



City of Coatesville
Regular Meeting – 1 City Hall Place, Coatesville, PA
Council Chambers
Monday, February 26, 2024

Council Present: President Lavender-Norris; Vice President Carmen Green, Councilwoman Tiniera Turner-Green, Councilwoman Villa Hunt, and Councilwoman Fran Scamuffa

Council Absent: Councilwoman Khadijah Al A min and Councilwoman Charrisse Allen

Staff Present: James Logan, City Manager; Roberta Cosentino, Assistant City Manager; Chief Jack Laufer, Police Department; Richard Troutman, Finance Director; Ruthann Mowday, Recording Secretary

President Lavender Norris announced an Executive Session was held earlier this evening to discuss personnel, real estate and legal matters.

President Lavender Norris announced Ms. Al Amin and Ms. Allen would not be in attendance,

Approved Minutes

Vice President Green made a motion to approve the February 12, 2024 meeting minutes; Ms. Turner-Green seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Accounts Payables

Vice President Green made a motion to approve the accounts payables; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Presentations

a. Dave Terry – F.I.S.H

Mr. Terry wished everyone a good evening. I guess I spoke with Mr. Logan about-- they're not events. The State of Pennsylvania stocks trout for Youth Mentor Day, and they also do it for the opening day of trout season. They do not stock our section of the river. I think most of you guys know that they don't. This year, I raised a personal amount of money, and I'm going to stock it for the Youth Mentor Day, which is March 30th. And whatever I have left over from that, I will roll over to April 6th, which will be the first day of trout season. So, it will be the City of Coatesville first opportunity for kids and adults to fish the opening season of trout season. What I would also like to do is-- you guys know that we've camped out for our events, most of these familiar faces. And I was asking permission if this year for the season opener for the adults if we could camp out Friday and Saturday night. These are events through the city. It would be just a public thing. So, I don't know if anybody on their staff or the council understands the opening of trout season. But it's a pretty big deal in the southeastern Pennsylvania. In places like Hibernia Park, they allow camping. There used to be a huge section out in [inaudible] that people used to camp out, and. It got ruined, and it got posted, and they were no longer allowed to do it. And I'm just trying to bring that opportunity back actually in the City for them to be able to do it and have fun. So I don't know-- yeah, I guess I'm just going to ask permission if we could camp out the-- it would be April 5th and April 6th. Mr. Logan stated yeah. I think, Dave, what we'll have to do is if you filled out the special event application. Mr. Terry asked if this would still be considered an event. Mr. Logan explained yeah, and then that would have to be circulated through each of the

departments that are involved in authorizing that. Mr. Terry asked if he still had enough time to do that. Mr. Logan replied yes. Mr. Terry asked am I going to have to pull out event insurance again for this? Or would it just fall under our organization? Mr. Logan replied yes, and then what I'll do is follow up with you tomorrow after I talk to the chief, and. Because we do have-- in terms of the parks, I don't know if we allow camping in the parks, but this is such a special event. Again, I would have to discuss with the Chief and other departments.

Mr. Terry stated at least you guys know we're cleaning up. I mean, you guys gave us-- we did a Camp Coatesville that one year. That was a really cool event that you guys let us do. But I would never do that in August again. Because that was a brutal weekend. But yeah, so I'll just fill out another event thing? Mr. Logan suggested or just add to current application. Mr. Terry said okay. So I'll be able to advertise it? Because I didn't want to really go too public with it. I mean, if it's okay to go public with it at this point, then. I mean, obviously, we'll invite people. It's a public stream, so anybody can fish it, but. Oh, the other thing I wanted to ask too, I know we can't stop it, but from the first day on, if you guys would allow us to put signs, "Please, if you cannot fish until April 14th, it would be wonderful"? If they do, they do. If they follow the signs, then so be it. You know what I mean? It would be kind of nice because those fish would be able to roll over toward the event as well. It's wishful thinking more than anything. Just anything for the kids, I guess. Mr. Logan replied yeah. No, that shouldn't be a problem. But yes, I'll follow up with you tomorrow morning. Both guys aren't here right now, so. Yeah. We just can't enforce it, right, Chief? If he puts the signs, it just can't be enforced. They can't be there and just [crosstalk]. Mr. Terry said just out of respect. Some people might. Chief, you know how it is. I mean, we could try. It might deter some people. It might not. It is what it is. I mean, we're putting fish in there for people to catch regardless. If we could just keep the [inaudible] for the kids a little bit anyway, it doesn't matter. I mean, we still put 1,000 fish in the weekend after anyway, so. It is what it is. Yeah, we do 1,000 trout in less than a quarter of a mile. Just as a gauge, the Hibernia Park to Lion's Head only puts in about 350 to 400 fish. And that's probably about 1.5 miles, I guess, but rumor is they stopped in the season, so. We put fences up. So we do kids area from-- what's the first one? So the first section is 9 and under. And then the second-- or 11 and under. And then the second section is 12 to 16. And then what makes this also different is we let kids aside from eating fish to be able to teach them and help them out as well. So from the High Arc Bridge to Lincoln Crest, we let the older kids fish. It's a little bit tougher than that due to the [inaudible]. Do you guys have any other questions for event-wise or anything? We're pretty smooth with that. I just wanted to be able to spend some time with some kids on Youth Mentor Day because-- I can't fish. So I'll be able to actually spend a lot of time with other kids and do a lot more one-on-ones if they come.

