

## SHARON CITY COUNCIL

**Purpose:** Regular Council Meeting  
**Date:** Thursday, August 21, 2014  
**Time:** 6:30 P.M.  
**Location:** Sharon Municipal Building Council Chambers

### MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER**

**TIME: 6:30 P.M.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

**Council:**

**Yes President Palanski**

**Yes Mr. Burke**

**Yes Mr. Connelly (by phone)**

**Yes Rev. Trambley**

**Yes Mr. James**

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**Yes Scott Andrejchak – City Manager**

**News Media:**

**Yes The Herald**

**Yes Attorney Madden – City Solicitor**

**Yes TV 21**

**Yes Lori Merolillo – City Clerk**

**Yes TV 33**

**Dept. Heads:**

**Yes Terry Whalen - Fire Chief**

**Yes Michael J. Menster - Chief of Police**

**\_\_\_ John Cave - Street Dept.**

**Yes Ken Griffith- Finance Director**

**Yes Janet Thomas- Community Development**

**\_\_\_ Robert Fiscus- Director of Code**

### CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Accepted Resignation of Chief Menster and put Lt. Gerry Smith as acting Chief of Police. Mr. Andrejchak added that Mr. Palanski would like to present a plaque to Chief Menster for his 24 years of service.

### PRESENTATION

Mr. Palanski read the plaque that acknowledged Chief Mensters 24 years of service and Chief Menster said a few words thanking Council , Mr. Andrejchak, former Mayors and Council members. Chief Menster also spoke about the Police Officers past and present and the work they do every day.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS - AGENDA ITEMS

**PUBLIC COMMENTS - ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA:**

Carol Swartz asked if Resolution 50-14 was about Fire Department also and Mr. Palanski answered no.

Mr. Joseph from 470 B St. asked what happened to B St. playground.

Mr. Bob Lucus asked about the Police Services on the agenda and what Sharon has to gain joining with Farrell.

Brianne Sampson asked if the proposal was already written and Mr. Palanski answered no and it was due by Monday August 25<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Sampson asked when the proposal would be available to the public and Mr. Palanski replied that after Farrell receives and reads it then it would become public.

Resident commented that Southwest Regional should be servicing West Middlesex but were mostly in Farrell. Riley Smoot-Farrell Police Chief replied that the statement was inaccurate and Farrell is a standalone department but works with other communities, but have not had any negative comments to date. Mr. Smoot also added that at the Council workshop meeting Mr. Andrejchak explained that unless the proposal was for Police and Fire then the deal would not go through.

Matt Grove- agreed with Mr. Smoot regarding the workshop meeting and asked if the Fire Department will be included in the proposal. Mr. Palanski replied that this proposal was only for the Police Department at this time and if Farrell agrees with the proposal then details will have to be worked out.

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- I.) **PUBLIC NOTICE-** *The City of Sharon will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday August 21, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, Sharon Municipal Building, 155 West Connelly Blvd., Sharon, PA to gather information for the City's Five Year consolidated Plan for FY 2015-2019 and the Annual Action Plan for FY 2015.*
  - II.) The purpose of the hearing is to gather information for the CDBG 5 year plan and the Annual Action Plan.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Janet Thomas presented the proposal and introduced the consultant John Hagland who is working on the plan. Mr. Hagland explained the CDBG funding and the use with the money. Mr. Hagland also explained that there is no discriminating on race, age etc. and the programs are based on income. Mr. Hagland added that public services, Code and City services also gain from these funds. Mr. Hagland asked for citizens comments on other goals needed in the Housing Strategy.

Darryl Torrence replied that working with the Fire Department there is a need for more demolitions because of abandoned properties which are the biggest complaints from people.

Bob Lucas commented about the housing project on the West Hill about 4 years ago and as long as the population keeps dropping we will not be able to do more projects like that one. Mr. Lucas also added that Hadley School was being torn down to add Soccer fields but if apartments or condos would be better for the City in that location and would help the City more.

