



Allentown

435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, Pa. 18101

Minutes - Final

City Council

Wednesday, November 15, 2023

6:30 PM

Council Chambers

Invocation:

Pledge to the Flag

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

Courtesy of the Floor

Courtesy and Privilege of the Floor Rules

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated please observe the Rules of Council when addressing the body. A full copy of Council Rules can be found on the city website. Courtesy of the Floor and Public Comment Rules: If you would like to speak this evening, we are asking that you fill out a card – they are on the back table - and provide them to the clerk before speaking. Please address the Council President. You are given privilege of the floor to provide public comment. This is a time to present comments, it is not a question-and-answer session. If you are speaking on behalf of yourself, you have three minutes and if you are speaking on behalf of a group that has several members present, you will be given five minutes - the idea being the entire group does not come up and make the same type of statement. Please be sure to state your name and address for the record and fill out a card. Courtesy of the Floor is meant to provide public comment on items that are not on the agenda; Council will take all comments under advisement and have the appropriate officials get back to you if necessary. If you have materials for Council, please distribute it to the Clerk. Public comment during consideration of ordinances, resolutions and motions is limited by topic – your comments must be relevant. Council will not entertain personal insults or attacks, name calling or other behavior that is inconsistent with the purpose of conducting official business. Please address council as a body. Refrain from using offensive language, cursing, and making noises while other people are speaking. Act with decorum. Remove your hat and turn cell phones off. Please be aware that comments and/or behavior in violation of these rules will result in a forfeiture of all remaining time and you will be asked to return to your seat. He stated that on Saturday, November 4th, there were certain comments made and threats made. That action will no longer be tolerated.

If any such happens, you will be removed.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that Mr. Hanlon has chaser tickets. He stated that residents are urged to park in the government deck, next door, and Mr. Hanlon has chaser tickets that would reimburse them for parking during Council meetings.

Contract Approvals

[15-6424](#)

R193

Authorization for Contract with Penn Mount Stone, LLC in the amount of \$90,902.00 to provide masonry repair and preservation of the WPA era retaining wall located along Park Drive for the City. This was competitively bid and two (2) bids were received, however, one bid was rejected.

Attachments: [R193 - Penn Mount Stone, LLC](#)

[Resolution #30741](#)

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he believes that Ms. McNeil is available.

Ms. Sarrah McNeil stated that this was done as Bid #2023-41, and was advertised on September 25, 2023. The public opening was held on October 24, 2023. The city received two bids and one was rejected. After the department reviewed the proposal, they are recommending an award to Penn Mount Stone, LLC.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Ms. McNeil and asked if there were any questions from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

[15-6425](#)

R194

Authorizes lease agreement with Lenni Lenape Indian Association for a commercial property located on Fish Hatchery Road, LR 39-109, known as the Bieber Dwelling.

Attachments: [R194 - Lenni Lenape Indian Association](#)

[Resolution #30742](#)

Ms. Sarrah McNeil stated that this Lease exceeds five years so it is required to bring before Council so that is why it is presented.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked what is the amount of the Lease. The annual lease payment.

Ms. Sarrah McNeil stated that it is currently at a \$1 a year. That is our Parks Department decided that. She stated that she believes it was Mandy.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that is the Museum of Indian History on Fish Hatchery Road.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mayor Tuerk and asked if there were any questions from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Gentleman asked what is the lease covering for the property. What is being conducted on the property.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that it is a museum.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that most of the Lease Terms are for \$1. The party is responsible for maintenance of the building. It is the older building out by the Fish Hatchery.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that it is a museum and kind like a heritage area and that is the reason why it is something to benefit the community. He asked if there were any other comments.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

Minutes of Previous Meeting

[15-6426](#) October 18, 2023 City Council Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [October 18, 2023 City Council Meeting Minutes](#)

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

[15-6434](#) November 1, 2023 City Council Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [November 1, 2023 City Council Meeting Minutes](#)

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

Communications

Mr. Santo Napoli asked if there was someone from IT. He is having network issues and not able to retrieve documents for the rest of the meeting.

Old Business

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that in regards to the external outside investigation, the

Clerk received the RFP and the committee will be meeting before the next Council meeting on December 6th to review it and then it will be going out for bids.

