

Council of the City of York, Pennsylvania

Edquina Washington, President of Council
Betsy Buckingham, Vice President of Council
Dr. Felicia O. A. Dennis, Member of Council
Elizabeth Bupp, Member of Council
Teresa Johnescu, Member of Council

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MINUTES NOVEMBER 19, 2024 6:00 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER: President Washington called the November 19, 2024, meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 101 S. George St., York, PA, with the following members present: Elizabeth Bupp, Teresa Johnescu, Betsy Buckingham, Vice President, and Edquina Washington, President with President Washington presiding. Vice President Buckingham telephoned in for the meeting. Councilwoman Dennis was absent.

Members of the Administration included: Mayor Michael Helfrich; Kim Robertson, Business Administrator; Monica Kruger, Director of Health; India Banks, Interim Director of Public Works; Dave Rudolph, Electrical Supervisor; and Attorney J. Lynette Carter (Eckert Seamans Law Firm) filling in for Assistant Solicitor Brett Flower.

Council Staff in attendance included: Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk.

I. Public Comment:

Mayor Helfrich read the following statement:

"Good evening. Thank you all for your input into the efforts to find revenue to maintain our parking garages. I will outline the problem the city needs to solve a bit later, because I am sure you are more interested in our final plan that was just completed today.

There will be no changes to parking meter rates or times. There will be NO charge for parking on SATURDAYS or SUNDAYS (for one year as we work to capture lost revenue and add a \$2 per night charge for weekdays 5 pm-8am). We are changing the parking garage hours from 8 am to 6:30 pm to 8 am to 5 pm. There will be a \$2 charge to park anytime between 5 pm and 8 am Mondays through Fridays, whether that's 15 minutes or 15 hours, just \$2 flat rate. I think that covers that.

But now I want you to really understand the problem we need to fix. In 2018 and 2019 the General Authority was suggesting they could sell the parking garages to a private company. If you look at Harrisburg, this means rates based on company profits, not the needs of the businesses and customers. In my mind parking should not be a for-profit business, it is a service to our residents, businesses, and customers. The cost of parking should be equal to the expense of staffing, maintenance, and any new parking that we may need to provide. When I took back the parking garages from the General Authority, we knew we were running about \$300,000 short every year, money

that the already over-taxed residents of York were subsidizing, mostly for the benefit of downtown businesses. So, the question became, where can we find this revenue?

What we found was shocking. About 20% of, or 30,000, parking garage tickets per year are not being redeemed at the exit. They are being taken at the entrance and people are waiting until after 6:30 pm to leave. We found that 20 tickets per day, approximately 5,000 per year, were coming from people who came into the garage between 7 and 9 am. These are people who are stealing parking; parking all day and waiting until after 6:30 pm to leave, thus stealing \$22 per day. 5,000 tickets times \$22 is \$110,000 of the \$300,000 the garages need. The other 25,000 unredeemed tickets come from various times between 9 am and 6:30 pm. We believe a conservative estimate of that revenue would be about \$100,000. But we really won't know until we close the 6:30 pm loophole. Finally, adding the \$2 per car per night revenue may fill the remaining \$90,000 gap. This is an unknown that we will only understand after implementing the night rate.

I want to describe this in another way to point out the lack of basic fairness in the current system. 150,000 uses of our parking garages occur every year during the daytime on weekdays. 30,000 of those are not paid for. An unknown number of people are using the exact same garage spaces at night and on weekends and they pay nothing. So maybe 50 or 60% of people are paying for the other 40-50%. AND, taxpayers that aren't even using the garages are paying \$300,000 a year! I think, unless you are one of the people parking for free, it is obvious that this system is not fair.

So, we will take the next 9 months, January to September, to measure the results of our changes. In October 2025 we will determine if any further changes are needed.

Thank you again for your interest and investment in York City.” - Mayor Michael R. Helfrich

Michael Walker spoke about the incoming President Elect of the United States and the challenges our city may face. He said Council may need to be proactive. He spoke about thousands of immigrants that will lose their citizenship and how this will affect programs such as SNAP. He said some residents may suffer homelessness, lost of Medicaid, and that this will build into an epidemic if we aren't proactive. He asked do we act now or wait until the situation is out of control. He said Council has the authority to request the mayor to establish a Humanitarian Task Force to prepare for those impacted by our country's new leadership. Click [here](#) to read full statement.

Carmine Pantano spoke about the mayor's proposal to consider charging downtown patrons for parking during off hours and the challenges this will create for business owners. Click [here](#) to read full statement. Read Mayor Helfrich's comment above addressing garage parking concerns.

