

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
APRIL 2, 2008**

R18

Appointment of Fire Chief: Robert Scheier

The Mayor said his list of credentials is a testament to the time and energy he has put into his profession. Bob and his 4 brothers serve on the Allentown Fire Department. Bob is well qualified and will make a great chief and leader.

Mr. Scheier said it's truly an honor to stand before you tonight to seek confirmation for this position.

Mr. Howells said your family has served this City quite heroically all these years.

Mr. Donovan asked what is missing in the Fire Department?

Mr. Scheier said over the next several years we're going to be presenting plans for increased training. They're losing a lot of experienced men.

Mr. Guridy said you're a man of valor. He's very proud to be part of the City when we have people like you supporting the City and working in the City. He would like to see a more diverse department. Thank you for taking the courage to lead the department.

Mr. Scheier said they have been very aggressive in the recruitment field.

Mr. Howells said he's concerned about all the grievances.

Mr. Scheier said a lot of the grievances have been resolved in the last month or 2. They have no new ones to date.

Mr. Schweyer said he got to see a working fire in the 1400 block of Linden Street. The professionalism of the firefighters overwhelmed him. All of them speak very highly of you. He'll do whatever he can to support the Fire Department.

Mr. D'Amore said he also he received many positive phone calls from men in the Fire Department. That's a testament to you and your leadership.

Mr. Phillips said in light of the ending of the Fire contract . . . what is in the future in terms of retirement.

Mr. Scheier said their contract runs through 2011. They've identified up to 60 members who could retire in the next 3 years. Their calculations are based on a 26 week period rather than a 30 week period.

Ms. Eichenwald congratulated him on his appointment. She was extraordinarily impressed by his credentials.

Mr. Atiyeh said he commends the Mayor for choosing Mr. Scheier for the job.

Mr. Howells and Mr. Donovan moved to forward R18 favorably to Council.

**COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 2, 2008**

1. Invocation: David M. Howells, Sr.

2. Pledge to the Flag

3. Roll Call

Mr. Donovan, Ms. Eichenwald, Mr. Guridy, Mr. Howells, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Schweyer and Mr. D'Amore

4. Courtesy of the Floor

Paulette Hunter said she was involved in the last Parks and Recreation Committee meeting. She appreciates all of Council's help.

Dan Mest, 940 Jackson Street, said someone has been overstepping their boundaries in a volunteer group. The meetings he goes to are useless. Someone should be looking into this. There are only 21 community groups. There used to be 31. He's not going to have another community group tell him how to manage his group. They are holding many activities for their neighborhood, but they need to find out who is in charge of the community groups.

Chief MacLean said the Police are not in charge of the community groups. They're willing to help them iron out problems.

Mr. Donovan said coordination is important to him. The community groups play a very important role in the City.

Mr. Schweyer said he's heard other concerns within the crime watch communities.

Ms. Eichenwald asked Chief MacLean if someone will be helping the crime watch organizations to rectify some of these issues?

Chief MacLean said yes, he asked Joe Hanna to find out what's going on and to be the intermediary.

Ms. Eichenwald requested he return in a few weeks to tell if some of these issues have been resolved.

Mr. Donovan said Council is not responsible for this. Council and the Administration play an important role in helping to coordinate those groups in the City.

Mr. Howells said in the 70's there was a group called CNO, Community of Neighborhood Organizations. When the federal funding dried up, the CNO groups turned into crime watch groups.

Mr. Guridy said he agrees with Mr. Donovan. He appreciates what the crime watch groups do. We need them in our community.

Everett Bickford, Stevens Park Neighborhood Association, said this last week we lost a cherished community member. He asked Council to make a motion that a tree be planted in memory of Harry Roberts.

Dennis Pearson, 942 East Tilghman Street, said if a community group does not receive any funds from Allentown, that community group can operate independently. If they do receive community funds, then there has to be accountability for spending the funds. There was once an organization called the Allentown Community of Neighborhood Organizations. It went through turmoil where 3 presidents resigned. He became a temporary president. We sponsored a road crew for the City. They couldn't have the CDBG workers work with their own crew. They took over that program under the condition that the City wouldn't reduce their recreational work force. And they did, so they canceled it.

Ernie Atiyeh said he was the first president of CNO. It was set up by Mayor Joe Daddona.

5. Approval of Minutes: March 5, 2008

6. Old Business: None.

7. Communications: None.

8. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

ADMINISTRATION – Chairperson Donovan

The Committee met on Wednesday, March 26th and forwarded one item favorably on tonight's agenda. They are requesting financial reports come separately, so we get the information more quickly. They are recommending that the Administration bring to Council earlier in the year, for budget planning purposes, any major changes in personnel, program projections or revenue issues. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 23rd at 7:00 PM.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Chairperson Schweyer

The Committee has not met since the last Council meeting; a future meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 10th at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers.