Henrietta King of 335 Sterling Ave. agreed with Darryl Torrence and Bob Lucas except Ms. King feels that something needs to be done if the houses are going to be torn down then something needs to be done because the lots look terrible afterwards. Mr. Hagland explained that you cannot use the money only for Demo or there has to be a future reuse for the land if you wanted to use the money for Demolition. Mr. Hagland added that if the money was used for Demolition and nothing replaced it then the City would be responsible for paying back the cost.

Dane Whalen from 639 Spruce Ave. and works for Hometown Community Rentals added that they are trying to buy these properties and fix them up instead of Demolitioning them and then they can rent them out.

Resident said there are a lot of homeless people in the City and Joshuas Haven which only holds 6 people and is the only place for them to go besides Ohio or New Castle. Mr. Hagland asked if he would like to see more temporary housing and the resident said yes because sometimes you have to wait 60 days for temporary housing and there is also no housing for families.

Resident said playgrounds are needed like B St. playground which is broken and has no fence which is not safe for kids. The resident also added that the catch basins near B St. playground have pieces of plywood in them and they are dangerous for children along with the grass not being cut.

Marlene Torrence of 534 A St. would like to see a skate park in Sharon and Mr. Hagland said he would make note of that.

Mr. Hagland asked if residences know where to go for discrimination complaints and asked if anyone had any zoning issues.

Darryl Torrence feels sections have been redlined for any economic development and on the West Hill they have nothing up there just the school which they had to fight to get. Mr. Torrence also agrees with the residence in regards to the B St. playground. Mr. Torrence added that the City needs to pay more attention to the West Hill because they pay taxes also.

Mr. Hagland thanked everyone for their input and left business cards on the podium after explaining that there is a survey on the City website for any other comments or suggestions. Mr. Hagland also said there will be another hearing in a couple months and they will be working on plans until then.

## PUBLIC HEARING FOR ORDINANCES

### Public Hearing for Ordinance 06-14, introduced June 19, 2014- SECOND AND FINAL READING

Authorizing the vacating of Brady Court.

## ORDINANCES

**MOTION** that Ordinance #06-14 entitled “An ORDINANCE of the Council of the City of Sharon, County of Mercer, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing the vacating of Brady Court. **Pass FINAL reading by title.**

**Motion: Mr. Burke**

**Second: Mr. James**

**Vote:**       **Yes Rev. Trambley**  
                  **Yes Mr. Connelly**  
                  **Yes Mr. James**

**Yes Mr. Burke**  
**Yes Mr. Palanski**

**MOTION** that Ordinance #08-14 entitled “An ORDINANCE of the Council of the City of Sharon, County of Mercer, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing the sale of Parcel #41-A, situated at Vine Ave. and Pitt St. to Primary Health Network for \$15,000.00 consideration. **Pass FIRST reading by title.**

\*Rev Trambley asked if this price was already agreed upon and Mr. Andrejchak said yes.

**Motion: Rev. Trambley**

**Second: Mr. Connelly**

**Vote:**       **Yes Mr. Burke**  
                  **Yes Rev. Trambley**  
                  **Yes Mr. Connelly**

**Yes Mr. James**  
**Yes Mr. Palanski**

**MOTION** that Ordinance #09-14 entitled “An ORDINANCE of the Council of the City of Sharon, County of Mercer, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing the vacating and abandoning of a portion of Vine Avenue beginning at a point on the intersection of the south right of way line of Silver Street and the west right of way line of Vine Avenue. **Pass FIRST reading by title.**

**Motion: Mr. James**

**Second: Rev. Trambley**

**Vote:**      **Yes Mr. James**  
              **Yes Mr. Burke**  
              **Yes Rev. Trambley**

**Yes Mr. Connelly**  
**Yes Mr. Palanski**

<b>RESOLUTIONS</b>
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**MOTION** that Resolution #48-14 entitled “A RESOLUTION of the Council of the City of Sharon Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing the proper city Officials to extend a small business loan to Brewtus Brewers in the amount of \$20,000.00 at 1.625% interest rate for a 5 year term. **be adopted**