President Lavender Norris asked are you going down cleaning? Mr. Terry replied yeah. Our cleanup is actually this weekend. March 2nd and 3rd is our typical cleanup. I was down there two weeks ago, and people were taking care of it, and I'm blessed. I mean, it hasn't been nothing like over the years. You were with us the first year. I mean, you remember how bad that was. I mean, it took us, I think, three weekends to make that happen, to actually get it navigable to be able to get to the banks. Now it's usually about a day, but we have two days. We're just going to try to do a little bit of-- make the trails a little bit better to get through. Yeah, I don't know if you guys know that the trails do go. You can walk the bank. You can start at the 182, walk the bank, cross the bridge, and then walk the bank all the way. I don't think anybody knows that, but you can walk the whole creek.

b. TMACC - Tim Phelps

Good evening, everyone. My name is Tim Phelps. I'm the executive director of the Transportation Management Association of Chester County, also known as TMACC. One of the projects that we operate here in the county is ChescoBus, two independent bus services outside of SEPTA service. We serve areas that SEPTA has chosen not to serve, and it is a critical lifeline for those individuals living in those communities. One of the communities that we have been serving for a number of years has been the city of Coatesville. And there are some updates that I'd like to share with the city on what we're working on. First, some facts and stats about the service. Currently today, we're 20 runs every weekday. That's 10 eastbound and 10 westbound. That starts at the former Brandywine Hospital with on-demand stops at the YMCA, travels west out towards Parkesburg, and then concludes there in the Parkesburg. It stops there in Valley Township at the grocery store, and then further out at the Walmart store, which are key connectors for folks in the city. That operates from 5:30 AM in the morning to 7:30 PM, and it is a fixed bus route service. On Saturdays, we were making 13 runs, 7 westbound and 6 eastbound on that service. And that service roughly starts around 7:20 in the morning and goes to 7:20 at night.

Key locations along the corridor, Madison Stroh's is actually one of the transfer points for people to set the service to the 135. The 135 travels further east through the city, and it goes on to Exton and then heads south into the borough of Westchester. On an average, we are over about 2,000 riders that are using this service during the week period of time. Currently, one-way fare is \$2.75. That fair rate has been set and it's been that for four years. When we get into the discussion of the next step or the future of the service, we will be reviewing that price point for that. Key destinations along the corridor - many stops here in the downtown area - the VA Medical Center, West Sadsbury, Walmart, Regency Park apartments, and then Handi-Crafters. For the past 18 months, we've been working with PennDOT on a public transit plan to review the service that we operate here in the Coatesville LINK. And then in the southern portion of the county, we operate the SCOOT bus service. This transit plan was to review how we were delivering service, what opportunities were to bring new technology and new types of service to the region to better service the residents.

Three areas that we were looking at is continue with the fixed bus route service with some modifications to make sure that there is efficiency of service that's happening. The second portion of the service was what's called a flexible route service where there would be zones in the corridor. And then the bus could actually deviate off of those zones to pick folks up within an appointment, so 30 minutes within their bus ride, and when the service is coming through, they could call, make that appointment, and the bus would deviate to pick them up. The third service that we were looking at is the micro-transit service. So this is kind of a curb-to-curb, on-demand service. It happens in a larger geographic area. It's like Uber, but it is not door-to-door. It's curb-to-curb. So we may require you to walk a half of walk down to the curb, whatever makes for the efficient of that bus service. Through our public outreach which we did two community surveys, one last spring and then one this past fall as we work through the routes, we have determined that the best service for the Coatesville marketplace is a microtransit model. There's a little exception to that. We will be running an-- we will be running a fixed route service during peak hours, so that would be from the 5 o'clock in the morning until I'll say 9 o'clock, and then from 9 o'clock until 3 o'clock, we will work on a

microtransit service. And then around 3 o'clock, then we'll move back to a fixed bus route service.

This is what came out in the survey. When our highest ridership was happening, people were interested in making sure that they got from what we call the origin and destination so that they could get from their work points back to the home. That microtransit service, it'll be a larger zone that is around the city of Coatesville. We are looking to have two smaller-sized vehicles that would be able to pick people up at curb to curb and then be able to take them to their appointments. This would include being able to get people to grocery stores, doctor's appointments, educational opportunities, work, through the period of the midday. Some of the things that we are working on is how do we transition into this plan. We know that there will be a lot of public outreach and conversations with social service agencies to make sure that we can work with the clients. We have been working with the Alliance for Health Equity. We do have an ARPA grant through Alliance, which is through the county, to begin to do that public outreach and training so that we can reach individuals who are using the public services and social services in and around the city so that they too can get to their medical and doctor appointments.

And one of the things I forgot to say is during the midday too with that microtransit service, we know how important the Aldis is and the Walmart is. So we will be running some service on demand out to those locations during the day so that people can get to those grocery stores, because they are technically outside of the core zone. We will be working with SEPTA to make sure that we can get to the east. It's a territory issue, but east so that we can connect people to the Thorndale station. So in case people need to get to the train station from the community today, we are able to get them down into the SEPTA service in that way. And it would be a one-seat ride instead of changing buses and getting over to the SEPTA service. We are also waiting for a grant from DBRPC that would also include a bilingual component to our outreach. It would serve both routes, the SCOOT and the lane service. But again, it would be a public outreach campaign so that we can have conversations with the community so they know how to access the program. And we have put the-- in the grant application we've put in, we've made that outline for 18 months because we know that it is a change of behavior and then reinforcement of that behavior. So we are looking forward to rolling out a portion of this come the early fall this year. And so throughout the summer, we'll be working with our local partners. And that is what the public transit system should look like here in the future for the city of Coatesville, something that I know that we can serve more people in the community.

