

**CONNELLSVILLE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**5 PM – September 19, 2023**

This meeting of the Connellsville City Council was held this evening at 5:00 PM in City Council Chambers, City Hall.

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING ROLL CALL:**

Attending this meeting was Council members Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. Also attending was City Clerk Ohler and Solicitor Witt.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Led by Chuck Hubble

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Taylor Triggs, Discussed her wish to hold a Suicide Prevention Event in the City. She asked for help to have an event.

Mayor Lincoln suggested she form a committee with others who would help her with the event. He also suggested she attend a Recreation Board Meeting the first Thursday of the month.

Councilman Keedy stated he will help her and he is passionate about suicide prevention.

James Flynn spoke next on behalf of the Recreation Board.

Mr. Flynn requested the resolution on the agenda for signage be tabled for a month to allow them more time to obtain two more bids.

City Council thanked Mr. Flynn.

Jack Loughry spoke next concerning parking on East Crawford Avenue.

Mr. Loughry explained his parking situation, he and his sister's disabilities and his neighbor who is giving them a difficult time concerning parking.

Mayor Lincoln instructed Mr. Loughry to dial 911 when the vehicle is illegally parked and the police will issue them a citation.

Chief Hammerle stated he is aware of the situation and he read the report. He noted the police have been to that location the past three days. He added one officer told her she could not park in someone's handicap spot and could park in the yellow area, temporarily, as long as she is not obstructing the view of traffic. Chief Hammerle stated the woman was given permission to park in the yellow spot and that is called police discretion. He stated this will be until they can help her get another spot. Chief Hammerle added that if she is in Loughry's spaces, they will make her move her vehicle.

Chief Hammerle and Mr. Loughry discussed the parking spaces and getting out of the spots into traffic.

Mr. Loughry passed details out to City Council and read a letter. AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

Chief Hammerle stated there is not enough parking spaces for all the residents there and that is an issue throughout the City.

Mayor Lincoln noted the three-minute time limit has been reached that council allows per speaker. He called on the City Solicitor to make a statement and stated after that, they will move on.

Solicitor Witt questioned Mr. Loughry if he is saying the neighbor continues to park in his space.

Mr. Loughry stated the neighbor is parking illegally and he and his sister cannot see safely to get out on to the street from their parking spot.

Solicitor Witt questioned again if he is stating that the neighbor is parking in his designated spot?

Mr. Loughry stated yes, approximately two to three feet.

Solicitor Witt stated he and council will discuss this with the police and find out if that is the case. He added that if they are parking that way, then it is documented when the police arrive and it is something for the police department to address. Solicitor Witt continued there are a lot of allegations here and they will retrieve the exact dimensions of the parking spaces to see if they are compliant with the requirements of the ADA, in terms of sizing of the spaces, and that it does not present an issue for compliance with the ADA. He told council they comply with the ADA by providing those designated parking spaces. Solicitor Witt reiterated as long as the size of the spaces comply as well.

Mr. Loughry stated they cannot utilize their space because the neighbor's vehicle is parked illegally and is causing them problems.

Mayor Lincoln stated the neighbor's car is not parked in their spot and is not hindering them from parking in their spots. He noted parking is like this throughout the City. He added they are going to evaluate the situation.

Councilman Karpiak commended Chief Hammerle to taking care of the neighbor's emergency situation and her inability to walk.

District Attorney, Richard Bowers, requested to discuss a Security Issue and asked City Council call an executive session due to the importance of the issue.

Mayor Lincoln made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a security issue. All was in favor. Time was 5:28 P.M.

The City Council Meeting reconvened at 5:39 P.M.

**CITY TREASURER REPORT:** Marilyn Weaver

**CITY CONTROLLER REPORT:** Bill Addis

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Chamber of Commerce, Requesting use of Fire Hall on October 12<sup>th</sup> and November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 for the Farmer's Markets.

Mayor Lincoln thanked Brooke Deason, Bonnie Parker, and the Chamber of Commerce for working to make the Farmer's Markets such a success.

**Resolution No. 9-1-2023:** "To grant permission to the Chamber of Commerce to use the East Side Fire Hall from 3 PM until 8 PM on October 12<sup>th</sup> and November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 for the Farmer's Markets; further authorizing the closure of North Arch Street between Apple and Peach Streets at said times; further authorizing use of items listed on the Utilization Form."

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

Suzie Flesik, Street closure request

**Resolution No. 9-2-2023:** "To close a portion of North 7th Street directly adjacent to the applicant's property, on Fridays and Saturdays from 7 PM to 11 PM beginning Friday, September 22, 2023 and continuing until Saturday, November 4, 2023 for the Crawford School of Terror; pending review and approval from the Police Chief and Fire Chief."

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**REGULAR AGENDA:**

**Resolution No. 9-3-2023:** "To accept the minutes from the August 15, 2023 City Council Meeting."

Councilwoman Tiberio questioned if they were voting on the original minutes or the revised.

City Clerk Ohler stated the revised were the last ones sent out.

Solicitor Witt stated it would have to be the most recent minutes that were sent out.