Stephanie Markle spoke about the police not doing their jobs because they have been harassed and their property damaged, and the police have done nothing. She said they never show up even when she calls. She said this is a continuous cycle and that she is getting harassed every single day. She stated that she has plenty of footage on her phone. When police do show up, she said they just break up fights and that's it. She said we are at our wits end and does not know what to do. She said this has been going on since around 2017. Mayor Helfrich spoke privately with Ms. Markle immediately following her comments.

Adam McCallister, city property and business owner, said in lieu of what the mayor provided tonight, they are familiar with the parking issues and the costs to operate a business in the city. He said businesses are dependent on visitors from far and wide to help their businesses prosper. He said when visitors patronize downtown businesses, they like the concept of not having to pay for parking in the evening. He said whatever vision we have for parking we need to be sure we help to keep businesses alive.

Don Hake, resident, said it's pretty obvious that over a number of years the city is struggling financially.

He asked what the unpaid tax base for the past year is. He said one thing is maybe we need to cut costs and determine what costs are justified. He said he would like identified the number of businesses that have come into the city or that have expanded their presence in the city and then go to those businesses and ask them why they expanded and if the Department of Economic Development was a reason. He said we need to take a look at Community Development and Economic Development departments and ask if this is money well spent.

Marie Rohleder, resident, said not having to pay for parking when you come into the city is ridiculous. If a meter is in front of your house, you have to pay the meter. She said that could keep people from wanting to move into the city but paying \$2 for 15 hours to park overnight is a bargain. She said if she has visitors to her apartment, they carpool, and someone pays the parking meters but usually has to park on another street because there are no available parking spaces. She said with housing being built in the meter district; the parking situation is worse. She said it's unfair to put the cost of parking on solely on the residents.

Lori Nevaga said big businesses have left the city and it would be nice to hear from a historian on the businesses that have left the city and why they left. She said she is struggling with her small business, and she understands it's the economy and she doesn't blame the city. She asked what they are going to do in the future to attract more businesses to the city. She said if we find out why businesses left, maybe we can avoid the same mistake.

There being no further comment, the public comment session adjourned at 6:38 p.m. and President Washington immediately convened in legislative session.

- II. Called Legislative Meeting to Order at 6:38 p.m.
- III. Roll Call
- IV. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- V. Moment of Silence of silence was observed.
- VI. Action on previous meeting Minutes of [November 6, 2024](#). Council dispensed with the reading of the minutes and unanimously approved them as written.
- VII. Presentations, Awards and Announcements
 - ▶ **Downtown Inc** – Update on the Codorus Greenway Project by Silas Chamberlain. Click [here](#) to view presentation.
- VIII. Meeting(s) Scheduled:
 - ▶ **Legislative Meeting:** The next legislative meeting of Council will be held on Tuesday, December 3, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agenda items are due by 12 noon on November 25th.
- IX. Status of Prior Committee Referrals: No reports.
- X. Legislative Agenda: (Order of Business – Action on Subdivision/Land Development & HARB Resolutions; Final Passage of Bills/Resolutions; New Business)

Subdivision/Land Development/HARB:

1. Resolution No. 105 - A Resolution
Accepting the recommendations of HARB. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham

Resolution No. 105, Session 2024, A Resolution accepting the recommendations of HARB in issuing certificates of appropriateness for work to be covered in the following applications: 1. Application filed for work to be done at 32 W. North St.; 2. Application filed for work to be done at 212-218 N. George St.; 3. Application filed for work to be done at 130 E. Gas Ave.; 4. Application filed for work to be done at 205 S. George St.; 5. Application filed for work to be done at 118 S. Pershing Ave.; and 6. Application filed for work to be done at 121 N. Pershing Ave., was introduced by Buckingham, read at length and on motion of Buckingham, seconded by Johnescu, Resolution no. 105 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

Final Passage of Bills/Resolutions

2. Final Passage of Bill No. 37, Ordinance No. 37 - A Bill
Amending the FY2024 Budget. ([View](#)) (For the Health Bureau by appropriating additional revenue and expenditures in the amount of \$35,655.94 associated with Community Development Block Grant funding through the Housing Bureau to support the Healthy Moms Healthy Babies program.)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham,
Originator: Economic & Community Development (Health)

Final Passage of Bill No. 37, Ordinance No. 37, Session 2024, A Bill amending the FY2024 budget for the Health Bureau by appropriating additional revenue and expenditures in the amount of \$35,655.94 associated with Community Development Block Grant funding through the Housing Bureau to support the Healthy Moms Healthy Babies program, which was introduced by Buckingham at the November 6 meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Washington, seconded by Johnescu, Bill No. 37, Ordinance No. 37 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