Mr. Logan asked Tim, can you just expand a little bit or explain the on-demand? How does that work in a nutshell? Mr. Phelps said yeah. So there'll be two components for the on-demand side of the microtransit. One, people will be able to call a dispatch number to book that ride. And we're also working with an app, and so that people who are using their phones would be able to use the app on the phone to book that ride. And we're trying to get it as close to a 30-minute lead time as possible. So 30 minutes out from the ride, they could be able to book that and be able to be picked up. Mr. Logan asked is that fare going to be premium other than the regular bus fare? Mr. Phelps said no. So the whole project is to make sure that we stay in the parameters of our current funding stream, which a majority of that is through the PennDOT and a grant coming from the county for that public transit service, as well as municipal contributions such as the city has made to the bus service. We are looking to-- we

will be able to-- we will need to raise the rate for that service. We need to find exactly where that price point needs to be. Fuel is not where it was four years ago, and operating public transit, it does have its impact. But we also know that we're making those choices in-- working with the pricing is, what type of beef does somebody buy, or if they're buying beef at the grocery store, their choice of their foods. Because even a dollar a swing, somebody's using it for two rides a day, five days a week, that's \$10 that people would be spending on their transit. But we're aware what those choices need to be. So, it's a balancing act. Mrs. Hunt asked how early in the morning and how late in the evening will that service be able to operate? Mr. Phelps replied so, that on-demand will only be in the middle of the day. So, we'll go back to the fixed bus route service where the customers are currently using that service to get to and from their work. That's where we know that primary user is today. So, it's leaving that at a comfort level for folks. And then roughly around 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock, then it will go to the microtransit service. And then at 3 o'clock, it will go back to the fixed bus route service, again, to capture those folks that are leaving their work to get back to their home.

Mr. Logan stated and the other question I had was, TMACC, as you all know, and the county were very instrumental in providing bus services from the city of Coatesville to Urban Outfitters. And you did that for almost-- it was supposed to be for a year, and I know you extended it, but many of our residents-- Mr. Phelps replied yeah. So we were operating-- it was referred to as the Outfitter. It was a partnership between PennDOT, Urban, and the county since we were operating the bus service. We managed that program for three years. PennDOT decided to sunset the service. At first, it was heavily used by the employees at Urban Outfitter. Over the last year, that number has dropped off. And I've talked with the folks at Urban. Some of that has to do with some of their hiring practice and retaining practices, and then also the competitiveness of the pack and pick facility as it is to other employment opportunities in and around the city. So that sunset in January. Mr. Logan asked what's the best way for people to stay tuned with what TMACC is offering in the city? You said this was rolling out in the fall. So, what's the best way to kind of keep informed? Mr. Phelps replied we will be posting that on the TMACC website, but we will be working with the city in order to push that communication out so that it resides on the city's website, because the city has a tremendous asset there with the new website. It's also easier for the customers because they know that they can go to the city and go to one spot to find more information.

Discussion Items

There were no discussion items at this time.

Citizens Hearings – Regular Action Items Only (3 Minutes)

Bob Dunlap

Good evening, Mr. Logan, members of the city council, the citizens of Coatesville. My name is Bob Dunlap. I'm one of five trustees representing the West End Firehouse. And West End Fire Company rents our firehouse to the City of Coatesville. We've been negotiating with city managers and administration for over eight months regarding a new lease agreement. Although we have the highest respect for their intent to meet the city budget and provide the best level of-- Ms. Scamuffa said excuse me, Bob. I'm sorry to interrupt. Do you mind just slowing down just a little bit and speaking a little louder into the mic? Mr. Dunlap said sure. Certainly.

As of April 1st, 2024, they will have removed their trucks and will no longer have a firehouse in the West End of Coatesville. Trustees have met with our volunteer firefighters and the President of the Firemen's Relief Association, councilwoman representing the first ward, and consulted with many members of the Firehouse community and its peers, clearly recognizing the importance of the firehouse on the west side of the railroad tracks being a vital necessity to the community and its citizens. After conversations with local business owners, we hear their concerns loud and clear regarding the need for a firehouse presence in the West End and in keeping short response times in emergency situations, recognized that if there's new firehouse coming for the city in upcoming years, we may not play a role in the long-term plans of the city's emergency service. However, we want to do all we can to do until that time arises to protect the community. With the opportunities on driving new business in the West End of Coatesville, increasing populations, new homes being built, and proposed development on the Flats property, the city's emergency services will likely need to expand long before a new firehouse comes to fruition. For over 100 years, we have been and want to continue to be a solution for the city.

There are only a handful of volunteer firefighters left in the city because of the paid firemen and union-created culture that pushes volunteer firefighters out of the city. Volunteer firefighters play an eager role in fighting the city's fires. However, many of them have been forced to fight fires and help volunteer organizations outside the city limits. Pulling out of the West End Fire Company simply sends more volunteers out of the city. The citizens of Coatesville know that your tax dollars are only providing two or three firefighters on duty in the entire city at any given time. The city relies heavily on outside volunteer organizations for assistance and manpower, or response times suffer. Several volunteer firefighters live in the west end of Coatesville operate out of the West End Fire Company and respond quickly to emergency situations. Those volunteers get there faster than the volunteer services from outside the city. Time is precious. Response time saves lives. It's that simple.

