which is amended to read as follows:

WHEREAS, the City of Chester hired Sonya Sutton for the position of Payroll Specialist, Department of Finance, effective January 2, 2024, 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 March 1, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the City has determined there is a need to extend the probationary period an additional thirty (30) days from the date of hire, with the extended probationary period ending on April 1, 2024.

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 Green, the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Gibson, Green, West, Davis, Mayor Roots. Nays: 0

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Jorge Garcia wishes to purchase 207 E. 10th Street for use as a side yard for his property at 205 E. 10th Street; and

WHEREAS, the Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Chester has approved the Redevelopment Authority entering into an Agreement of Sale with Mr. Garcia conditioned upon approval of the Agreement by the City Council of the City of Chester; and

WHEREAS, the property is located in a redevelopment area in the City of Chester and as such, the sale, lease or transfer of such property is subject to approval by Chester City Council under the Urban Redevelopment Law, at 35 P.S. Section 1709(k).

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

That it approves the Agreement of Sale between the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Chester and Jorge Garcia in connection with sale of 207 E. 10th Street.

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

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Chester intends to submit an application for Fiscal year 2024 funding under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program: and

WHEREAS, one of the requirements of these programs is to inform the citizens of the City of Chester regarding the City's intended uses for the funds requested from HUD under the CDBG and HOME Programs; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chester is required to prepare a draft of the Fiscal Year 2024 CDBG and HOME Action Plan, which identifies the projects and program activities on which the Program Year 2024 CDBG and HOME funds are proposed to be spent.

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

That it authorizes the Chester Economic Development Authority (CEDA) to take the appropriate steps to ensure that the requirements for Action Plan preparation and public notification are met and to advertise the availability of the draft F.Y. 2024 CDBG/HOME Action Plan in accordance with the appropriate federal regulations.

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

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Chester City Council approved Resolution #106-2023, on June 15, 2023, to award the contract for professional services for Fire Station #81 Addition and Renovations (Project 36), to S.J. Thomas, for which responses were received through Keystone Purchasing Network (KPN), for the award amount of Eighty-six Thousand Two Hundred Seventeen Dollars and Ninety Cents (\$86,217.90), which is to be paid from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds – Project 36; and

WHEREAS, the City has complied with all KPN bidding requirements; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined there is a need for a change to the scope of work in order to complete the project.

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

That it does hereby approve Change Order No.1, to the Subrecipient Agreement between the City of Chester and S.J. Thomas Company, Inc., for Fire Station #81 Addition and Renovations _ Project 36, to add a design fee to include Geotechnical Engineering Services for the footings which is necessary to complete the foundation design, thereby increasing the agreement price by Sixteen Thousand Three Hundred Eighteen Dollars and Seventy-one Cents (\$16,318.71).

FURTHER, that all work is to be performed pursuant to Change Order No. 1 shall be completed in accordance with the specifications and to the satisfaction of the City and its Engineer.

EVEN FURTHER, all the work listed on Change Order No. 1 will be funded through ARPA Project 36.

On motion of Councilor West, seconded by Councilor Green the above Resolution was adopted. The following vote was taken: Yeas: Gibson, Green, West, Davis, Mayor Roots

Nays: 0

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby accept the quote received through Keystone purchasing Network, (KPN), for the Public Works Building Upgrades and Additions (Project 27) from S.J. Thomas Company, Inc. that shall be paid from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, in the amount of Seven Hundred Sixty-eight Thousand Two Hundred Twenty-one Dollars and Sixteen Cents \$768,221.16.

FURTHER, the City has complied with all KPN bidding requirements.

FURTHER, the contract is contingent upon final review and approval of the City Solicitor

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

RESOLUTION

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER DOES RESOLVE:

That it does hereby award the contract for the Public Works Garage Site Improvement – Project 27, for the City of Chester, for which bids were received on December 5, 2023, to JMC Contractors, Inc., at the lowest responsible bid price of One Million Four Hundred Fifty-five Thousand Two Hundred Ninety Dollars (\$1,455,290.00).

FURTHER, that all other bids for the above be and they are hereby rejected; all checks and/or bid bonds accompanying said bids shall be returned to the unsuccessful bidders.

FURTHER, that the Solicitor’s Office shall review a contract and the successful bidder shall furnish a Performance Bond in the full amount of the contract, in accordance with the specifications, and to the satisfaction of City Council.