REPORTS

Public Hearing Announcement: Council will consider for possible adoption an Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Allentown to add a new section that would establish a new "Mixed Use Overlay" Zoning District that would (i) apply to approximately 195 acres of land formerly occupied by the Allentown State Hospital that is South of Hanover Ave., South of E. Allen St., South of Wahneta St. extended, generally East of Maxwell St. extended, North of River Dr., and West of the City of Bethlehem border as shown in more detail on the map that accompanies the proposed Ordinance, (ii) allow a variety of uses, including residential, commercial, recreational and institutional uses, as well as selected industrial uses on a portion of the tract, and (iii) add certain definitions to the Zoning Ordinance.

City Council will consider the foregoing at a Public Hearing on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, 435 Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA 18101. Copies of the full text of this Ordinance are available to any interested party for examination and copying at cost at the City Clerk's Office or for inspection during regular business hours at the offices of this newspaper and the Lehigh County Department of Law. City Council may adopt this amendment to the Zoning Ordinance at the regularly scheduled City Council Meeting at 6:30 PM on December 6, 2023 immediately following this Public Hearing.

Budget and Finance: Chair Napoli, Hendricks, Gerlach

The Committee has not met since the last council meeting; there are no future meetings scheduled at this time.

Community and Economic Development: Chair Mota, Napoli, Affa

The committee met this evening; the next is scheduled for November 29th where the committee will consider the zoning petition for the former state hospital property; and on December 6th to consider Resolution 202 that is being introduced this evening - a HARB denial at 213 N. 11th Street.

Human Resources, Administration and Appointments: Chair Santos, Zucal, Napoli

The Committee has not met since the last Council meeting; there are no future meetings scheduled at this time.

Parks and Recreation: Chair Gerlach, Affa, Mota

The Committee has not met since the last Council meeting; there are no future meetings scheduled at this time.

Public Safety: Chair Affa, Hendricks, Zucal

The committee met this evening; there are no future meetings scheduled.

Public Works: Chair Zucal, Santos, Hendricks

The Committee has not met since the last Council meeting; there are no future meetings scheduled.

Rules, Chambers, Intergovernmental Relations, and Strategy: Chair Hendricks, Mota, Gerlach

The committee has not met since the last Council meeting; there are no future meetings scheduled at this time.

Controller's Report (3 minutes)

Mr. Jeffrey Glazier stated that he has two quick reports tonight. Number 1, is the bank reconciliation for the month of July. An issue the Controller's office noted that was in Parks and Recreation, deposits were not going to the bank within three days. Some of the deposits were held longer and that presents a possible risk. The department was advised and along with Finance will work to make sure that in the future all deposits make it to the bank in a very timely manner. The second report that he would like to make this evening is about Light in the Parkway. He stated that he sent it out to Council last week. He totaled up the expenses for Lights in the Parkway and the revenue and while it is his opinion that a General Fund Program cannot turn a profit because that is not the nature of the General Fund. If you want something to show a profit, it should be an Enterprise Fund. At any event, he can say that the revenues from Lights in the Parkway exceeded the expenses of Lights in the Parkway by approximately \$55,000. That is certainly good news and he is sure the Special Events folks are going to do a great job on Light in the Parkway this year as well.

Mayor's Report (3 minutes)

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that last month he delivered an ambitious 2024 budget with proposed improvements with the way they do a lot of things in Allentown. It was an investment in better community engagement, in cleaner streets, in a sustainable future, in safer neighborhoods, and in the people of Allentown. He based a budget on what he has been hearing from residents for the past two years. At places like city hall at the table, at courtesy of the floor, in his every day life traveling throughout the city of Allentown. He stated that budget hinged on a 6.9 percent property tax increase and the feedback has been clear. He stated that he heard what Council said. Now, is not the time for an increase of that size. They are all here tonight because they believe they can help the city that they love to do better. When he ran for office, he committed to things like keeping our residents safe, fostering economic growth, to maintaining clean parks, ensuring effective public services to keep Allentown running. He stated that they have to protect the residents individually, but also as a community. Disinvestment is fundamentally unfair to neighborhoods. That has been the story of Allentown for a really long time now. He stated that the city is still dOffing out from previous administrations decisions and the consequences of those decisions. It is hard on our residents and

it is hard on our employees. That is why later tonight, in the spirit of compromise, he is going to bring something different to them. He stated that he will ask them to join him later in making an investment in this city that will be just for all of the residents.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mayor Tuerk.

[15-6451](#) Controller Reports

Attachments: [Bank Rec - Nov 14 Report](#)

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE (To be Voted On):

[15-6385](#) Bill 102
Amending the 2023 General Fund Budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of One Million Four Hundred Fifty-Three Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty-Seven Dollars (\$1,453,537.00) from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) Gun Violence Investigation and Prosecution Grant for the reimbursement of expenses for the purchase of new city cameras, new in car cameras for the entire police fleet and new body worn cameras for the Police Department.