Because of all the reasons listed above, the West End Fire Company Board of Trustees recommends and proposes to continue operating under the current lease agreement that we've had in place since 2017, with absolutely no increase in cost to the city and no changes to the agreement with the intent to keep the West End citizens as safe and protected as possible. This gives the city ample time to build this new firehouse and still have a place to store its trucks, paid firefighters, and volunteers. We make over 2,000 square foot living space and three heated engine bays available to the city for only \$1,100 per month, the mere cost of a one-bedroom efficiency apartment in today's environment. The city pays well over double the rent to the Washington Hose Company than it does to the West End Fire. The West End Fire Company welcomes the opportunity to continue to work together with the City for the benefit of our city. We encourage citizens of Coatesville to [inaudible]. Thank you very much. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Robert Tracey Sr.

Mr. Tracey stated he had no comment. Mr. Dunlap explained it all.

Mrs. Hunt made a motion to close citizens hearings on regular action items only; Vice President Green seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Regular Action Items

- a. Receive and consider a motion for first reading and permission for advertisement of an Ordinance authorizing a first amendment to the lease between the City and Washington Hose Lease for the property located at South 4th Avenue and East Lincoln Highway, Coatesville to

provide additional dedicated space for two engines, and additional bunk room, cages for firefighter personal effects, and ancillary storage areas in exchange for an increase of \$10,000 annually.

Vice President Green made a motion to approve a first reading and permission for advertisement of an Ordinance authorizing a first amendment to the lease between the City and Washington Hose Lease for the property located at South 4th Avenue and East Lincoln Highway, Coatesville to provide additional dedicated space for two engines, and additional bunk room, cages for firefighter personal effects, and ancillary storage areas in exchange for an increase of \$10,000 annually; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-1. Ms. Scamuffa was the dissenting vote.

Ms. Scamuffa said I'd like to make a comment, please. Being in the first ward, this is really a difficult decision that's been presented in front of council. And I have to say, I'm having a difficult time with it. I personally would like to see the West End Firehouse at least remain as it stands now at the current numbers that you provided, Mr. Dunlap. I'm just one person. And I do have a special place in my heart for 41 and 43, both departments. I just want to say I'm really struggling with this decision because I want to do what's best for the residents, and it's a twofold situation. So, I'm just going to leave it at that for now. Thank you.

Vice President Green stated I would like to make a comment also. Moving the equipment to Washington Hose is not going to lessen or harm the West End. When the city made the change many, many years ago, most of it was because of the fact that the railroad there was used, and in the event that there was a train coming, that it would slow the process if there was a fire in the West End. Those tracks are not used very, very often anymore. There would not be and for any reason any type of extra delay. A lot of the fire scenes-- I show up at a lot of the fire scenes, and a lot of the times, the other municipalities are here before we are. It's been my experience to see. So, to say that the West End would be at a loss or not safe, I just think that's a little stretch. We're not using them. Those tracks are not being used frequently at all, stopping a train from-- or stopping a firefighter from crossing because of a train coming. And that was the biggest reason why the city did that many, many years ago. We are trying to do our own station. It was fiscally more responsible and sound for us to move to the Washington Hose.

President Lavender Norris stated I hear the comments that we heard today. Those were not the ones that were presented to us prior to. That was just presented to us couple days ago, and people already had went through the process of what we were going to do with the Washington Hose. So I just wanted to be clear that in no way are we putting any of our residents in jeopardy by moving our station. And I think that is a misstatement. I would like to say I have talked with our fire department, our paid guys, our drivers. And it's my understanding that the response time from bridge to bridge is-- is it 16 or 60 seconds? Chief Dobson replied yeah. Bridge to bridge, I guess, 60 to 90 seconds. So pretty much the fire trucks will be in the middle of the city. We have equal responsibility to our residents, not just West End, not just East End, but the entire city. We're sitting in a position of considering the safety of the residents that we represent. This isn't an easy decision, but it's a necessary decision. I know that it won't be as devastating as was just stated because I remember when there was a fire at the West End Firehouse, and it was shut down for a minute, for quite a few minutes, as a matter of fact. But it did not affect the safety of our residents. So I sit in the position with regard to my decision as a result of not just a dollar sign, but the homework, the

research, and the clear understanding that our residents will and shall be safe. Does anyone else have comments?

Mrs. Hunt said I pretty much echo the comments of all of us, Councilwoman Green, Councilwoman Lavender Norris, as well as Councilwoman Scamuffa. And I can understand your concern as being representative for the first-- is that the first ward? For the first ward. But also, I think as Miss Green stated, we have to be conscious of what the West End was trying to put on the city. And those numbers that were given to us tonight is not what was presented to us, which caused us to have to look at a better way to financially continue to support the city. Our financial department has been doing a marvelous job making sure we stay in budget, making sure we have a balanced budget year-to-year, and the demands that are being put on us from the West End Fire House Trustees, who, just so you know, just was not able to handle those demands, and looking at that and then looking at the welfare of the city to make sure that we are still protecting the residents from West End to East End.

Ms. Turner Green stated from the West End to the East End. I too agree with my colleagues that I believe we're doing what's in the best interest for us all the way around. I'm really just going to mirror what was already said. But when this discussion was brought up, the first piece of concern from everyone here was, would it affect response time, right? Would the residents be negatively affected by this change regardless of anything else? And once that question was answered, then we kind of made a decision that was best for everybody. And I don't think that having affections for what has always been done is a good reason to continue to do it.