Mayor Lincoln stated for clarification purposes, what are minutes. "Minutes are not transcripts. Minutes are a summary of the meeting." He explained the microphones and camera record everything

and then it is put up on the City's YouTube Channel. He noted anyone can watch it word from word on YouTube. He continued that tomorrow Shelley will sit at her computer with headphones on and watch the meeting and try to interpret everything she can hear. Mayor Lincoln noted that sometimes you cannot hear everything and she puts down what she can hear and verify. He stated this is how they get their minutes and they are not transcripts. He continued that these minutes were revised because the Daily Courier last month did not write a word from word account of our discussion over pickleball. "And now we have revised minutes to discuss tonight, over pickleball." Mayor Lincoln stated he is voting no on the revisions of the minutes because there was no reason to revise these minutes over that. He noted that Shelley does the best job she can do for the City and he appreciates all the work she does for Council. Mayor Lincoln added in addition to maintaining the website, answering calls, and doing all she does, he feels like it is a slap in the face to question her minutes.

Councilman Karpiak questioned what was revised. He questioned "From what to what?"

Councilwoman Tiberio answered there were about seven or eight things that were revised, "Things that were said. Things that were clearly stated, just to get a more accurate..."

Councilman Karpiak questioned what was said, "What we are revising was true, though?"

Councilwoman Tiberio answered yes, it was true.

Mayor Lincoln stated it was not necessary because minutes are not transcripts. He noted what was revised was not pertinent to the meeting.

Councilwoman Tiberio stated that is a personal opinion. She noted what is important to one person may not be to another person. She added when the minutes are sent out, she thought the purpose of that was to respond.

Councilman Karpiak stated he is in the fog as to why they revised something that was true to something that was "truer."

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative was Councilwoman Tiberio. Councilmen Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Mayor Lincoln voted nay. The majority of the votes being nay, the resolution was not adopted.

Solicitor Witt stated the motion for the revised, the most recent sent out, that motion failed. He questioned if there is an alternative motion that anyone on Council would want to make in respect to the minutes. He added they have to approve minutes in some form.

Mayor Lincoln questioned if the original minutes could be approved.

Solicitor Witt stated if the original minutes were sent out to everyone, a motion could be made to approve those minutes, the original draft of those minutes. He added they can be approved with amendments as well.

Mayor Lincoln made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 15, 2023 City Council Meeting as originally sent out. His motion was seconded by Councilman Tom Karpiak.

**Resolution No. 9-4-2023:** “To accept the minutes from the August 15, 2023 City Council Meeting as originally sent out.”

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmen Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Mayor Lincoln. Councilwoman Tiberio voted nay. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-5-2023:** “To waive the Four-Day Resolution Rule to allow for items submitted after the Four-Day Rule to be read at the meeting tonight, such Resolutions will be marked with an asterisk.”

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

Mayor Lincoln announced Trick or Treat has been changed to Sunday night, the 29<sup>th</sup> from 6 PM – 8 PM

**Resolution No. 9-6-2023:** “To set Trick or Treat in the City of Connellsville for Sunday, October 29, 2023 from 6:00 PM until 8:00 PM.”

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

#### **MAYOR LINCOLN:**

Police Department Report by Police Chief Hammerle

Mayor Lincoln questioned if the new servers and body cams arrived.

Chief Hammerle answered yes and they will be trained to use them.

Mayor Lincoln stated on the agenda, they will vote to accept Captain Huss’s retirement letter. He stated they are looking to hire his replacement and be doing testing to replace him.

Chief Hammerle stated that begins a series of events. He noted the first promotion test is for the position that will be vacated by him as Captain. He continued, pending whoever gets that position, other positions will need filled. He stated the Civil Service Board does all the testing.

Chief Hammerle discussed the new hire, Noah Hough. He stated Noah is a Connellsville resident from right outside of the City. He continued that he works part-time in Brownsville and has worked as a part-time police officer in various municipalities for a few years now. Chief Hammerle stated he has a

Bachelor's Degree is Criminal Justice, which is a 4-year degree and graduated from Connellsville High School. He noted Noah is around 25 or 27 years old and scored high on the entrance test.

Mayor Lincoln stated they will swear him in in October before he starts in November.

Councilman Keedy commended the Police Department for an incident last Wednesday or Thursday night. He stated he tried to pull onto Fayette Street and there was a car on the sidewalk. He added he told an officer and in a matter of minutes the car was gone.

Mayor Lincoln stated he and the Chief discussed cameras at the Public Works Building where the recycling dumpsters will be and at the parking lot for added security. He noted the recycling dumpster is now gone but the glass recycling is still there. Mayor Lincoln stated the County will be providing a green dumpster. He added there will be signs that state when the dumpster is full, putting garbage on the ground is not permissible and you will be charged with littering. Mayor Lincoln reminded residents the City does not take electronics; however, Uniontown Recycling Center does. He stated that Special Investigation monies will cover the cost of the cameras at the garage. Mayor Lincoln discussed Washington Avenue's park and that cameras need to be placed in the park.

**Discussion:** PMRS Pension Plan, Min. Municipal Obligation, Clerk notifies Council of that obligation.

City Clerk, Vernon Ohler stated this is to notify City Council what the MMO will be for 2024. He noted that it will be around \$100 less.