Attachments: [Bill 102 PCCD Grant](#)
[Ordinance #15955](#)

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mr. Hanlon and stated that this was in your committee Ms. Affa.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that it was voted favorably.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there are any questions or comments from his colleagues or the public.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

[15-6386](#) Bill 103
Amending the 2023 General Fund Budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of Twenty-Two Thousand Three Hundred and Forty Dollars (\$22,340) from the United States Department of Justice Edward Byrne Memorial JAG Grant to the City of Allentown Police Department to utilize the funding for batteries to be used for speed control signs, solar panel kits and license plate readers.

Attachments: [Bill 103 JAG Grant Appropriation](#)
[Ordinance #15956](#)

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that this was also in your committee, Ms. Affa.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that it was voted favorably, 3 - 0.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any questions or comments from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

CONSENT AGENDA: There are no items on the consent agenda.

RESOLUTIONS FOR FINAL PASSAGE (To be Voted On):

[15-6338](#)

R180

Denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness – 316 N. 8th Street

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R 180 HARB Resolution to DENY - 316 N 8th St](#)

[316 N 8th St Final Review](#)

[Resolution #30743](#)

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated to Ms. Mota that this was in your committee.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that it was 3 - 0 and it was a denial.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any questions or comments from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated just to be clear, he asked Ms. Kistler if they have the wording correct on that.

Ms. Vicky Kistler stated yes.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that he just wants to make sure. Yes, it was a denial.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any questions or comments from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

[15-6340](#)

R181

Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness – 932 W. Gordon Street (originally a denial)

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R 181 HARB Resolution to DENY - 932 W Gordon St
932 W Gordon St Final Review
Resolution #30744](#)

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that this also was in your committee Ms. Mota.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that the vote was 3 - 0 and approved with the condition of work in front of the property.

Mr. Michael Hanlon asked Council if they would like him to read the potential amendment.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any questions or comments from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any questions or comments on the amendment or comments from the public.

A motion was made by Santo Napoli, seconded by Cynthia Mota, that this Resolution be amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

A motion was made by Daryl Hendricks that this Resolution be approved as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

[15-6427](#)

R195
Police Officer Appointments

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R195 - Appoints 2 Police Officers
Resolution #30745](#)

Assistant Chief James Gress stated that there are two applicants Emmanuel Cintron. He is off the Civil Service Competitive List. He is 32 years old, completing his degree at the Northampton County Community College, he is a graduate of Freedom High School from Bethlehem. He is not Act 120 Certified. He will be attending the Police Academy beginning in early January. In his prior employment, he worked for the Lehigh/Northampton Transportation Authority. The second one is Gregory Gold. He is also from the Civil Service Competitive List. He is 28 years old, a Saucon Valley High School graduate. He does not have Act 120 either. He will be attending the Academy in early January as well. His prior employment, he worked as a landscaper, but also a military veteran. Currently, list in the National Guard since 2018.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Assistant Chief Gress. He asked if there were any comments or questions from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Yes: 6 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

No: 1 - Ce-Ce Gerlach

[15-6428](#)

R196

Authorizes the sale of Police K9 Remi, to His Handler Talden Cashatt

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R196 K-9 Remi Sale](#)

[Resolution #30746](#)

Chief Charles Roca stated that the Resolution that he has in front of Council today speaks to one of the K9 partners that he grew up in the department as well. He stated that K9 Remi is somebody that began his career with Officer Talden Cashatt, who is present with his family and the rest of the K9 team. He acknowledged them and thanked them for being here tonight. Canine Remi began his partnership with Talden Cashatt on May 8, 2015. For eight years of service, they had been doing excellent work in the Police Department, helping out the patrol, helping out the investigations on different cases. Over time, Remi is currently 11 years old. He has been through a lot. He did have a surgery previously and they are saying their prayers for him. Remi pulled through and that speaks to the dedication of the K9 team that they have in the Allentown Police Department. He invited Officer Cashatt to come to the podium just briefly and give a little rundown about Remi.