Vice President Green made a motion to close action items; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Reports

1. Solicitor

Mr. Jefferson explained he has provided a more detailed attorney-client privileged report to Council. Since Council's last meeting: I have communicated and continue to communicate with outside counsel regarding certain litigation matters; continue to provide advice regarding land development matters; drafted the ordinance that was subject to tonight's vote; provided opinions regarding the VPP Zoning Ordinance Amendments; provided opinions regarding a Zoning Hearing Board matter; drafted and mailed a letter to Pro-Tech; provided an opinion regarding the pension ordinance amendment; and provided an opinion regarding the opioid litigation.

And at the end of last council meeting, a question was posed regarding the Sunshine Act and public comment. So I just want to address that and thank you for bringing that up. The Sunshine Act governs what is public comment. It's section 709A. Prior to tonight's meeting, I provided that subsection to city council. When Mr. Verwey, now Judge Verwey, was here, he had an announcement for public comment published, and I provided that this evening as well. That is how it was when Mr. Verwey was the solicitor. Going back in history a little bit further back to 2004, Ms. Maude was able to pull a prior resolution from a different city council, but ours, regarding public comment. It outlined different rules than what was listed in what Mr. Verwey had provided in that time period.

So, one of the things that I can say about this is that the Sunshine Act, while it governs public comment, it doesn't give a lot of details about public comment. So the idea of how long somebody can comment is up to you guys. Whether the rights to talk can be transferable, it's up to you guys. In my review of both the one that Mr. Verwey provided and the resolution from 2004, I didn't see anything regarding the transferability of time. So that is how I came to that conclusion. While I also look to Robert's rules for just sort of guidance, it's not necessarily applicable to public comments. Robert's rules are different, and they're not governed by the Sunshine Act. In looking at that itself, one of the sections was regarding whether City Council could transfer there to time during debate. And Section 43:10 said rights in regards to debate are not transferable. Unless the organization has a special rule in the subject, a member cannot yield an expired portion of his time to another member. It goes on to address other things about that. But based on the totality of the circumstances and the fact that under Robert's rules of order, city council members put in transfer their unexpired time, and based on the way that the two public comments-- the way that Mr. Verwey provided the comment and then the way that the resolution from 2004 was, it was my opinion that the unexpired time is not transferable.

However, City Council is free to amend that and come up with your own rules. And I would encourage you and empower you to do so. Prior boards did it. They did it in 2004. Mr. Verwey did it when he was here. These are your meetings. I want to empower you guys run it the way that you want them to be run. If you want somebody to have six minutes of public comment, go for it. These are your meetings, and I want to empower you. I don't want to be the no person, so come up with it and go with it. I just wanted to educate a little bit to say where I was coming from when I did what I did. So if there are any questions, I may say I'll answer it at the next City Council meeting after I do some research, but just let me know. I'm happy to do it. This is my job, and I like doing this. So that is my entire report unless there are any questions.

President Lavender Norris stated there are no questions, just a comment. We'll stay at three minutes. Thank you. We will not transfer time. Thank you. And if we need to put that in writing, so be it, will do. Thank you so much.

2. City Manager

Mr. Logan stated I'll be brief with my report. I just want to give a brief update on the train station. I know we talked about it a lot. There's been some questions about is it going to be completed in 2025. Our discussions with PennDOT representatives, they are aggressively moving forward. Haven't had a chance to go out and take a look at the progress that they've made out there. There's some work that's being done on Coates. They're still working through the repositioning of the pipe. But it looks like they're going to move forward on that. The train station completion date is 2025. I think it's going to be towards the end of 2025, maybe the first quarter of '26. But they're moving forward. They're very aggressive with their timetable, and we're very happy about that. As part of the whole, I would say, multimodal and transportation efforts, and that includes TMACC, along with the city and the county, the RDA funded a parking study almost two years ago. And that parking study revealed the inadequacies of parking in the City of Coatesville, which we will be addressing this year. Small committees will be formed to talk about some of the recommendations that have been made in reference to the parking study and where our parking assets are throughout the area. This is going to be important as the city continues to grow.

It was mentioned a little bit earlier that we are working on a fire station. We have received \$3 million in funding to start that process. With all of the businesses that are growing and coming to the area, our fire department is going to require a state-of-the-art facility. Partnering with the Washington Hose Company is the first step in that direction. And I think when we look at the expansion of this community, police, fire, just quality of life for residents is going to be paramount for us. So that parking study is going to help us reveal some of those [inaudible] areas. And we have a number of resolutions in play, one being a parking garage that we're looking at on 3rd and Lincoln Highway. Now that parking garage structure will serve a dual purpose. One would be for retail parking for the downtown district. The other would be for our residents. We'll be able to have a lot of parking facility right in the downtown area. The train station will have a surface lot. Now that's going to be 120-plus parking spaces for the commuters. After hours, of course, that will double as another opportunity for some of our patrons in the evening or, say, during the evening hours. The whole parking, train station, and other projects that are going on in the community would be an added bonus to attracting not only more people into the city but more investors as well.

We're also going to be hosting a couple of workforce development initiatives. Once again, we've been able to work with a number of employers in the City of Coatesville and in the region. Vincent Miles, who is not here this evening, but he is working with a number of our utility companies, mainly Pennsylvania American Water. They will be hosting in the month of May a job fair, a career fair, which we hope, if there are any employers in the room here, that you will join us. And that will be held I think at the ninth, tenth high school, not too far from here. We're very excited about that. And that's designed to not only get the job seekers in the city of Coatesville interested in educating on the employers but also bring the employers here so that they can see what talent that we have in this community. We're very excited about that.