3. Final Passage of Bill No. 38, Ordinance No. 38 - A Bill
Amending the FY2024 Budget. ([View](#)) (For the Fire Department by appropriating additional revenue and expenditures in the amount of \$25,000.00 associated with a grant from the Office of the State Fire Commissioner for a new HVAC system for Fire Station 2.)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Fire/Rescue

Final Passage of Bill No. 38, Ordinance No. 38, Session 2024, A Bill amending the FY2024 budget for the Fire Department by appropriating additional revenue and expenditures in the amount of \$25,000.00 associated with a grant from the Office of the State Fire Commissioner for a new HVAC system for Fire Station 2, which was introduced by Buckingham at the November 6 meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Washington, seconded by Johnescu, Bill No. 38, Ordinance No. 38 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

4. Final Passage of Bill No. 39, Ordinance No. 39 - A Bill
Amending the FY2024 Budget. ([View](#)) (\$75,000 Associated with a grant from the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) to expand digital literacy access for justice-impacted individuals through the Talent for Tomorrow Digital Equity Challenge program.)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Business Administration (Mayor)

Final Passage of Bill No. 39, Ordinance No. 39, Session 2024, a Bill amending the FY2024 budget in the amount of \$75,000 Associated with a grant from the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) to expand digital literacy access for justice-impacted individuals through the Talent for Tomorrow Digital Equity Challenge program Motion, which was introduced by Buckingham at the November 6 meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Buckingham, seconded by Washington, Bill No. 39, Ordinance No. 39 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

5. Final Passage of Bill No. 40, Ordinance No. 40 - A Bill Amending the FY2024 Budget. ([View](#)) (By appropriating expenditures from the **American Rescue Plan Act "ARPA"** funds for York County Planning Commission's Lead Hazard Reduction Capacity Building Grant Program in the amount of \$75,000.00.)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Business Administration

Final Passage of Bill No. 40, Ordinance No. 40, Session 2024, A Bill amending the FY2024 budget by appropriating expenditures from the **American Rescue Plan Act "ARPA"** funds for York County Planning Commission's Lead Hazard Reduction Capacity Building Grant Program in the amount of \$75,000.00, which was introduced by Buckingham at the November 6 meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Buckingham, seconded by Johnescu, Bill No. 40, Ordinance No. 40 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

6. Final Passage of Bill No. 41, Ordinance No. 41 - A Bill Amending the FY2024 Budget. ([View](#)) (For the Recreation & Parks bureau by appropriating additional revenue and expenditures in the amount of \$25,000.00 associated with a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for plan and design costs associated with the Parks Master Plan.)
Introduced by: Felicia Dennis
Originator: Public Works (Parks & Recreation)

Final Passage of Bill No. 41, Ordinance No. 41, Session 2024, A Bill amending the FY2024 budget for the Recreation & Parks bureau by appropriating additional revenue and expenditures in the amount of \$25,000.00 associated with a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for plan and design costs associated with the Parks Master Plan, which was introduced by Dennis at the November 6 meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Washington, seconded by Johnescu, Bill No. 41, Ordinance No. 41 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

7. Final Passage of Bill No. 42, Ordinance No. 42 - A Bill Amending the FY2024 Budget. ([View](#)) (By appropriating additional revenue and expenditures from Family Health Council of Central PA (FHCCP) for the Women's Health Services, in the amount of \$15,000.00.)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Economic & Community Development (Health)

Final Passage of Bill No. 42, Ordinance No. 42, Session 2024, A Bill amending the FY2024 budget by appropriating additional revenue and expenditures from Family Health Council of Central PA (FHCCP) for the Women's Health Services, in the amount of \$15,000.00, which was introduced by Buckingham at the November 6 meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Buckingham, seconded by Washington, Bill No. 42, Ordinance No. 42 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

8. Final Passage of Bill No. 43, Ordinance No. 43 - A Bill Establishing Article 196 "Tax Forgiveness Review Committee" of the Codified Ordinances. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Teresa Johnescu
Originator: City Council (T. Johnescu) / City Clerk

Final Passage of Bill No. 43, Ordinance No. 43, Session 2024, A Bill establishing Article 196 "Tax Forgiveness Review Committee" of the Codified Ordinances, which was introduced by Johnescu at the November 6 meeting of Council and read by short title, came up for final passage. On motion of Johnescu, seconded by Washington, Bill No. 43 came up for discussion.