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

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Chester City Council approved Resolution #147-2022, on August 24, 2022, to award the City of Chester Municipal Building Roof Replacement Option 2 (Project 11), to S.J. Thomas, for which responses were received through Keystone Purchasing Network (KPN), for the award amount of Three Hundred Eighty-two Thousand Four Hundred Twenty-two Dollars and Eighty-five Cents (\$382,422.85), which is to be paid from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds – Project 11; and

WHEREAS, Chester City Council approved Resolution #207-2022, on December 14, 2022, to accept Change Order #1 to increase the contract price by Two Thousand Nineteen Dollars and Seventy-nine Cents (\$2, 019.79) for changes to Project 11 scope of work to include additional caulking and resetting of the metal panel on Building façade, for an adjusted contract price of Three Hundred Eighty-four Hundred Forty-two Dollars and Sixty-four Cents (\$384,442.64); and

WHEREAS, the City has complied with all KPN bidding requirements; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined there is a need for a change to the scope of work in order to complete the project.

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

That it does hereby approve Change Order #2, to increase the adjusted contract price by Eleven Thousand Six Hundred Seventy-seven Dollars and Eighteen Cents (\$11,677.18), for changes to Project 11 scope of work, due to the payment of building permit fees that were not a part of the original contract, for a final contract price of Three Hundred Ninety-six Thousand One Hundred Nineteen Dollars and Eighty-two Cents (\$96,119.82), all the work listed will be funded through ARPA Project 11.

FURTHER, all work is to be performed to the satisfaction of Chester City Council and the City Engineer.

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

RESOLUTION

THIS RESOLUTION, approved and adopted by the Council of the City of Chester, Delaware County, Pennsylvania on the date hereinafter set forth.

WHEREAS, Section 7503 of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Services Code, 35 Pa. C.S. Section 7101 et seq. mandates that the City of Chester prepare, maintain and keep current an emergency operations plan (EOP) for the prevention and minimization of injury and damage caused by a major emergency or disaster within this City; and

WHEREAS, in response to the mandate stated above, this City has prepared an emergency operations plan (EOP) to provide prompt and effective emergency response procedures to be followed in the event of a major emergency or disaster; and

WHEREAS, this City has also prepared an emergency operations plan (EOP) in order to reduce the potential affect of a major emergency or disaster; and

NOW, THEREFORE, we the undersigned Council of the City of Chester, do hereby approved, adopt, and place into immediate effect the Emergency Operations Plan of the City of Chester, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. This Plan shall be reviewed every year to make certain that it conforms with the requirements of the Delaware County Emergency Operations Guideline.

FURTHER, the City of Chester does hereby authorize Mayor Stefan Roots, Deputy Mayor Portia West, Emergency Management Coordinator John-Paul Shirley and City Clerk Candice Newsome to execute for and on behalf of the City of Chester all required forms and documents of the Emergency Operations Plan.

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

Mayor Roots asked the public to play close attention to the resolutions of projects for the ARPA (American Rescue Plan) money i.e. Roof at City Hall, Dock St. Public Works,

equipment, salt and personnel. Project #11 both fire stations are being upgraded. Mayor Roots acknowledged and welcomed District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer.

Presentations

John Paul Shirley, Fire Commissioner (Attachment #1)

Stephen Gretskey, Police Commissioner (Attachment #2)

Jack Stollsteimer, Delaware County District Attorney

Councilwoman West asked Commissioner Shirley, for those persons who may not have a lot of experience or need more training, how does a firefighter go about being selected for training?

Commissioner Shirley said, they are contracted with Bucks County Community College Department of Public Safety. They deliver a set amount of training hours. The training packet allow firefighters to apply for any type of resident programs at the college. i.e. resident certification courses.

Councilwoman West asked, if a chief doesn't make a selection and someone really want to go for the training, they can get training outside of what you offer?

Commissioner Shirley, yes.

Councilwoman West said, she wanted to make sure that the opportunity for training is offered to everyone.

Commissioner Shirley said, everyone is afforded the same opportunity as it relates to training.

Mayor Roots emphasized the fact that we're not fighting a lot of fires. He said, they also assist EMS Emergency Medical Service. They also handle hazmat; hazardous materials. He said, the firefighters of old are not the firefighters of today. They are an all- hazards fire department.

Commissioner Gretskey's presentation – Attachment # 2

Commission Gretskey said, body camera will be in place this year.

District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer thanked Commissioner Gretskey and his leadership of the Chester Police Department and the police in partnership with the community. He recognized Cory Long and his organization, Making a Change Group for their work in the community.