**Discussion:** To permit PA American Water permission to remove the brick from East Cedar Avenue when doing their upcoming waterline replacement project and replace the brick with asphalt.

Mayor Lincoln stated PA American Water is asking permission to remove brick to pave Cedar Avenue. He added the City will keep the bricks and coordinate with Jim Bigam, Street Foreman.

**Discussion:** Remind residents that have "Auto-Pay" for their garbage that they will not be paying County Hauling after November 1<sup>st</sup>, and if they still would like the "Auto-Pay" option it could be set up through the CMA office.

Mayor Lincoln stated beginning November 1<sup>st</sup> the Municipal Authority will be taking over the billing for the garbage collection. He added that citizens who have "auto-pay" through County Hauling, "Make sure that you change that to end October 31<sup>st</sup>." Mayor Lincoln announced the Municipal Authority has "auto-pay" available and created a social media page for their sewage and for the garbage collection. He stated this page will keep you informed with what is going on with garbage collection and bills since the first few months will be learning everything new. Mayor Lincoln announced this October 7<sup>th</sup> will be the last time we have a fall clean-up day in the City, and noted there will be one clean-up every spring. He stated if you are delinquent, the Municipal Authority can use PA American Water to shut off your water.

Councilman Karpiak stated he spoke with two people with the garbage company and is hoping that satisfaction is higher than what it was before.

Mayor Lincoln added he would like to see the Daily Courier do an article on the Municipal Authority taking over the bills and the Good To Know program meet with someone from the Municipal Authority for an explanation of the changes taking place.

City Clerk Ohler stated he and the Municipal Authority have been meeting weekly to finalize everything and Thursday they will meet with the commercial haulers.

Mayor Lincoln added Republic will have the commercial businesses in the City. He added he is aware there are businesses that currently do not have dumpsters or cans and they will be contacted and made to be compliant.

**Resolution No. 9-7-2023:** “To appoint Barbara Bielecki to the Connellsville Housing Authority Board; term to expire the first Monday in January 2024.”

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-8-2023:** “To grant Mayor Greg Lincoln permission to sign for all necessary paperwork on behalf of the City of Connellsville for the PennDOT Multimodal Grant.”

City Clerk Ohler stated this is for the wall at East Park on Wills Road.

Mayor Lincoln added this will ensure the safety of that wall for 35 to 40 years.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-9-2023:** “To introduce Bill No. 7 of 2023; An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Connellsville, Pennsylvania, approving the vacation of a portion of an unnamed alley located in the City of Connellsville, County of Fayette.”

Solicitor Witt explained there was a request for an unopened paper alley and the City must go through a formal process to vacate the alley. He continued the property owner must sign off to reopen them. He explained a city resident had passed away and the family petitioned the city to vacate a very small portion of that alley.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-10-2023:** “To accept the retirement letter of Jason Huss from the Connellsville Police Department effective October 16, 2023.”

Mayor Lincoln stated Jason has been with the City for 20 years.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-11-2023:** “To grant the Chief of Police permission to conduct testing to fill the Captain’s position.”

Mayor Lincoln questioned what the qualification are to apply for the Captains position.

Chief Hammerle answered, without looking at the ordinance, he believes it is five years of experience here and you have to have rank to take a promotion test. He stated he believes the Corporals have to have had that position for at least three years so there are a couple of corporals who cannot take it.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-12-2023:** “To hire Noah G. Hough as Patrolman for the Connellsville Police Department with a start date of November 1, 2023; salary reflected by the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City and the Connellsville Police Officers Association; funds taken from line item 410.142.”

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-13-2023:** “To permit the City Clerk to submit a Statewide Local Shares Account Grant on behalf of the City for renovations to the Bandshell and walkways at East Park.”

Mayor Lincoln questioned what was going on with the bandshell.

City Clerk Ohler stated he had a conversation today with representatives of Widmer Engineering and PA Historical Commission. He noted he felt the bandshell would fall under that category, and surprisingly, it does not. He stated that Widmer Engineering is willing to do the engineering and design on their dime. He added, if need be, the City can go after them as well.

Solicitor Witt stated that could be discussed in an Executive Session.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-14-2023:** “To grant the City Clerk permission to submit a GO Laurel Highlands Grant to fund staff at the Connellsville Visitors Center for the 2024 season.”

Mayor Lincoln stated he was happy to learn that the City has now been visited by all 50 states. He commended Yough River Trail Council for reaching out to North Dakota and inviting them.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-15-2023:** “To grant the City Clerk permission to submit a GO Laurel Highlands Grant on behalf of the City for upgrades with parking in East Park.”

Mayor Lincoln questioned if pickleball lines could be made at the tennis court at East Park.

James Bigam, Street Foreman, stated they could do it. Bigam explained why that could not be done right now with moss and a water issue they are having at the park. He added they got the creek cleared out last week and they have no water to clean with.

Mayor Lincoln questioned if there needs to be a whole new water line in East Park.

James Bigam stated the prints show the water line from the restrooms to pavilion #3, right underneath the slab. He added they dug and cannot find it. He added they have to winterize the park because those lines are above ground. He continued they come underneath pavilion #1 and #2, then up in the asphalt all the way back up into the park where the leak is.