And then the last two points I have is affordable housing discussions. We're looking to work closely this year with the county on affordable housing, or A-plus housing as we call it now. And that's affordable housing for our diverse community. We have low-wage earners that live in the City of Coatesville as well as high-wage earners. We want to provide a network of affordable homes that are market-rateable homes as well as affordable homes for low-income individuals or individuals that are looking to kind of scale up. And they'll have a-- instead of going from, let's say, \$900 to \$2,400, we're going to have a few things in the middle. So, we're looking to work with the county on a number of housing initiatives.

And then the last thing I would like to just do is thank everyone that came out this past Saturday for our sixth annual pancake breakfast and book reading hosted by our Parks and Rec Committee and the City of Coatesville. This year, we partnered with Women Destined for Change, Coatesville Public Library, Looker Books, and the NAACP. And this is all part of our Black History Celebration. The Police Department is here on hand. I don't see Dr. Seuss. Oh, there he is over there. He had to read and sprint away, but Lieutenant Ollis, he always comes through with his reading of Green Eggs and Ham. So that was great. And we also had a cameo visit from our Fire Department. Mike and Mike. They were here this Saturday. They shared with kids as well as parents the importance of safety, especially when it comes to checking the fire detectors in their homes. I thought that was a great message that you guys shared with the young people. And we may have some future firefighters in there

too. Also, I just want to thank our state and local officials that were there, Representative Williams, and Carolyn Comitta had her Chief of Staff attend along with Ricky Campbell from Representative Williams Office, and you, all council members that came up that day. Thank you for supporting it. And I hope I didn't miss anyone. But it was a wonderful event, and we just appreciate everyone for coming out. That concludes my report.

3. Assistant City Manager

Ms. Cosentino thanked the Council President. To begin, I'd like to welcome any Spanish speakers and other non-English speakers that need assistance with city matters that we are here to help as best we can. We want everyone to be able to share their questions and concerns. [foreign]. I just want to give you a few updates on our public works department. Public works has been working on some spring cleanup activities. So that means trash pickups throughout the city, especially where we have major issues of illegal dumping. The Public Works Department in the city actually teamed up with the Public Works Department in Valley Township. And they did a cleanup of East Glencrest Road as well because we share responsibility on that road. Public works currently has two mowers. One is about a 2013. One is a 2018. The older mower recently we found out needs a complete engine rebuild. So we are down to one mower currently. We actually went out and got three quotes for a new mower and we're looking at purchasing one. It has a 72-inch cutting deck. It's a Hustler. And the quote came in at \$13,949. Unrelated to that amount of money but on the flip side, good news, is that last week we received notice that because of our increased recycling reporting on our yearly 904 grant, the city will actually be receiving \$13,103.62, which is about double what the city usually receives.

As I mentioned, East Glencrest Road, Millview Basin is currently being worked on. That is a project, just to remind council, that is a collaboration between, again, Valley Township and the city and the county to retrofit the basin and fix a problem that has been there for years. Part of that is that on March 11th, East Glencrest Road will be closed. And they'll be putting up detour signs starting March 8th on that road. Similarly, we mentioned that Coates Street, there's some work happening with PA American Water, but PA American Water is also going to be continuing their service line inventory in March. Actually, starting this week from February 26th through March 8th, PA American Water's asking people to go online to do the survey, but you may also get a knock at your door from somebody from PA American Water that are doing the service line inventories. On March 5th, so that is next week, Tuesday, March 5th, the city in collaboration with Brandywine Conservancy will be hosting a public meeting in this room to hear public comment on flooding in the city. So this is part of the Brandywine Flood Study. They want to hear public comment from city residents, from anyone in and around the city. And it will be advertised. We'll be posting some information about it on our website as well as on our social, as will the Brandywine Conservancy. But that will be Tuesday, March 5th at 6:00 PM in this room. And if anyone has anything that they'd like to share about their experience or knowledge of flooding in the city, it would be great to have you here.

Also, I recently got to sit in on a meeting with our Historical Commission, which was an incredible education, and they have an incredible wealth of knowledge, which is great. But I did want to share that our Historical Commission has submitted an application to the county to be included in the upcoming town tours and village walks. And we're hoping we are accepted, and we will be hosting maybe some people here to learn about the history of

Coatesville. Also, our Historical Commission is representing the City on the PA America 250 committee. The City is a part of that, and you will be hearing more. Hopefully, they'll be coming to present to council in the coming months to share more about the PA 250 committee.

I did want to share that our VPP zoning ordinances have been submitted to the county for Act 247 review. So those will come back to you for final approval after that. I'm sorry, I'm jumping around a little bit, or at least it feels like I'm jumping around a little bit. Our Code Department, we actually have a new code enforcement officer that started. He just completed his 30 days. And we're very glad to have him on board. And we're seeing some good results from his work already. As Mr. Logan mentioned on the housing front, I think we all have heard the message loud and clear that housing is a major concern of people in the City. So, in addition to working with the county, I am also working with the Alliance for Health Equity on their housing subcommittee. And I know Councilwoman Allen is also working on a housing subgroup. There are some things that are kind of coming down the line that we're very much looking forward to be able to share more about. But there are things getting worked on and hopefully solutions coming. Also, I wanted to share that a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Logan and I had an opportunity to meet with the Ash Park engineers of JMP. And as of February, that design project is about 15% complete. So, the design will take the rest of the year, essentially. We're not looking for construction until early 2025. But we are in a good position. We're on schedule with that project, which is exciting. And we got to see some of their design elements and talk to them a little bit about the stormwater that they're planning, some solutions for that. So, there's some great designs that we're looking forward to share soon. And I believe that is the end of my report. Thank you.