PUBLIC WORKS – Chairperson Guridy

The Committee has not met since the last Council meeting; a future meeting will be scheduled when the traffic study of the intersection at 16th and Chew Street is complete.

PUBLIC SAFETY -Chairperson Howells

The Committee met tonight; a future meeting has not yet been scheduled.

APPOINTMENTS - Chairperson D'Amore

The Committee is currently considering some appointments and will refer them for the next agenda.

LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE – Chairperson Phillips

The Committee has not met since the last Council meeting; a future meeting has not yet been scheduled.

RULES AND CHAMBERS – Chairperson D'Amore

The Committee has not met since the last Council meeting; a future meeting is not yet scheduled.

OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS

AEDC - Mr. Donovan said we are working on a new program, Allentown Ahead, sponsored by Robert Wood. It's looking at ways to improve the business climate.

Arts Commission – Mr. Donovan said the Ad Hoc Committee on the Housing Inspection Ordinance has an organizational meeting on May 5th, at 6 PM. The first public hearing will be on June 25th.

Blighted Property Review Board – Mr. Schweyer said they will meet in 2 months

Council Reform Committee – Mr. Schweyer said we are about ready to announce all 6 additional members; 5 are confirmed; 1 he's waiting for a final okay. They look forward to having their first meeting in April.

Human Relations – Ms. Eichenwald said the focus of the meeting was the creation of a system of mediation where people could come to the commission with issues, and there would be trained mediators to resolve it.

Mr. Guridy requested a report from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Report – Mr. D'Amore said we meet the last Thursday of every month. Their community based zoning has interest to him.

CONTROLLER'S REPORT: None.

9. ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE:

R18

Appointment of Fire Chief: Robert Scheier

Mr. D'Amore said R18 was forwarded favorably, 7-0.

R18 was approved, 7 Yeas and 0 Nays.

Bill 13

Introduced by the Administration: An Administration bill that amends the 2008 General Fund Budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of \$10,000 to provide for the receipt of a grant from the Pennsylvania Community Revitalization Assistance Program from Senator's Browne's office,. This grant is *for the support of the renovation of Cedar Creek Parkway to make the renovations handicap accessible.*

Mr.D'Amore said Bill 13 was recommended favorably, 2-0, but tabled at the last Council meeting because of questions.

Ms. Eichenwald said she's in favor of making playgrounds handicap accessible. She's still a little concerned about the wording.

Bill 13 was adopted, 7 Yeas and 0 Nays.

Bill 17

Introduced by the Administration: An Administration bill that Amends the 2008 General Fund Budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of \$5,000 from St. Luke's Hospital to the Communications Program of the Police Department to provide for public education for our 911 program

Mr. Howells said Bill 17 was in Public Safety this evening and forwarded favorably, 3-0.

Bill 17 was adopted, 7 Yeas and 0 Nays.

Bill 18

Introduced by the Administration: An Administration bill that Amends the 2008 General Fund Budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of \$22,000 as a result of a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development (PA DCED), Community Revitalization Assistance Program to the Fire Department, for Thermal Imagers

Mr. Howells said Bill 18 was in Public Safety this evening and forwarded favorably, 3-0.

Mr. Donovan asked if that's enough, or will more be needed? Is this the first time we're receiving one?

Chief Scheier said it's not the first time we're receiving one. This is the first time we're replacing one. The new models are safer for the firefighters because they read temperatures.

Mr. Donovan asked if there's a camera in every truck?

Chief Scheier said they are purchasing 7 cameras.

Bill 18 was adopted, 7 Yeas and 0 Nays.

10. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION:

Bill 20

Introduced by the Administration: Amending the 2008 Capital Fund Budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of Five Hundred Thousand (\$500,000) Dollars to provide for a grant from Harry C. Trexler Trust to the City of Allentown for the Old Allentown Homeownership Initiative Program.

Bill 20 was referred to CEDC.

Bill 21

Introduced by the Administration: Amending the Consolidated Plan One Year Action Plan for the Twenty-sixth, Twenty-ninth, Thirtieth, Thirty-first and Thirty-second years of the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), which re-programs Four Hundred Seventeen Thousand Three Hundred Twenty-Six (\$417,326) Dollars of Unexpended Funds.

Bill 21 was referred to CEDC.