**Motion: Mr. Connelly**

**Second: Mr. James**

**Vote:**      **Yes Mr. Connelly**  
              **Yes Mr. James**  
              **Yes Mr. Burke**

**Yes Rev. Trambley**  
**Yes Mr. Palanski**

**MOTION** that Resolution #49-14 entitled “A RESOLUTION of the Council of the City of Sharon Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing the proper City Officials to accept a proposal from Winslow Engineering in the amount of \$9,850 for CDBG engineering services. **be adopted**

**Motion: Rev. Trambley**

**Second: Mr. Connelly**

**Vote:**      **Yes Rev. Trambley**  
              **Yes Mr. Connelly**  
              **Yes Mr. James**

**Yes Mr. Burke**  
**Yes Mr. Palanski**

**MOTION** that Resolution #50-14 entitled “A RESOLUTION of the Council of the City of Sharon Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, authorizing the City Manager to send a proposal for police services to the City of Farrell. **be adopted**

**Motion to Table: Mr. Burke**

**Second: Mr. James**

**Vote:**      **Yes Mr. Burke**  
              **Yes Rev. Trambley**  
              **Yes Mr. Connelly**

**Yes Mr. James**  
**Yes Mr. Palanski**

**TABLED**

## CONSENT AGENDA

*THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE CONSIDERED BY CITY COUNCIL TO BE ROUTINE CITY BUSINESS AND WILL BE ENACTED BY ONE MOTION AND ONE ROLL CALL VOTE. ANY COUNCIL MEMBER, CITY OFFICIAL OR CITIZENS WISHING CLARIFICATION OF AN ITEM MAY ASK A QUESTION BY RAISING THEIR HAND AND IDENTIFYING THE ITEM BEFORE ADOPTION OF THE ITEM.*

**MOTION** that Resolution #51-14 entitled "A RESOLUTION of the Council of the City of Sharon, Mercer County, Pennsylvania, authorizing, in accordance with Section 915 of the Home Rule Charter, the City Manager, or in the absence of the City Manager, the Tax Collector, to pay the bills submitted on Schedule A to Council" **be adopted.**

**MOTION** that Resolution #52-14 entitled "A RESOLUTION of the Council of the City authorizing appointments for certain boards. **be adopted.**

**Sharon Street Authority**  
Scott Andrejchak to replace Rev. Adam Trambley  
Janet Thomas to replace Carl Sizer

**MOTION** to approve the minutes from the July 17, 2014 Regular Meeting and the Public Hearing/Special Meetings on July 25, 2014. **be adopted.**

**Motion: Rev. Trambley**

**Second: Mr. James**

**Vote:**      **Yes Mr. James**  
              **Yes Mr. Burke**  
              **Yes Rev. Trambley**

**Yes Mr. Connelly**  
**Yes Mr. Palanski**

### **COMMENTS:**

**NEWS MEDIA:** Mr. Wiercinski asked what the effective date of Chief Menster's retirement would be. Mr. Andrejchak replied that Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> would be his last day and Mr. Wiercinski asked how the permanent Chief would be decided. Mr. Andrejchak replied that Lt. Gerry Smith is acting Chief and the final decision would be by Council but it will be revisited after Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Wiercinski asked Mr. Burke why he motioned to table Resolution 50-14 and Mr. Burke replied that he has not seen the proposal and would not vote on something he has not seen. Mr. Wiercinski also asked Mr. James the same question and Mr. James replied the same that he has not seen the proposal. Mr. Wiercinski asked the rest of Council the same and the response was echoed by all Councilmen.