Mr. Logan said actually, I do have two other items to speak about. One is HBO. For those of you who are curious about what's going on over at the Flats HBO is back in town. They're filming another miniseries. It's not Mayor of Easton or Easttown, but it's something different. So, if you see them out and about, say hello, be nice to them. We want them to come back more. But they find Coatesville to be a wonderful gym and it's great to have them back here. So, they're over at the flats. That's their staging area, but they will be shooting throughout the city for the next, I think, couple of weeks. And then the last item, and I wanted to kind of save this because I want to embarrass her, but we'd like to congratulate Roberta. She has reached the one-year-- [laughter] she has reached the one-year anniversary. So, Roberta, you can throw the probations paper away now.

4. Finance Department

Madam President and Council. Good evening. Tonight, I want to start by talking trash. Owners please pay attention to the letters sent to you if you have outstanding trash bills for last year. Friday is the final day to pay in City Hall before being turned over to our collection firm. Only 45 have paid so far after 2 letters mailed this year as well as at least two last year. There are still 214 unpaid that will have fees added to them. If you are not able to pay as a hardship, make sure the finance department is aware so we can send that note along with the open balance to keep fees as low as possible. Send an email with the property address to Finance@coatesville.org so it can be documented. Last year almost a hundred paid at the City.

I also want to comment on the 2024 fee and how that was arrived at. The starting point is the contracts we have to remove trash and landfill costs. The fee is essentially these costs divided by the number of residences with totes. The accounting rules require the fund to pay for itself, it is not allowed to be subsidized. The city went through a competitive bid process that resulted in rejected bids excessively higher than what was agreed to. Over the last few meetings a recognition that more of these educational tidbits to help explain city finances seem appropriate; which we will start providing over future meetings.

Regarding the financial status, 2024 is too early to have any significant sense of where we are on the journey. As for 2023, the auditors have begun, roughly a month earlier than last year with no changes surfacing so far.

Citizens Hearings Non-Agenda Items Only (3 Minutes) – Residents/Tax Payer/Property Owner

John Sly

Mr. Sly wished everyone a good evening, members of the council, members of the audience. I wanted to provide an update on advanced life support. I apologize I didn't make the last meeting. I got a little tied up with work. In January 2024, we had 121 total responses in Coatesville City. 99 of those came from Westwood on Valley Road, 22 from Wagontown. 400 for the end of the month--excuse me for the end of the year in 2023. We're going to have our year-end report prepared. Much like Mr. Troutman mentioned, we're doing our auditing process, so we'd like to provide our financial report as well as the year report. 1,338 emergency medical calls in the City of Coatesville for Westwood last year. And just for the resident's advocacy on that, that's mainly the advanced life support, the most critical incidents. We continue to work with our partners at Washington Hose who provide the basic life support. We're here to augment them with the advanced life support anytime there's a serious incident. So that could be a trauma incident, a pediatric emergency, a cardiac event. So, these are the serious calls, and that's a lot. This month, again, with 121, that puts us on-- [inaudible] alone was 1,500 for the year. So, it's going to be another busy year for us.

Only comment I have that's negative is obviously we all saw the report that Chester County and Tower Health did not reach an agreement on the Brandywine Hospital property. So we're back to the drawing board here in the Greater Coatesville region without a hospital facility. Going to continue to affect us, continue to affect all the EMS agencies here as we all have to transport long distances to Chester County Hospital, Paoli Hospital. The hospital systems themselves are inundated and overwhelmed because we've lost 30% of our hospitals in the county. So that continues to be a challenge for all the agencies here. Staffing continues to be a challenge, but I think we're all working through that. So hopefully there'll be good news coming in the future. I do know that Chester County still claims to be committed to Coatesville area. It may not be at that property, but obviously, that's still going to be a long journey ahead of us. So we'll just continue to work through it. And if there's any questions that the council has, I'm happy to answer them. But again, look forward to our year-end report, which will be very comprehensive.

Donald Folks

Mr. Folks state first of all, I just want to apologize to council for last Monday. I had to run out, but I just want to thank you for appointing me back to civil service to work with my men in blue, back with the Chief, back with the Fire Department. Even though I never left the Fire Department, Christmas, Fire Department hooked up with Colonial Nissan downtown, and they gave away coats, and I got a call from Mike and Mike, and we gave away 100 coats in that hour. They plan to do that again, and not just Colonial; plan to go to different companies and have a coat giveaway at the

firehouse. I'm happy to be back with the guys in blue. I know there's a lot of stuff going on with the Fire Department. Police, in the next five years, we've got a lot of guys retiring. We got to look at that. I know something's happening next month. Got to look at that too. But yeah, I am so happy to be back involved with the City that I never left and that I love. My name's Donald Folks, 133 South 4th Avenue, Second Ward, Coatesville, Pennsylvania.

Vice President Green made a motion to close citizens hearings on non-agenda items only; Mrs Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Special Events

There were no special events at this time.