Mayor Roots, asked that we pay attention to the stats of the number of violent crimes that has gone down within the last 5 years thanks to the partnerships of the DA, Mayor, Council and the police department. He commended them for the amazing job that they do with the force that they have. He said, we have to re-engage neighborhoods and communicate with each other. He asked that the community watch out for one another. One of his objectives in this administration is to re-engage citizens to help protect their own neighborhoods. He would like to establish block captains. Mayor Roots asked, how many officers are on the police force; they are doing more with less. He commended them for the work that they do.

Commissioner Gretskey said, 71 officers right now.

Rosetta Carter, Chester' Bureau of Health - Covid and Flu Clinic 11-2 pm today

Attachment # 3

Councilwoman West asked if you need your insurance card to get shots.

Rosetta Carter said, yes, if you have insurance you need to bring it.

Councilman Green asked, if you do not have insurance are people still able to get a shot?

Rosetta Carter said, yes, the pharmacist will work with the residents. If you want to obtain home Covid kits you can go on the CDC website or call her to obtain those kits; they are free; 4 kits per family.

If you wish you can call her at (610) 447-7700 x7555 and she can help you to navigate the system to be able to obtain the test kits. She said, they will be taking the clinic on the road for the next two weeks. She said, they are able to do this due to the Black Coalition grant.

Councilwoman Gibson thanked Ms. Carter for her hard work and dedication to the residents of the City of Chester. She said, the services that she provides are very necessary. She thanked her for taking care of the residents in that manner.

Mayor Roots added, Covid is real. He encouraged everyone who is fortunate enough to have insurance to go to their doctor. He said, we no longer have a big box pharmacy in the city.

Councilwoman Gibson said, there is a pharmacy on 9th and Booth.

Old Business

Councilman Green said, they met in executive session last week to talk about ARPA projects and whether to bring in a new engineering firm or not to bring in a new firm or to continue to work with our current engineer and legal matters. He said, he would like to have a quick executive session after this meeting. Subject: Zoning Hearing Board appointments and appointments to the MFRAC Committee.

Mayor Roots said, as the chief executive, he would have appreciated it if the meeting would have been scheduled during a time when he could have been available.

New Business

Councilman Davis said, being the newly appointment council person and the Director of Accounts and Finance, he feels it is important for the city and community to know where the money is going, how money is appropriated and the time frame that it has to be appropriated. He said, that conversation should be had during executive session.

Councilman Green said, he is working diligently with his department and Parks Manager Stephanie Hall and has met with the engineer. They are going to do some park improvements with ARPA money that has been allocated. They are looking to fix up

bathrooms in Chester, Memorial and Sun Village Parks. Also, they are going to work on some grants to fix up the Upland Street Recreation Center. He said, he would like to give kids the opportunity to enjoy that recreation center as he did growing up. He is working to build up the recreation department. They are also improving public property. He said, he will lay out his first 100 days of what he has done and what he plans to do. We will be hiring a Program Recreation Manager, and a Fleet Manager. He said, Friday at 10am he will tour the city with staff to see actually what the city owns. He will also have weekly meetings with the Receiver.

Councilwoman Gibson commended the L&I department for all the work that they have been doing. She said, she appreciates Ms. Judy because she meets with staff every morning and the inspectors are going out doing what need to be done.

Mayor Roots said, as a body they need to operate through the city charter. It dictates how they operate. He referenced the meeting they had on re-organization day when Council appointed themselves to departments. He didn't know why he wasn't appointed to the Public Affairs department. He said, he started office hours from 4:30 – 7:00.

Councilwoman West said it is automatic that he oversees the Public Affairs department.

Mayor Roots says, that's not stated in the Charter.

Public Comment

Kathryn Flagg said, she came to the inauguration to see the Mayor take the oath of office. She asked, Mayor Roots, what did he mean when he said he wanted to clean up city hall.

Mayor Roots said, he respected her point about taking an oath in public. He didn't want it to be a gap in the leadership in city hall. He considered doing a do over on January 2nd, but decided against it. Cleaning up City Hall; putting people in place to get the job done. He would like the citizens to be better served.

Seifuddin Simpson talked about a hiring law called Ban the Box. Attachment #4

Livia Smith said, there is no finance report on the agenda for approval. She said, there need to be revision on the line item for ARPA funds. Job descriptions; she asked why some people on the job description report to a title and some report to a particular name; web site need to be updated, no phone numbers for current administration and the 2023 holiday schedule is listed, organizational chart; the citizens of Chester trumps everyone else.