Mr. Wiercinski asked Mr. Andrejchak where he goes from here and Mr. Andrejchak explained that the proposal needed to be to Farrell by Monday and the Resolution was only to approve Mr. Andrejchak to extend a proposal to Farrell and not voting on it. Mr. Wiercinski asked if the proposal was dead now and Mr. Andrejchak said it was not his decision but Farrell voted to solicit a proposal from the City and now it is tabled but Farrell might extend the offer. Mr. Wiercinski asked each Councilman where do they go from here and Mr. Burke explained how upset he was because it affects a lot of lives and the City should not jump into anything quickly. Mr. James agreed and added that they need to see numbers and really analyze it. Mr. Palanski also echoed the same comments regarding numbers and more detail. Rev. Trambley also agreed with the rest of Council and said it needs discussed further and shouldn't happen overnight and funds cannot be the only factor because there are a lot more questions with this proposal.

**Mr. Wiercinski asked Mr. Andrejchak if he felt there was a future with this proposal and Mr. Andrejchak replied that there needs to be a future and it needs revisited.**

**TV21 asked if there will be another workshop meeting to discuss Res. 50-14 further. Mr. Palanski replied that nothing is dead because Council has workshops every month which is why the business meetings run efficiently and you do not see much discussion. Mr. Palanski added that this all came about due to budget process and the City has made a nice comeback for a number of reasons. Mr. Palanski added reason #1 is the last 4-5 years the City has not spent a dollar unless they take in a dollar which is part of the budgetary process and right now they are looking at a significant deficit to work on. Mr. Palanski added that will compound in years 2016-2017 and one of the mistakes they do not want to repeat is not looking out 2-3 years. Mr. Palanski also said he was happy to see as many people as there were at tonight's meeting because this is their community and listening to residents there are people taking control of their neighborhoods because the City does not have the money to do everything.**

**CITIZENS: Carol Swartz from 445 Lorain St. said it was good to see so many people and asked if Council tabled the item on sharing Police Services then why was it added to the agenda. Mr. Palanski replied that the President of Council and City Manager prepare the agenda and Farrell approached them with a request for proposal and Mr. Andrejchak and Farrell City Manager Mr. Ceci put a lot of work into trying to firm something up which was explained at the workshop and it became an item for the agenda so they can give it consideration. Mr. Palanski added that they have been talking about it because it is such a big move and talked to a number of residents but when it came down to it they did not feel prepared to act in the best interest of the City without seeing the details in the form of a proposal. Mr. Palanski also said they only seen details in the form of an overview of a proposed budget but to recall the details of that presentation Council cannot do that. Mr. Palanski also said it was a normal course of public business to have the item on the agenda. Mrs. Swartz thanked Council for tabling that item because she feels it is a horrible idea. Mrs. Swartz also asked if the Fire Department is currently assisting with Code work then what happens with the out of town landlords that do not seem to care about their properties and the fires that get started by arson. Mrs. Swartz wanted to know how is the City going to handle all of these issues if they get rid of 8 full time firefighters and what is going to happen to the part timers that help out too which would leave 5 full time firefighters sharing all those hours. Mrs. Swartz feels that the City should come up with some other way to get money to save our services because we need Sharon's finest firefighters and Police Officers.**

**Bob Lucas from 1124 Hall Ave. asked what kind of year did the City have last year. Mr. Palanski replied that they paid all of the bills and have a surplus which Mr. Palanski verified with the Finance Director Ken Griffith. Mr. Lucas asked if Council had a chance to see the survey of Financial Conditions of the City that was submitted April 1, 2014. Mr. Palanski replied that he believes Council does see a copy of that and Mr. Lucas asked what the report showed but Mr. Palanski could not recall at this time. Mr. Lucas also asked how much money was spent on outside lawyer fees in the last 12-15 months. Mr. Palanski explained that they were not compelled to engage in questions like that and Mr. Lucas asked that Council discuss at the next workshop meeting and come back to the citizens with how much money the City has spent on outside lawyers fees either for arbitration or grievance arbitration and also the arbitrations that the City has lost. Mr. Palanski said he appreciated former Mayor Lucas but when you look at lawyers fees you talk about how much was spent but you also have to weigh how much you gained otherwise. Mr. Palanski added that Mr. Lucas can talk all he wants but that number cannot be put together.**

**Robert Torrence from 534 A St. asked the City Manager and City Council to give serious consideration to reinstating an Auxillary Police Force. Mr. Torrence added that there has not been one since the late 70's and Mr. Torrence believes it would be useful, he has a lot of time on his hands and would be willing to volunteer and maybe some of the younger people would be interested. Mr. Torrence thought if some**

younger people would be interested than they might move on to apply with the Police Force and this would be good training for them.