Council Comments

Ms. Turner Green why am I the first person? I'll keep it short and I will follow on that same routine. Thank you to all the presentations today. I'm not sure if David Terry is still here. But that sounds like a really awesome thing. I'm going to try be there and bring my kids. Maybe they can learn some new skill sets. In the event of an zombie apocalypse, it's good to know how to fish, so. And then this weekend's event was really awesome, and the Pancake Breakfast Literacy event, if you missed it, you missed a good time. Thank you to everyone who was involved, who read, Mike and Mike that gave a wonderful, "Please change the batteries in your fire detectors," which we know that single women are very aggressively not doing that. I've been called out quite a few times. But thank you all for coming out. It's so great to see all of your faces. Please continue to come here and sign your name up and speak your peace. And everyone get home safe.

Ms. Scamuffa said see, I'm second now, but I usually get first. [laughter] I want to thank everybody for coming out tonight. I've been trying to encourage some of the residents to come out and come to the meetings. Hopefully, that picks up some momentum. Love to see a packed room. Fire departments, thank you for your service, both Fire Departments. I'm thankful for all of you guys, all the brothers and sisters, volunteers that really put your lives on the line as well. You're no different than a Police Officer. You guys do the same thing just in a different way. I'm just going to keep it short. I really appreciate everybody for coming out. And thank you. Thank you to all of the staff, all my fellow council persons. I'm thankful for all of you, and hopefully, we get this room filled up again. Thank you and have a good night.

Mrs. Hunt wished everyone an good evening. Oh, as always, good to see everyone. I'm glad to see you here tonight. I just want to-- somebody want to talk [inaudible]? I just want to say, seriously, on a serious note, just thank you all for coming. And thank you for your concerns. I just want to take a moment to assure you again concerning the move of the Fire Department that you are not in jeopardy of not having things taken care of when needed. But you put us in a position where you vote us in to be responsible for the welfare of the city in all ways, and that means financially. And with what was presented to us, we just could not handle that. And I want to thank our negotiation team for negotiating more than once to try and keep things in the West End, but to no avail. So, I do thank you for all that you've done to try to make that happen, and I thank the Washington Hose Company for your commitment to allowing us to bring space there to house our trucks and our firefighters. And just know that my grandchildren live in West End. So if I would have thought there was any kind of talk, [laughter] you know. But I'm just saying as an elected member of this community to service you, please know that your welfare and your well-being is in our best interest as well because we are a part of you. We just sit behind a table and try to negotiate things. Again, I want to thank our staff

for the fine job that you do daily in the city to keep things going, to our Chief, Solicitor, our Manager, Assistant City Manager, and of course to Miss everything, Ruthann Thank you, Richard. Thank you so much for keeping things moving. To my fellow council persons, it's always a pleasure. And I look forward to us continuing to bump heads but to work together for the good; looking at seven different views but being able to come together for one collaborative effort, and that is for the welfare of our city. Thank you so much. Have a good day.

Vice President Green stated I would just like to thank everyone for coming out. It's so good to see the room filled. I'm a fair person. But the decision to move the station, I just think that it was a good move, a good decision. Me personally, I think that the decision should have been made a long time ago. I've always wanted to move the station. So, I'm grateful to the City for the idea of us being able to build our own station. And in the meantime, in the interim, we'll partner with the Washington Hose. I think that our guys are going to get-- they'll be able to do better there. They'll have better services: kitchen, a lot of space, all of that. A lot goes into making a decision. It's not based on just because it needs to be done, but based on what's good for the firefighters, what's good for the city financially, what's good for the city just because. So, I'm very happy with the decision that we made today. And I just thank and appreciate all the firefighter volunteers that came this evening. I appreciate them for all that they do. But I'm just going to leave it at that and come out to the next meeting. Continue to come out. Continue to support the City. I'd like to mention our staff. I think that was-- I'm very happy with just your comments tonight. And I think that that would be a great thing for you to do. I haven't had a chance to speak to you yet, but I was going to ask you about something that we can come together. That way, we get a better understanding, all of us, on what goes into finance and being fiscally responsible. I thank you so much. I thank Logan, Roberta, and our Solicitor for their report, and see you in two weeks.

President Lavender Norris echoed her colleagues. And I hope that whatever the divide or impasse there is between volunteer and aid, if there's any, my desire is that it goes away because your safety is at stake first. You're relying on one another, be it paid or unpaid. The fire does not know whether or not you're paid. Nor do the people you're going in to save. All they know is it's a fire and they need a fire person. It's to our benefit that we can all get along. But in the event that we can't all get along, let's all agree to disagree and do what's best for the community. I understand the paid side of it from my time working from Francis Pilotti's era up until this day with this City. But then I understand the volunteer side of it because my brother was a volunteer for 52 years. So, I know how it flows from both sides. That's why I'm saying let's get together and be one. I don't know what the issue is, if there's one or if there isn't. But for us to work together is the only way to get the job done. We're not making a snap decision here about relocating. We're certainly not. Negotiations, if you will, discussions, have gone on for quite a while, for months. And for things to change over the weekend, abruptly like they have, it's like, "Let's hurry up and close the door," but the horse is already out. What can we do? What can we say? We're working to the best of our ability with the knowledge we have. Again, our concern is the safety of our community, and that will always be first and foremost. I just pray that you all stay safe, because I know it's not an easy job. I know it isn't. But it's extremely necessary. Extremely necessary. And I thank you all again, paid and volunteer. Thank you for your service. It doesn't go unnoticed. And whether or not the residents say thank you or tell you they appreciate you, trust me, they do. They certainly do. So, God bless you all. Thank you all. And please, by all means, stay safe and have a blessed evening.

Adjournment

Vice President Green made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.