Councilman Green said, there is a line item for park improvement with no park identified.

Susan Dennis was concerned about not being able to get on the MFRAC meeting. She asked, will something be done to make it easier to get on those meetings?

Mayor Roots said the receiver is here, he has received that.

John Shelton said, he's happy to see assumed progress on the way. The future is in our hands to see what we do with it. He is not pleased with having a council meeting and not able to have questions answered. He said, we have to work together and live together.

Cory Long commended Mayor and Council for presenting a unified effort and showing a unified front. He said, if there's anything he can do, feel free to call on him.

Delores Shelton said, she would like to see the Mayor lay his hand on the Bible to be sworn in. She would like to see the Receiver's meeting on channel 5. She asked, when is the Receivers meeting with Council? She asked, if there's a time frame for when there's a fire and items taken out, how long before it is removed?

Regina Butcher spoke about her organization, I Am My Sister's Keeper at 3012 W. 3rd St., 1st and 3rd Saturday. Attachment #5

Councilwoman Gibson said, she had the opportunity to watch I Am My Sister's Keeper program. She said, they are doing a phenomenal job. She commended the organization for their great work.

Michael Collier had a concern about the traffic light at 8th and Barclay/Fulton changing too fast. He would like something done about the timing of the lights.

Councilwoman West said, her public works director, Mark Alexxander will speak with him after the meeting. She will have someone check out the traffic light.

Council Comments

Councilwoman West thanked everyone for being kind during the snow storm. She thanked everyone in the streets and public works department for their hard work and hour they put in.

Councilman Green in reference to the expenditure list; to his knowledge Council was not presented with an expenditure list thus far. He said, he was not a part of the decision to have it removed from the agenda.

Councilman Davis said, he has not met with the receiver since he's been appointed; he's just getting a phone number to his office as of this week. He asked everyone to be patient while they go through this transition time.

Councilwoman West asked, who is on the MRAC board? She said, there should be (2) two members of council, someone from the state and the county.

Councilman Green said, that's why he wanted an executive session to discuss the MFRAC board appointments.

Mayor Roots said, the website is not updated because of having to go through a third party and they are working on that. He said, they are working to stream line the website, it will have a different look. He has office hours and prefer meeting people out in the community, he has made arrangements to meet in various locations to get questions answered. i.e. Access Center, Boys and Girls Club, Widener University. Improving communication is vital.

Justine Tibbels, Special Assistant to the Mayor and Constituent Affairs Manager said, Facebook is the biggest way the vast majority of people in Chester communicate. He's working towards posting to Twitter and Instagram sites. Working to get the city channel updated. to make sure that people who aren't on line will still be able to get information.

Mayor Roots asked Justin, what's the move to get the public access channel up and working? He said, there's been a lot of effort to bring this channel up to date.

Justin said, this council meeting is being live streamed on the city's website right now and streamed on the public access channel. Mayor and Council and varies departments will be working on adding more video and content to the public access channel.

Mayor Roots said, part of fixing city hall is upgrading the internet. He would like to work with I Am My Sister's Keeper organization. He said, there were 10-13year olds, who wanted to come in to learn how city government works under Monica Bailey-Washington's leadership. He said, Monica Bailey-Washington was thankful for the opportunity.

Councilman Davis said, they gave a mock trial of how city government works with AKAs and children ages 10-13 years old. He said, he would like to work with Regina Butcher's organization, I Am My Sister's Keeper.

Councilman Green said, it was a great experience working with those students showing them how government work. He said, the mock council meeting focused on whether to

raise taxes or why taxes shouldn't be raised. He thanked Chief Lightner for putting it together.

Mayor Roots thanked the council members for participating in the project. He thanked Chief Lightner for putting it together because it was going to be cancelled in his absence.

Mayor Roots said, some traffic lights are a problem due to lights being too long or too short. He asked that this problem be brought to their attention so a city-wide survey can be done.

Expenditure reports: he said, they weren't expenditure reports; they were check runs. We want to reconcile with each department; what was spent, what you have left; that's the direction we're going in. He said, we are working with the city controller so you can see what's coming in and going out of your department. The check runs are on the Receiver's website. Chesterreceivership.com.

Mayor Roots thanked the Solicitor for stepping in today.

There being no other business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Neal, Acting City Clerk