Mayor Lincoln questioned if they could eliminate the line where the problem is and run a new line.

James Bigam stated they did a new line, “Nevaeh did it three years ago and have a sprinkler system 20 feet from the restroom and down by the concession stand and the section that wraps around back to the restrooms is where this is a break somewhere.”

Mayor Lincoln questioned if they could tap into it at the building and run a new line straight to the pavilion and eliminate that line?

James Bigam stated they have to cut through the road and that is where they are at right now. He added that now there are no rentals there and children, they just did not want to tear up the roads with that going on. It added the sewage and water lines are all on the same path which is straight down from the gate on the asphalt.

City Clerk Ohler noted that both grants have paving involved, so it would be an easy fix.

Mayor Lincoln stated he feels an entire new water line is what is needed.

James Bigam stated from Pavilion #3 down is new and the playground to the water fountain is new.

Councilman Topper stated after the water lines are in and we discussed pressure washing the tennis courts; "Can you paint the line for pickleball?"

James Bigam answered yes.

Councilman Topper stated they discussed fixing the bandshell and getting parking. He noted the parking will be helpful to those utilizing the pavilions. He continued that the Recreation Board wants to go back to having movie nights and events down there with utilizing the bandshell. Councilman Topper stressed that parking will be a great help with that.

City Clerk Ohler added the plans were for approximately 20 parking spaces.

Mayor Lincoln questioned if there will be a gate to keep people from driving in the park.

James Bigam stated he will speak with Chief Layton to find out how big the gate will need to be in order to get a fire truck down there.

Mayor Lincoln brought up the playground equipment that has that broken bridge. He stated they are going to have to put up something so they cannot go into that side of the playground.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-16-2023:** "To permit the City Clerk in conjunction with the Board of the Carnegie Free Library of Connellsville to submit for a Keystone Grant for Public Library Facilities, through the City of Connellsville, with match funding being the responsibility of the Library Board."

Councilman Keedy stated the repairs to the front façade on the library are approximately \$350,000. He noted the front of the building has been roped off with scaffolding for a while now.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-17-2023:** "To amend the agenda for consideration of a motion to approve placement of camera devices with the city."

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-18-2023:** “To authorize the Pennsylvania State Police and the Fayette County District Attorney’s Office to mount camera devices in designated locations within the city and to approve any associated agreements, if required, at no cost to the City.”

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**REMINDERS:**

September 24<sup>th</sup>, Living Historians meeting, Crawford's Cabin, 2:00 PM, FREE, Kids will be provided with 18th century games, bring your friends and family that may be interested as well to join our group, If we can find the wooden muskets, we will teach musket drills. Contact BEN HOFFMAN

September 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>, New Haven Hall Fall Festival, Car Show is October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 PM-5PM

September 30<sup>th</sup>, New Haven Hose Fall Festival Parade, 4 PM

September 30<sup>th</sup>, Farmer’s Market, 8 AM –2 PM, October 12<sup>th</sup>, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5 PM–8 PM, N Arch Street

September 30<sup>th</sup>, Chamber’s Yard Sale, 8 AM – 2 PM, 724-628-5500 for information

October 7<sup>th</sup>, Tangled Up In Brew, Yough River Park, 6 PM – 10 PM, tickets are \$20 and they are almost sold out, Sponsored by the Recreation Board, \$20 tickets

October 7<sup>th</sup>, Cleanup Day, Place items at curb the evening before. Mayor Lincoln stated this is the last fall cleanup in the city.

October 8<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> Fall Foliage Ride/Walk, Yough River Bike Trail Council, <https://youghrivertrail.com> for registration forms

October 29<sup>th</sup>, Trick or Treat, 6 PM – 8 PM

October 31<sup>st</sup>, New Haven Hose’s Halloween Parade, 7 PM

November 4<sup>th</sup>, Warriors Rock Concert, 7 PM, Sr. High School

November 18<sup>th</sup>, Christmas in the Park, Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, 724-628-5500, The Chamber is seeking donations for treat bags. Please call the Chamber for arrangements

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Christmas Parade, 5 PM, Green Street to 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Chamber of Commerce

December 7<sup>th</sup>, Toy Drive by the Chamber, Aaron’s Building, 5 PM – 8 PM

December 16<sup>th</sup>, Laying of the Wreaths by CAHS Patriots, Bus leaves 9 AM at Sr. High School

Councilman Keedy stated December 2<sup>nd</sup> will be a Stuff A First Responders Vehicle, 12 PM – 3 PM

**COUNCILMAN KEEDY:**

Councilman Keedy questioned City Council Members as to which days and times works best for them for the budget meetings.

**Resolution No. 9-19-2023:** “To advertise and schedule the Budget Meetings for the following dates and times: October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 5 PM; Meetings to be held in City Council Chambers, City Hall.”

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-20-2023:** “To increase the salary of part-time clerk, Eadie Check, from \$10.00 to \$11.00 beginning October 1, 2023; money to be taken from line item #403.144.”