Councilwoman Johnescu thanked Treasurer Jeffcoat and City Clerk Thompson for helping get this legislation over the finish line. She said there was no uniform process or standard in place for requests for municipal real estate tax forgiveness and this legislation does just that. She outlined the members of the committee and the process. She said there is a cap on the years that can be requested for forgiveness.

President Washington thanked all involved for their hard work in getting the legislation drafted.

There being no further discussion, Bill No. 43, Ordinance No. 43 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

9. Final Passage of Resolution No. 101 - A Resolution Establishing an application fee in accordance with Article 196 "Tax Forgiveness Review Committee" of the Codified Ordinances ([View](#))
Introduced by: Teresa Johnescu
Originator: City Council (T. Johnescu) / City Clerk

Final Passage of Resolution No. 101, Session 2024, A Resolution establishing an application fee of \$50 for requests for municipal real estate tax forgiveness in accordance with Article 196 "Tax Forgiveness Review Committee" of the Codified Ordinances, which was introduced by Johnescu and the November 6 meeting of Council and read at length, came up for final passage. On motion of Johnescu, seconded by Washington, Resolution No. 101 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

New Business - Introduction of Bills

10. Introduction of Bill No. 44 - A Bill Approving the 2025 York City Budget. ([View](#)) (\$70,266,904)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Mayor / Business Administration (Finance)

Introduction of Bill No. 44, Session 2024, A Bill approving the 2025 York City Budget, was introduced by Buckingham, read by short title, and deferred to the December 17 meeting of Council.

11. Introduction of Bill No. 45 - A Bill Approving the 2025 Tax Rate. ([View](#)) (The sum of \$18.97 on each one thousand dollars of assessed valuation)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Mayor / Business Administration (Finance)

Introduction of Bill No. 45, Session 2024, A Bill establishing the 2025 tax rate, was introduced by Buckingham, read by short title, and deferred to the December 17 meeting of Council.

New Business - Items for Consideration of Consent Agenda

12. Resolution No. 106 - A Resolution
Appointing and reappointing members to various boards. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Mayor / Council

Resolution No. 106, Session 2024, A Resolution consenting to the following was introduced by Buckingham: 1. Reappointment of Carmen Bones as a member of the York City Board of Health to serve in said capacity until the first Monday of April 2029; 2. Appointment of Lester Abbott, Jr. as an alternate member of the Zoning Hearing Board to serve in said capacity until January 1, 2028; 3. Reappointment of Rabiya Khan as a member of the York City Human Relations Commission to serve in said capacity until July 16, 2027; and 4. Reappointment of Jason Phillips as a member of the York City Human Relations Commission to serve in said capacity until July 16, 2027.

On motion of Buckingham, seconded by Washington, Resolution No. 106 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

City Clerk Thompson administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Lester Abbott, Jr.

13. Resolution No. 107 - A Resolution
Authorizing the appointment of probationary police officers. ([View](#))
Introduced by: Edquina Washington
Originator: Mayor / Fire-Rescue

Resolution No. 107, Session 2024, A Resolution appointing the following as probationary police officers: 1. Timothy Fleck; 2. Israel Carrion-Cruz; 3. Stephen Marte; 4. Clayton Loeblein; 5. Rori Caulfield; 6. Jesse McCardle; 7. Steven Reid; 8. Inez Arrington; 9. Owen Henty; 10. Antonino Musso; 11. Dominic Colombo, was introduced by Washington, read at length, and on motion of Washington, seconded by Johnescu, Resolution No. 107 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

14. Resolution No. 108 - A Resolution
Authorizing an agreement with Highmark Blue Shield. ([View](#)) (For Medicare Advantage coverage for 2025)
Introduced by: Betsy Buckingham
Originator: Business Administration (HR)

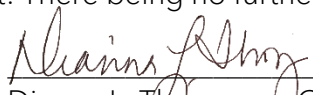
Resolution No. 108, Session 2024, A Resolution authorizing an agreement with Highmark Blue Shield for Medicare Advantage coverage for the year 2025, was introduced by Buckingham, read at length, and on motion of Buckingham, seconded by Johnescu, Resolution No. 108 passed by the following vote: Yeas - Bupp, Johnescu, Buckingham, Washington - 4; Nays - 0.

XI. Requests for Future Meetings: None

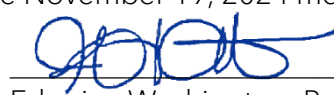
XII. Council Comment: None

XIII. Administration Comment: None

XIV. Adjournment: There being no further business the November 19, 2024 meeting of Council adjourned at 7:11 p.m.



Dianna L. Thompson, City Clerk



Edquina Washington, President of Council