Marc Paoletta from Hawthorne Place asked when talking about the bright future in 2015-2016 what is the concern in the future that Council is thinking might not be so bright. Mr. Palanski explained that when you look at projections you're seeing increased pension costs and increased health costs, so you have to be concerned because you are planning for the future. Mr. Palanski added that when they go into the budget process which is around the corner, the City of Sharon is the most highly taxed municipality in Mercer County and our tax millage rate is 124.46 and the next highest millage rate is Sharpsville at 117.82. Mr. Palanski explained if you keep extending the real estate tax then people are going to quit buying houses and the City has reduced its real estate tax by 13 mills and if you added the 13 mills onto the 124.46 you would have 137.46 and Mr. Palanski does not think there would be many houses selling. Mr. Palanski also does not think you would have 80 million dollar investments by industries and these are the things you have to be concerned with. Mr. Palanski did not want to go into detail on the earned income tax but it has carried the City for the last 3 years and has created the income the City has. Mr. Palanski also added that most of the questions raised were about the Fire Department and one question is regarding our fire budget which is 1.7 million proposed for the upcoming year. Mr. Palanski added that when looking at the surrounding communities such as Brookfield, Hermitage, Farrell and Sharpsville and they are covering more square footage than Sharon and have a larger population than Sharon why is our budget the same which is 1.7 mill. Mr. Palanski explained that we have a fine Fire Department and that is not the argument but the finances and the Budget is where this starts and Mr. Palanski and Council would like everyone to be part of the conversation but Mrs. Swartz pointed out the code work and Mr. Palanski feels like they need to back the code work out of the total budget to see a more realistic picture of the Fire Dept. Mr. Palanski said this is very hard but we have a great community here and we just have things to work on.

Bill Stigliano from 887 Quarry Place asked if Mr. Palanski to repeat the number that he quoted for the cost of the Fire Department and Mr. Palanski replied the projected for next year was roughly 1.7. Mr. Stigliano explained that his wife emailed each Councilman and the answer was that Sharon spent \$2 million on fire services which Mr. Andrejchak explained that Council did not include Workers Compensation.

Martin from 347 Ellsworth St. wanted to bring an important point and he understands that some of Council is convinced that the City needs to cut Fireman and Mr. Martin asked Council to really look at the safety aspect with what is going on with the Police Department. Mr. Martin said personally he feels like he does not pay enough taxes because he came from New Jersey and paid \$7000 in taxes and now back in Sharon. Mr. Martin added that there is a higher crime rate in Sharon than there is in Farrell and Mr. Martin can understand if Farrell was a higher crime rate but he feels that we are asking the Police to overextend themselves already. Mr. Martin feels Sharon needs more officers actually with having the higher crime rate. Mr. Palanski asked if Mr. Martin received his statistics from the FBI crime statistics and Mr. Martin replied yes then Mr. Palanski commented that Mr. Martin's remarks will be taken into consideration. Mr. Martin added that he is a father of 6 kids and does not feel comfortable if he is not home and there is a fire but Mr. Martin expressed that he would not have a problem paying a little more to keep our Fire Department and Police Department. Mr. Martin also added that he feels that the City is not getting the job done in the community and he explained that he meant the City does not have enough people to do it. Mr. Martin asked that Council to direct their attention to the bigger issues like more Police, Police dogs and drug issues instead of thinning our Police out by sending them to Farrell and cutting the Fire Department. Mr. Martin explained that he works at WPIC radio station and he had Mayor Olive on his show and asked Council who was it from Farrell that asked for a proposal and Mr. Palanski replied that it was Farrell City Council that requested it. Mr. Martin also spoke about the taxes from one side of town to the other and asked if Council has ever requested from the County to check into these assessments but Mr. Palanski explained that it is up to the citizens to request that change to the

County but Mr. Martin disagreed and felt that it was up to Council since it has been 45 years since the last assessment.

