

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2022

A special meeting of the Council of the City of Lebanon, Pa., was held in Council Chamber of the Municipal Building, Lebanon, Pa., this evening, Chairperson Morales presiding.

The meeting was called to order at 4:45 p.m.

Present--Mrs. Haitos, Mr. Martin, Mr. Miller, Mr. Wertz, and Mr. Morales, Chairperson.
Absent--none.

Also present were Mayor Sherry L. Capello; Acting Chief of Police Bret Fisher; Robin L. Getz, Director of Public Works; Melissa E. Quinones, Director of Administration-Assistant to the Mayor; A.J. Sweitzer, Assistant Fire Chief; Duane Trautman, Fire Chief; and two members of the news media.

Mr. Morales introduced Bill No. 5, the title of which is as follows: "AN ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS OF THE CITY OF LEBANON, PA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2023, AND ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023".

Mayor Capello reported that this is the eighth consecutive year that the budget was presented with no tax increase. She reported that of the 54 third class cities in Pennsylvania, only 14 (26 percent) did not raise real estate taxes in the last eight years. Lebanon City is one of the 14 that did not raise taxes. With the exception of one city, all these cities raised real estate taxes for the 2014 budget year. The exception was Hermitage City in Mercer County. Hermitage City has not raised real estate taxes for 31 years; however, its earned income tax rate is 2.25 percent for city residents. Mayor Capello told Council that she is proud of the efforts to keep taxes reasonable while still getting work completed. She added that Lebanon City can be even more proud that out of all of these 14 cities, including Hermitage City, Lebanon City has the lowest real estate tax rate. She further reported that out of all of the third class cities in Pennsylvania, Lebanon City has the second lowest real estate tax rate. Scranton City has the lowest tax rate; however, Scranton's earned income tax rate is 3.4 percent compared to Lebanon City's earned income tax rate of 1.9 percent.

Mayor Capello gave a summary of the 2023 budget, as follows:

Revenues:		\$15,649,585
Expenditures:		
Department of Administration	\$ 3,899,732	
Bureau of Police	5,447,925	
Department of Public Safety	3,589,986	
Department of Public Works	2,554,836	
Interfund Transfer	<u>157,106</u>	\$15,649,585

Overall, the total revenues propose to increase by 2.19 percent from the 2022 budget and the total expenditures propose to increase by 2.35 percent from the 2022 budget.

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Mayor Capello reported that salary and benefits account for 80.9 percent of the budget. She noted that percentage does not include the increase for Career Firefighters as that contract has not yet been settled. She further reported that the excess carryover totaling \$2,740,370 was utilized to balance the budget.

Chairperson Morales thanked Mayor Capello and her staff for their hard work in preparing the budget. Councilmember Miller noted that the amount of effort put into this budget is phenomenal. He added that as a result of those efforts, the city is in good financial position and the bond rating in 2021 was a result of the work put into budget preparation.

Chris Coyle, *LebTown*, asked if streets and roadways are part of the Public Works budget to which Mayor Capello replied yes. She added that the \$25,000 liquid fuel funds received from the County of Lebanon are included in the general fund budget; the budget for the Liquid Fuel Tax allocation includes salt and some street resurfacing; and the Community Development Block Grant Program budget includes the most funding for street resurfacing. Mr. Coyle stated that there have been complaints about potholes and conditions of alleys in the city. Mayor Capello responded that in 2022, a portion of Walton Street was repaired. She added that repairs are addressed based on complaints received from the residents and what the crew observes when they are out in the field.

Bill No. 5 was introduced and will be considered on final reading at the monthly Council meeting of November 28, 2022. Yeas--Mrs. Haitos, Mr. Martin, Mr. Miller, Mr. Wertz, and Mr. Morales, Chairperson--5; nays--none.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

CHERYL J. GIBSON, Clerk