

**Connellsville City Council MINUTES
DECEMBER 28, 2021**

This meeting of the Connellsville City Council was held this evening at 6:00 PM. Attending this meeting was Mayor Lincoln, Council members Keedy, Topper and Karpiak. Also attending was City Clerk Ohler and Solicitor Witt.

Carol Tiberio, in-coming Councilwoman, was at the meeting via telephone.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE: Led by Pastor Brian Higbee

REMARKS FROM VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mayor Lincoln stated he is glad to see Higbee Insurance removed the surcharge and a discount added onto that bringing it down to \$197,000 which drops it down \$14,000. He also stated Slavin was \$171,000 and Higbee is \$197,000. Mayor Lincoln stated the issue he has is having the police and cybercrime, noting there was one in the past that was a payout of around \$11,000. He added with Slavin there is not a zero deductible, it is a \$25,000 deductible meaning if there were a cybercrime in 2022, the savings between the two companies is gone.

Mr. Slavin explained his proposal and how it works.

Solicitor Witt explained the coverage of “lost wages” and if someone would claim to have lost wages due to taking off work to, for example go to therapy, over something a councilmember has done.

Councilman Topper stated this is very complex and these are very detailed policies that we are given a week to discuss. He added he does not like how this was handled at all. He also stated they are still not comparing apples to apples which is what council wants to do. Councilman Topper stated he is not comfortable making this kind of decision on this kind of timeline. He also asked why other insurance companies were not asked for quotes and only one was asked. He explained there are different plans and different scenarios that could happen. Councilman Topper stated he has a hard time changing policies with only a quick overview. He stated council should have a couple of months to compare policies and he is willing to look and review policies next year along with getting more insurance companies involved next year.

Councilman Keedy stated the process began in October with an email and it was discussed at the budget meetings and how he wanted to look into the surcharge. He added if Council would have spoke up then and said they didn’t want to change it, he would have stopped. He added there is no process. Councilman Keedy added this decision is not ideal for him or Council. Councilman Keedy stated because of this meeting, there is now no surcharge and we are getting a discount. He noted his question was the surcharge for the past five years.

Councilman Karpiak questioned why he didn’t go to Higbee Insurance five years ago. He stated there are a lot of other things going on with insurances that Council needs to get to the bottom of. He announced that if someone gets a major speeding ticket that is 20 miles an hour over, then the insurance will not cover them, meaning that he may have lost half his work force unknowingly. He added that Council needs to look at things like this. Mr. Karpiak stated he is not opposed to changing companies but Council has more work into getting bids for paving streets than they have for this. He

added the last time they switched companies, there was a process. He questioned if the city is going all over Western Pennsylvania or staying in town? He noted that at that time, they made a decision to stay in town, which is not set in stone. Councilman Karpiak added it is a surprise that only one man from out of town was given a chance to give a proposal.

Councilman Keedy stated he understands that not everyone writes these types of policies. He questioned Mr. Higbee.

Mr. Higbee answered there are other places that write them.

Councilman Keedy stated they couldn't get anyone to write them before.

City Clerk Ohler answered that Fiesta Insurance did.

Councilman Topper stated for next year, they need a better plan that Council gets time to review the proposal.

Councilman Keedy stated he wanted to have the information for the November meeting.

Mayor Lincoln stated Mr. Ohler would prefer to have the information in September.

Councilman Karpiak stated he prefers to have the information in August.

Councilman Keedy stated he understands going local, but they can potentially save the city \$30,000.

Councilman Topper answered on the surface it looks that way, however when you get in to other things, it may not save the city money.

Councilman Keedy asked Mr. Higbee on the Cyber, is the city covered with ramson?

Mr. Higbee answered he will check on that.

Councilman Keedy stated it is only General Liability Insurance that they are discussing today. He added Worker's Compensation is through AmTrust and too late to switch. He stated it should not be up to the city to get that discount.

Councilman Topper questioned if Councilman Keedy questioned the surcharge the past five years.

Councilman Keedy stated at the last meeting he was told that is if the city has a major claim and questioned Higbee.

Mr. Higbee stated the companies have to give a rate that they believe will sustain the claims for the next year. He noted the word surcharge is really a "credit" or "debit" on a schedule modifier. He clarified that the insurance company determines the rate and the State determines the modifier.

Mayor Lincoln questioned Mr. Slavin on the insurance proposal, asking if he understands that the police department are not permitted to moonlight.