Mayor Lincoln stated he would like to see raises for the police dispatchers because they clearly do not make anything. He added he does not understand how they can do this now when they are working on the budget for 2024. He requested discussing the budget first and see what is there. Mayor Lincoln questioned giving \$1 an hour raise, and noted that is a 10% raise. He added that most employees with the city only get a 3% raise. Mayor Lincoln stated again that he does not know why this cannot wait and questioned the rush of this resolution.

Councilman Keedy questioned City Treasurer Weaver if she is ok with waiting until after the budget process.

Treasurer Weaver replied that she would like the raise now because Eadie has been doing the work alone, all year. Weaver stated, “She is handling several million dollars and we have had no problems.”

Mayor Lincoln questioned why is it being raised a dollar. He questioned how that can be justified.

Councilwoman Tiberio stated she is underpaid.

Mayor Lincoln stated all the employees are underpaid.

Treasurer Weaver stated before she goes out of office, she would like to correct that. She continued that they have been underpaid for many years and are responsible for millions of dollars. She stated she feels that it is fair.

Mayor Lincoln stated he is not against giving her a raise but feels they need to go through the budget process and then give a raise. He stated again that he does not understand the urgency right now.

Councilman Karpiak questioned if there is money there.

Councilman Keedy stated that Dawn left so there is money there to cover the dollar an hour increase for this year. He added the question is will there be money there for next year.

Treasurer Weaver added they have only been operating with one clerk since Dawn left.

Mayor Lincoln stated that because there is money in a line item, does not mean you have to spend that money. He added they have to go through the budget to see where they are financially for the whole city. He continued "Who knows where we will be sitting financially for 2024. Just because there is money in a line item does not mean that money should be spent."

Councilman Keedy stated he was hesitant at first because it is a dollar an hour increase. He continued he began looking around at what other tax clerks make an hour.

Treasurer Weaver added it is hard to find people.

Councilman Keedy stated the majority of tax office workers are \$14 to \$15 an hour. He continued he was hesitant, because he did not think that they could do it but if there is money to pay for it this year and the fact that \$11 an hour is still underpaying that office.

Mayor Lincoln stated the dispatchers in the Police Department make \$7.75 an hour.

Treasurer Weaver stated they are underpaid.

Mayor Lincoln agreed that they are underpaid. He added some person has been working here since 2009 and is making \$7.75 an hour for 14 years for our Police Department. Mayor Lincoln noted again that just because there is money in a line item does not mean you have to spend it and they have no idea where the city will be sitting financially for 2024 until we have our budget process to see where we are at.

Councilman Karpiak questioned if she will have an opportunity to go full-time or doesn't she want full time.

Mayor Lincoln answered there is no full-time position in the office.

Treasurer Weaver added she gets no benefits.

Councilman Keedy stated there is no need for a full-time clerk there.

Councilman Topper questioned if another clerk is being hired.

Treasurer Weaver answered yes. She added that in the spring, they cut back hours.

Councilwoman Tiberio questioned the average hours.

Treasurer Weaver answered in the next 24 hours it will get very busy because the CoreLogic will be coming in and we will be using everyone.

Mayor Lincoln stated there are full-time employees, with benefits, making \$12 an hour.

Councilman Topper stated he wants to make sure they do what is right. He added he does not want to give them a raise and then meet next week or in a couple of weeks for the budget and find out they are really tight. He continued they can be pointing to that and other things, then next year at a budget meeting find they did not have the extra money and going back to them saying "we may not be able to work you as much."

Treasurer Weaver stated the point is that the City is also saving money.

Councilman Topper added he wants to be sure they are doing right by them and not rushing something that could have been a better discussion during the budget period which will be between now and the next three weeks.

Treasurer Weaver stated it is not going to change.

Councilman Keedy questioned if the School District reimburses half of that salary.

City Clerk Ohler answered yes.

Councilman Keedy stated that would then be only a 50 cent an hour increase for the City. He added that would be an increase of \$700 in that line-item next year.

City Clerk Ohler stated with all the increases, that payment went up around \$6,000.

Councilman Keedy stated he feels that they can pay for it.

Councilman Topper questioned if they can ask them moving forward, as discussed before, "This needs to be a budget discussion and not discussed in the middle of the year."

Treasurer Weaver stated she had that discussion at the Budget Meeting last year and was denied a raise. She continued that she does not expect them to give her anything at budget time because she was not given anything last year and added the money is there.

Councilman Topper stated due to Councilman Keedy's recommendation, he will vote yes.

Councilman Karpiak stated since the school district pays half, he will vote yes.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-21-2023:** "To hire Katie Farrell as a part time Tax Clerk, beginning September 20, 2023, at an hourly rate of \$10.00 per hour; money to be taken from line item 403.144."

Mayor Lincoln stated, again, what is the rush to hire someone in September when tax season is over and what taxes are we collecting?

Treasurer Weaver answered school taxes.

Mayor Lincoln questioned what the percentage is with people paying their taxes this late.

Treasurer Weaver stated it is the mortgage payments now and there are a couple thousand of those.

Mayor Lincoln questioned how they came up with a \$10 an hour starting salary. He asked again "Where did that number come out of?"

Treasurer Weaver stated "I just think that it is time."