Mayor Olive from Farrell wanted to thank Council for tabling the Resolution because Monday night at Farrell's Council meeting on the agenda there is an item to vote for the South West Regional Police Department for 2015. Mayor Olive said Farrell's City Manager has assured them that they are ok for 2015 and Farrell does need to work out a budget with the Police Commission which she is on and the deputy Mayor, but wanted to thank Sharon Council for tabling the item. Mayor Olive also said that West Middlesex voted to stay with Southwest Regional and Wheatland is meeting next week. Mayor Olive added that what is to say Sharon cannot be the other City and be part of Southwest Regional and she did not think the Chief would mind.

Al Cvelbar from Wilson St. said he was retired and seen Sharon go from a population of 25,000 to around 13,000 currently and in his opinion he lives on a fixed income and feels that the Police and Fire are the City's priorities and after they are paid for then use the money for whatever else needs done.

Ron Maurice from 354 Curtis St. and has worked for the City for 20 years. Mr. Maurice agrees about the Police and Fire comments but wanted to say that the Street Department is down to 5 guys and when he started working for the Street Department there were 18 guys and if you live on Wilson Street they are the first people to complain in the winter time when they cannot get up their road and anywhere you want to go in this City you have to go up or down a hill. Mr. Maurice said his department has been cut down to nothing and is just as needed as the Police and Fire Department.

Carol Swartz agreed with Mr. Maurice and said the Street Department is definitely needed. Mrs. Swartz also asked if the full time Police and Fire have to live in Sharon and buy a home in Sharon. Mr. Palanski replied that yes the Fire Department does have to reside in the City if they are full time but the Police can move after 15 years of service.

Mr. Palanski thanked everyone for their input and said it is a complicated problem and Mr. Palanski and the other Council members are happy to see some input. Mr. Palanski added that we heard all the problems and now what is the solution, then replied that money is the only solution. Mr. Palanski also said if you continually raise the property taxes then the City will be in an eternal downward spiral and there has to be other answers

**MR. ANDREJCHAK:**

**MR. CONNELLY:**

**MR. BURKE:** Wanted to make a note to discuss residency for employees and have it added to the Workshop agenda. Mr. Burke added that it has not been enforced since 1992 so he wanted to make sure it is addressed at the next meeting. Also, Mr. Burke wanted to tell chief Menster that on his plaque it had 3 words professional, dedicated and devoted which is who he is. Mr. Burke worked with Chief Menster in 1992 when Chief Menster was Mr. Burke's training officer and he said Chief Menster was one of the most honorable men he knew and they worked the longest trial in Mercer County history together. Mr. Burke ended saying he will be missed and introduced Chief Menster's wife Allison and thanked her for the support she gave Chief Menster.

**MR. JAMES:** Also thanked Chief Menster for his service and dedication.

**REV. TRAMBLEY:** Also thanked Chief Menster and said he received all kinds of email from both sides of this issue with Police and Fire and they are good discussion to be having. Rev. Trambley also said last month at the meeting Council moved to put on the ballet for the Fall an increase in the real estate transfer tax to the levels of the surrounding communities and it will not raise a lot of money but has the potential to raise some income. Rev. Trambley asked everyone to please vote for it on the ballot.

**MR. PALANSKI:** Thanked Chief Menster for his services

<b><u>ADJOURNMENT:</u></b>
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Meeting adjourned at 7:49 P.M.

**Motion: Mr. Burke**

**Second: Mr. James**

**Vote:**     \_\_\_ **Mr. Connelly**  
          **Yes Mr. James**  
          **Yes Mr. Burke**

**Yes Rev. Trambley**  
**Yes Mr. Palanski**