Bill 22

Introduced by the Administration: An Ordinance providing for the expenditure of certain monies received by the City of Allentown under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended; Subtitle B of Title IV of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, as amended; and Title II of the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, as amended; for the purpose of undertaking programs of housing and community development within the City.

Bill 22 was referred to CEDC.

Bill 23

Introduced by the Administration: An Ordinance providing for the expenditure of certain monies received by the City of Allentown from the repayment of loans made through the Rental Rehabilitation Program.

Bill 23 was referred to CEDC.

11. **CONSENT AGENDA:** None

12. RESOLUTIONS ON SECOND READING:

R14

Introduced by the Administration: Approves the Sale of City Property, South of South Albert Street
This is a 5600 square foot piece of property, land locked, appraised by Geiger for \$5000, and would be conveyed to an adjoining property owner, a developer, who will tear the building down on one piece of property and will come back onto the property role.

Mr. Donovan said this is a piece of property up in the hills that the City does not need. They approached the abutting homeowner and have arranged to sell the property and put it back on the tax roles. It was forwarded favorably.

Attorney Burianek said the City did not purchase but rather it was dedicated as part of a plan for the street extension.

Ms. Eichenwald asked if it was always a City-owned entity?

Attorney Burianek said no, this happened when a developer created a plan and proposed an extension of the street and deeded it to the City.

Louis Hershman, 405 North Gilmore Street, said it says City Council must authorize any conveyance of City-owned real estate. What piece of land is at Trexler Middle School? Are there things going on in the Administration and bypassing the governing body? He understands there's a deal in the works with the Mayor and School District for permit fees. The Mayor is going to waive fees, which could amount to \$100,000. Must Council authorize any conveyance?

Mr. Phillips said yes we do have to approve it, but that's another issue.

R14 was approved, 7 Yeas and 0 Nays.

13. NEW RESOLUTIONS:

R15

Introduced by the Administration: Approves of the submission to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development of the Action Plan for the period July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.

R15 was referred to CEDC.

R16

Introduced by the Administration: Sewage Facilities Plan for the Central Park Development, the Department of Environmental Resources requires this to allow the Development to connect with the City system

R16 was referred to Public Works

R17

Introduced by the Administration: Encroachment for a wooden ramp for ice cream window sales at 646 North 8th Street.

R17 was referred to CEDC.

14. **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Hershman asked if there was any land conveyed?

Mr. Phillips said the Mayor walked out and this man has questions about an issue. He's a public person who pays taxes and he just walked out.

Mr. D'Amore said just as the Mayor does not have the power to order Council. Council does not have the power to order the Mayor. He can leave these Chambers any time he chooses.

Mr. Hershman said he heard the Trexler School is expanding. The City gave some land for the expansion. What did we get in return? You didn't approve it. There has to be a deed transfer. He understands there's been some kind of agreement between the school district and the City. They are supposed to pull permits. The Mayor waived the permit fees.

The Mayor said there is a request from the school board for a paper street for Trexler to waive 50', which he sent to the legal department, and they will notify him what they should do with this transfer. He indicated to the school board that he didn't think any of you would have a problem with 50' simply because it's to build a brand new school. The other issue regarding fees, we have not waived any fees. We've worked with them to identify exactly which fees they need.

Mr. D'Amore said if you do choose to waive the fees that is your executive privilege to do so.

The Mayor said it is, but we have not. Todd Collins has been working with the school board, and they have a number of fees they were required. We worked with them to make a determination of exactly what fees they needed.

Mr. Guridy said in the spirit of cooperation with another entity, like the school district, we should be flexible. If we are waiving any fees, it would be nice to know. Sometimes we get accused for not cooperating with others. What is the paper street we are conveying? Is that 14th Street?

The Mayor said the deed was sent to the legal department for review and determination. He's not sure what we do with it.

Mr. Gurdy said some people talked about the initiation . . .

The Mayor said the Superintendent and he are getting together to figure out some things.

Mr. Donovan said one of the things that has amazed him coming on Council is the amount of information that we owe the 108,000 people in the City, and the amount of information the Administration and Council must digest and communicate, and sometimes it is overwhelming.

Mr. Hershman raised the question again about waiving fees.

The Mayor said we haven't waived any fees. All we did was work with them so they could make a determination of what fees they actually need to apply for. They are going to pay for all the fees that are required. There were some redesigned because they weren't building a new building that they thought they had to pay, and we indicated no, because they're not building a new building. They're renovating the building. The Mayor said Mr. Hershman can always contact him for information, and he will gladly share it with him.

15. **GOOD AND WELFARE:** None.

16. **ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Michael P. Hanlon
City Clerk