Mayor Lincoln stated "I am going back to the Police Department, where there are three dispatchers getting paid \$7.75 an hour and somehow, we are starting a new person, who has never worked for the city, \$10 an hour. That is \$2.25 more an hour than these people who have been here for years. We are paying someone off the street \$10 an hour."

Treasurer Weaver stated she is also a trained accountant and does budgeting.

Mayor Lincoln stated he is not saying she is not qualified and wants to know how she came up with \$10 an hour. He questioned if Dawn started at \$10 an hour.

Treasurer Weaver stated she started at \$9 an hour.

Mayor Lincoln stated he is not against hiring people and wants to know what the rush is right now.

Treasurer Weaver stated the Police Department is not her concern. She added it is the Police Chief's concern to raise salaries. She noted she is there to speak on behalf of her employees.

Mayor Lincoln noted they are doing this three weeks before the budget process regardless of the school district is reimbursing or not, he does not understand not waiting for the budget process.

Councilman Keedy questioned Treasurer Weaver if she would be ok with starting her at \$9 an hour. He added after the budget process, if they can raise it to \$10, they will then.

Treasurer Weaver answered she does not know if she will come to work for \$9 an hour.

Mayor Lincoln stated leave it there. He noted he is not against paying people, he wants to follow the process of it. He noted they are starting people out at a lot more than other people started out.

Councilman Karpiak questioned if the City needs her.

Treasurer Weaver answered yes.

Councilman Topper questioned if they could be open during lunch with two people. He stated he was questioned about it since this is when some people only have the ability to come down and pay their taxes.

Treasurer Weaver answered with two people, yes, they can have it open.

Mayor Lincoln stated that now that they will have two employees, they will be open.

Councilman Keedy noted the goal is not to have two employees all the time. He added there is not a lot of overlap. He asked Treasurer Weaver if that is correct.

Treasurer Weaver stated she is hoping to have two working during this CoreLogic swamp that is going to be coming.

Mayor Lincoln stated there is Shanea and she is a full-time employee. He clarified that Shanea and a part-time employee will be working at the same exact time. He questioned, "Do we not have office hours here? Do they not work the same hours?"

City Clerk Ohler answered they are here at the same time and take lunch at the same time.

City Treasurer Weaver stated they are two different departments.

City Clerk Ohler replied she (Shanea) works both different offices.

City Treasurer Weaver stated she can work both offices but she has not been working in my department because she has so much of her own.

Mayor Lincoln questioned "Is not her title "Bookkeeper/Tax Clerk?"

City Clerk Ohler answered yes.

Mayor Lincoln informed the City Treasurer "That is her title, so she has to be working both." He added "That is how we set up her position is that she is Tax Clerk and Bookkeeper."

Mayor Lincoln asked Solicitor Witt if he was correct.

Solicitor Witt stated yes.

Mayor Lincoln added if there are concerns with the office being open during lunch, then figure that out.

Councilman Topper stated he just had a question and it was not like people banging down the door.

Treasurer Weaver noted they can put taxes through the door slot, too.

City Clerk Ohler questioned if Katie was only working on Wednesdays because that is the day that Eadie could not work.

Treasurer Weaver answered correct.

City Clerk Ohler clarified, "Katie is only working one day a week?"

Treasurer Weaver answered "She will be working several days. They will figure out their own schedule once she starts. I do not know if it will be three, two or one. They will both be working plus I will be working to get the CoreLogic stuff done."

Councilman Keedy stated he thinks that Shanea told him the goal was to be 4 and 1, but when the escrows come in, Katie may be here more to assist with the escrows. He stated again that the goal is 4 and 1 with Wednesday being the day that Katie will be here except for when the escrows are here.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

#### **COUNCILMAN KARPIAK:**

##### Health Officer's Report

Health/Code/Zoning Officer, Tom Currey, reminded residents that garbage is to be in cans with lids at all times. He reminded everyone that we are in burning season and besides recreational, you can only burn on Wednesday and Saturday.

Mayor Lincoln stated that is a great thing. He noted there has been an issue on a certain part of the southside with a resident burning yard waste. He questioned if we have approved burning firepits or something that residents have to use? He added they cannot just throw their yard waste on the ground and set it on fire.

Tom Currey replied that is correct, it must be contained.

Mayor Lincoln questioned what do they consider contained and are there guidelines on what that is.

Tom Currey answered it is in the ordinance, yes.

Mayor Lincoln asked Mr. Currey to inform council of what that is.

Tom Currey stated the fire has to be attended at all times, there has to be some way to put it out at all times and must be contained at all times. Burn barrels must have a screen on top. He added that ordinance is available on-line.

Mayor Lincoln added all the ordinances are on-line at Connellsville.US.

New Haven Hose by Bill Addis

Mayor Lincoln thanked New Haven for their assistance with the storm that came by when half the city lost power. He acknowledged that at 2:30 AM New Haven Hose was out helping until 8 PM that night. He thanked New Haven Hose.

Fayette EMS Report read by Councilman Karpiak

Councilman Karpiak reminded residents that when they get a Fayette EMS's envelope in the mail requesting support, do not forget about them.

Councilman Karpiak read Gwen McPoyle's letter of resignation from the Board of Health. Letter is available upon request.