Mr. Slavin stated only bars and nightclubs they cannot work for. He asked Council when they look at companies next year to look at five-year loss runs because they are under 50%.

Carol Tiberio questioned why it is not five years they go back on claims rather than ten years.

Mr. Higbee answered the company rates them based on five years but provides twelve years of information.

Mayor Lincoln stated the next question is for Mr. Slavin. He noted he will read and then Mr. Slavin can respond.

Solicitor Witt questioned if he can make a copy of it so everyone has one.

Councilman Topper stated that when Councilman Keedy noticed in October that they were paying a surcharge and too much and why is he looking at only one other bid rather than five.

Councilman Keedy stated if Council would have stated they wanted that, he would have done that.

Councilman Karpiak stated he believes that he would have got other quotes but Council did not know to ask that.

Councilman Topper added that no one even stated the city is shopping around for quotes.

Councilman Keedy stated he did state he was going to see if he could find a better deal with what was going on in Jeanette.

Councilman Topper stated he still wants this to get out there and give the Connellsville companies the opportunity as well, noting they may be able to save even more.

Carol Tiberio questioned that is Am Trust is suppose to be the same, why was there a \$1,700 difference between the two agents.

Mr. Higbee and Mr. Slavin discussed quotes among each other.

Mayor Lincoln stated City Council needs to pass a resolution that beginning August or September to begin getting quotes.

Councilman Topper questioned if they can put out what they want deductibles to be.

Councilman Keedy stated he understands the zero deductible, however if it saves the city money when there have been no public official claims.

Solicitor Witt explained what is considered public officials.

Mayor Lincoln questioned Solicitor Witt as to what is best next.

Solicitor Witt explained that it is under Councilman Keedy's department, therefore, he would read the resolution that he proposes and Council would take action on that. He added depending on that, there could be a secondary resolution.

Mayor Lincoln turned the meeting to Councilman Keedy's department.

REGULAR AGENDA:

MAYOR LINCOLN:

KEEDY:

Resolution No. 12-29-2021: "To approve Higbee Insurance of Connellsville as the City's insurance agent for all General Liability, Bonding and Workers Compensation insurances."

Mayor Lincoln stated he feels they need to stay with Higbee because they didn't have enough time to dive into this and they need a procedure in place in which they begin this in August or September.

Councilman Topper stated that no one there wants to raise taxes and they now know to look at things differently and earlier. He thanked Councilman Keedy for catching the surcharge and he is glad it is gone.

Carol Tiberio questioned if the insurance can be split between the two companies.

Solicitor Witt explained that depends on how the packages are written and if they are complete packages. He added the city is not required to go with only one insurer for all coverages.

Councilman Karpiak added they do not have the ability to do that in three days.

Mayor Lincoln questioned both agents if they gave package deals.

Mr. Slavin answered they have nothing to do with each other.

Mr. Higbee answered they are separate and it is advised to not split it.

Mayor Lincoln stated he doesn't know how they can make a decision to split up the insurance this evening.

Mrs. Tiberio questioned if Slavin could address the items that were a big difference.

Mayor Lincoln stated he doesn't have a problem with that; however, he feels Council has not had enough time to digest everything.

Councilman Karpiak stated he doesn't feel it will change his mind.

Councilman Topper stated it will not change his mind.

Mayor Lincoln stated since it will likely not change the vote of the Council, they will decline. He noted this is all preparation for new coverage when they begin looking in the fall.

Mr. Slavin explained his proposal.

City Clerk Ohler stated next year they can make it equal across the board.

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

KARPIAK:

Councilman Karpiak thanked both insurance agents for being present at the meeting.

Resolution No. 12-30-2021: "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF CONNELLSVILLE TO ISSUE A GOVERNMENT OBLIGATION CONTRACT TO FINANCE A SMALL CAPITAL PURCHASE, WHEREAS, City Council of the City of Connellsville, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, hereinafter called the Local Government Unit, proposes to incur nonelectoral debt by the issuance of a government obligation contract to finance the costs of the purchase of a Street Sweeper Vehicle;"

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

Mayor Lincoln stated January 12th there will be a homeless task force meeting. He asked the City Clerk to see if it could be moved to the Senior Center so they could have more room.

Councilman Topper thanked the insurance agents for attending the meeting.

TOPPER:

Resolution No. 12-31-2021: "That this meeting of City Council does hereby adjourn."

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