Councilman Karpiak noted this is with a heavy heart they have to receive something like this. He added he wishes her the best and if there is anything they can do, he hopes she feels free to ask.

**Resolution No. 9-24-2023:** "To accept the resignation of Gwen McPoyle from the Connellsville Board of Health effective immediately."

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-22-2023:** "To adopt Bill No. 6 of 2023, An ordinance AMENDING SECTION 3 OF ORDINANCE NO. 1471 FOR THE LANDLORD REGISTRATION AND OCCUPANCY ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CONNELLSVILLE, ENACTED ON NOVEMBER 12, 2009."

Mayor Lincoln added this was introduced last month and will take effect ten days after this meeting.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

**Resolution No. 9-23-2023:** “To have Connellsville City Council direct the Code Enforcement Officer to grant a Ten (10) Day warning period for compliance to violators before citations will be issued with the Quality-of-Life Ordinance No. 1556.”

Mayor Lincoln questioned Tom Currey what this will do to the Quality-of-Life Ordinance with changing from instantaneous to ten days.

Tom Currey replied it is now ten days added to the process and another inspection.

Mayor Lincoln questioned what happens after that.

Tom Currey answered that if there is a property with a violation, they get a warning letter stating they are in violation of the Quality-of-Life and this is your ten-day notice to correct your violation. He stated he goes back to inspect in eleven days and if it is still in violation, he will write a Quality-of-Life ticket and post it to the door and go back to where he started from.

Councilman Keedy stated that even though the Quality-of-Life does not specify it is instantaneous, do you have the authority to give a notice anyway?

Tom Currey replied he could but it specifically states not to.

Councilman Keedy continued they got the ordinance and eliminated the instantaneous when you can already give a warning.

Tom Currey stated it is up to council and it is their call.

Mayor Lincoln stated after talking with Councilman Karpiak, he found it was discussed at the Health Board and the Health Board is good with giving a ten-day warning.

Tom Currey answered correct.

Mayor Lincoln questioned what their reasoning is.

Tom Currey explained when they went from what was originally being done to the Quality-of-Life, that was a fundamental change in what they were doing. He noted they would go to people with a letter asking them to correct the violation and then with the Quality-of-Life we go to them and say “You should know better and here is the Quality-of-Life ticket.” He clarified they went from no warning to a ticket.

Mayor Lincoln questioned after the ten days, he goes back and finds they did nothing, do they get a ticket?

Tom Currey answered yes and they have 10 days to appeal it and 14 days to pay it.

Mayor Lincoln questioned what happens when they end up at Haggerty’s office.

Tom Currey answered that 90% of the time the judge states they have two options: A hearing at his office which will cost \$300 if they are found guilty or you can pay the ticket at City Hall. He continued that people are not reading their tickets and assuming there is something wrong.

Mayor Lincoln questioned if the judge is granting extensions.

Tom Currey replied he is once in a blue moon. He added there were two cases that he dismissed the Quality-of-Life tickets and got rid of all of them.

Councilman Keedy questioned if people are paying their tickets.

Tom Currey answered yes there are here. He added he does not know the number at Haggerty's because he is not supposed to check that number or be aware of that number.

Mayor Lincoln stated he is not to make money for the city, he is there to enforce codes.

Tom Currey replied correct.

Councilman Keedy asked that if the people who are paying the tickets becoming more compliant.

Tom Currey answered they typically are. He added that most also are compliant with a ten-day warning. He noted there is a small percentage that cannot comprehend it or are able to figure it out and those folks get the tickets.

Councilwoman Tiberio stated that he issues a warning and they cut the grass, but if they are a repeat offender, do they get a second warning.

Tom Currey answered if it is in the same season, he will not give another warning.

Councilman Topper questioned if that would be for anything. He stated if they went by parcel id and say "This parcel ID got their warning for their grass and later in the year they have a car sitting there. Are they still afforded a warning?" He questioned if that was considered separate offense.

Tom Currey stated that is up to council. He noted what he typically does is consider what the scenario is.

Mayor Lincoln added that Tom does the vehicles that are off of the street and police handle on the street. He continued that he reports abandoned vehicles to Patrolman Layton and the process they use is to run the plate, locate who the owner is, notify them that they have a certain period of time to get the vehicle street legal and if they do not, they get a large citation and the car is towed to an impound lot. He added that is another amount of money for them to pay.

Councilman Topper stated his feelings are when he first sat on council and the original ordinance was a lot more and a lot of people do not understand that council chopped a lot out of that ordinance. He added it could have been a lot tougher and we tried to hit the big stuff. He continued there was a

warning at first because it is tough to get that information out to people of what the rules are. Councilman Topper noted there are cops that write warnings every day and we try to work with people and give them the benefit of the doubt. He added he would like to see the fine go up if they do not comply. He noted that if they do not adhere to the warning, it should not be just a \$50 fine. Councilman Topper added since there is a second inspection and more of the code officer's time, the fine should be doubled if you do not adhere to the warning. He noted that by giving a warning, that shows that the city is trying to work with people and he hopes they do not make the city regret that.

Mayor Lincoln stated the City goes above and beyond to get the word out. He added residents can look at the City's ordinances at [Connellsville.us](http://Connellsville.us). He noted they can be viewed 24 hours/7 days a week. He continued that if you own a business here, like a business owner who has owned a business in the City for 30 plus years, wrote a letter to the editor. He added it is not the City's fault that he does not know the ordinances because they are readily available. Mayor Lincoln stated when we sent him his tax bills in March, inside your tax bill there is an informational sheet, front and back, that tells you the ordinances. He continued it tells you about grass, garbage, and all of those things. Mayor Lincoln stated the city has done more than their fair share of what the ordinances are. He stated as adults we need to take responsibility and learn what this is rather than going on a rant on the Letter to the Editor about our city. He clarified that the city has done everything in their power to let people know that they need to maintain their properties and follow the guidelines. He added he is fine with the warning as long as it is one warning only and he wants to be sure that is clarified and people understand that they will get a ticket after that.

Councilman Tiberio agreed and noted there is a lot of follow-ups after that. She added she agrees that the fines need to be increased as well.

Councilman Keedy questioned increasing the fines; "Do they need to amend the ordinance?"

Mayor Lincoln stated there is a scale from \$50 to \$300.

Tom Currey answered at Haggerty's it is \$300.

Councilman Karpiak stated what we are doing is working and what we are looking for is compliance. He added we are gaining compliance and also fining people. He stated "It does not all come down to the real bad guys doing their dirtiest by not cutting their grass. It is a single mother who did not get to it, who told her son to do it and he did not do it and she cannot get him off of a video game long enough to do it. There is that kind of thing out there too. A \$50 fine is a lot of money and they cannot afford it. We do not have a payment plan and that might be something that we may want to look in to. As far as Haggerty goes, he is looking for compliance, not fines. He called me and we had a conversation about this. Haggerty told me we are fining people who cannot read the ticket. This is a sad fact of this town. Before when we were warning people and not getting anywhere with it, we had no teeth. Now we have teeth. Those same people that we have warned are going to get it. The next time we go through and give warnings, for the real bad people, it is only going to be eleven more days before they get the ticket. There are those out there who are never going to learn the easy way, they will learn the hard way. When you sit in on these hearings, some of them, you wish you could double fine right then and there. Others,

because we are going by the book, if there is one thing Tom is, he is by the book, this will give him “by the book leeway.” This will also give the people hearing the appeals a bit of leeway also.” Councilman Karpiak explained we can warn people to do the right thing and the board will not have to levy fines. He added this is a good thing but not the cure all.

Councilman Topper stated it can be changed back if we regret it. He added we all live in this small city and want it to look nice.

City Council discussed how they wanted the resolution to read as far as warnings.

The resolution was re-read:

**Resolution No. 9-23-2023:** “To have Connellsville City Council direct the Code Enforcement Officer to grant a Ten (10) Day warning period for compliance to violators before citations will be issued with the Quality-of-Life Ordinance No. 1556 for each first violation.”

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. Councilman Keedy voted nay. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

#### **COUNCILMAN TOPPER:**

Councilman Topper stated that Tangled Up In Brew tickets are selling fast. He added that it is one of the biggest fundraisers of the year and brings a lot of money to the city parks. He noted there will be a very large park project going on at 12th Street Park. He stated Christmas in the Park at Yough Park is always a very good event. Councilman Topper stated they want to get more events at East Park.

**Resolution No. 9-25-2023:** “To grant permission to Diana DeWitt in conjunction with the Connellsville Recreation Board to hold a Softball Tournament at Woodruff Park on October 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in honor of her son Colton DeWitt.”

Councilman Topper stated as soon as we get information on this, we will put it on our Facebook Page and try to help get the word out on the two-day event.

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

Councilman Topper stated they are working on the Spring Fling signs and want them to be up for a very long time. He added they want to be sure they do it right before they move forward.

The following resolution was tabled.

**Resolution No. -2023:** “To approve the purchasing of new signs for each City park from Green Ridge Signs in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_; with money to be taken from sponsorships of “Spring Fling and Recreation Line item #450.00K.”

**COUNCILWOMAN TIBERIO:**

Public Works Report by James Bigam

James Bigam thanked New Haven Hose for helping with cleaning up the trees during the last storm throughout the City.

Mayor Lincoln thanked James Bigam for all his work at Austin Park for the dedication.

Mayor Lincoln and James Bigam discussed the parks security.

Treasurer Weaver thanked the Public Work’s Department for cleaning up the gravel on the back side of Wesley Methodist Church.

**Resolution No. 9-26-2023:** “To grant approval to PennDOT to perform night work for the 2025 Traffic Light Project along the Route 119 corridor. Work hours would be from 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM when traffic volumes are lower.”

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.

City Clerk Ohler stated they will begin tomorrow on the storm drain project on East Crawford Avenue.

**Resolution No. 9-27-2023:** “That this meeting of the City Council does hereby adjourn.”

A vote upon the adoption of the resolution resulted as follows: Affirmative were Councilmembers Karpiak, Topper, Keedy and Tiberio and Mayor Lincoln. The majority of the votes being affirmative, the resolution was adopted.