Officer Talden Cashatt stated that Remi has been here for eight years. It has been a great career and they had a great time. They are very much looking forward to retirement. It was always a hope and dream to be able to retire together. Things have worked out. That is going to be a possibility to have that happen. He stated that they are very grateful for the community support that they had over the years and the support of the Administration. His coworkers over the years, made the ride very enjoyable and the experience is something that he will always treasure. People always say, when you are a dog lover and you experience the relationship of having your house dog. That is one amazing relationship, but when you go to the next level and you become a Handler and responsible for this individual every day and you spend countless hours with him every day and go through the things that they have gone through in the past eight years, puts your relationship on a whole different level. He has been an amazing asset to the community, an amazing family member, and a great bestfriend to him.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Officer Cashatt for his service and your partner's service.

Chief Charles Roca summed it up by saying thank you to his family who are here tonight and also to the K9 team that is here. It is about family. It is about bonding. It is about comradery. It is just not about the Allentown Police Department. It is about serving our community. He thanked Council for the opportunity to talk about this Resolution this evening. He stated that he will take any questions, if Council has any.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Chief Roca and asked if there were any questions or comments from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Mr. James Whitney took the opportunity to thank Talden Cashatt for his service to our city. He has served our city with compassion, with bravery, and he gotten a chance to get to know him and his family a little bit. He stated what an absolutely incredible Police Officer he is and he thinks the reason for that is what a wonderful man, husband and father he is. The way that he loves his family, is what he will be remembered for. He thanked Officer Talden Cashatt and stated that it has meant the world to he and his wife to have somebody like Talden keeping Allentown safe and he thanked him for his service and thanked Remi as well.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mr. Whitney for his comments. He asked if there were any other comments.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

[15-6429](#)

R197

Approves the submission of the formal application for the local share account grant on behalf of the Police Athletic League (PAL) to support the renovation of its facilities.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R197 PAL Local Share Grant Application](#)
[Resolution #30747](#)

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that this and many of the following Resolutions are required for the local share account which is a statewide grant program that community organizations can apply for. For investments in capital assets, for programmatic support, etc. The city has to act as a pass through for those grants. He stated that the city is hosting the applications. They need the Resolutions from City Council in order to forward them to the state. You will see a few of those. There are a few the last time as well.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mayor Tuerk. He asked if there were any questions or comments from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

[15-6431](#)

R198

Accepts the funds awarded by the Department of Homeland Security under the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program to fund 12 new firefighter positions.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R198 SAFER Grant Acceptance](#)
[Resolution #30748](#)

Chief Afrain Agosto stated that this is a grant that was awarded to the Fire Department.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any comments or questions from his colleagues. He stated that he welcomed this and appreciates the work Chief Agosto did to get this grant through. He stated that this will be a big benefit for the citizens of this city for fire safety and public safety overall. He asked if there were any comments from the public.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that this grant was awarded due to the incredible work by the fire administration, but he wants to offer appreciation and thanks to Congresswoman Susan Wild who helped secure these funds for public safety in the city of Allentown.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated absolutely. So noted.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

[15-6432](#)

R199

Approves the submission of the formal application to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for \$250,000 from the Statewide Local Share Account Fund (LSA) that will support the replacement of Central Firehouse.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R199 Central Fire LSA](#)
[Resolution #30749](#)

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that is kind of self explanatory. He asked if there were any questions or comments from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

[15-6430](#)

R200

Approves the submission of the formal application for the local share account grant on behalf of Resurrected Life Community Development Corporation (RCDC) to support the rehabilitation and renovations of its facilities.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R200 RCDC Local Share Grant Application](#)

[Resolution #30750](#)

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked Mayor Tuerk if he wanted to comment on that.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that it is similar to a LSA Grant. This one in particular is an application by RCDC on Ninth and Turner that extends some investments that were previously made by the state. The hope is that LSA will fund that as well.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any questions or comments from his colleagues or any comments from the public.

Mr. Eddie Aviles, Eddie Cares, stated the last part that Mayor Tuerk said giving more money for Ninth and Turner. He asked is that what he understood. He asked for Gregory Edwards.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that it is a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It does not come from the city of Allentown.

Mr. Eddie Aviles stated that it is still trying to get that man some more money. He asked if the mayor seen his church. He asked why are we trying to get him more money. He asked if Mr. Hendricks seen the condition of the church.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated no, he has not.

Mr. Eddie Aviles stated to Mr. Hendricks that tomorrow they will meet and see the condition of the church. Then they will take a drive to Gregory Edwards house and see the condition of his house. He stated before the city gives him anymore money, you will see what they are are talking about. Let's do that.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that no one gave him any money. This is an application.

Mr. Eddie Aviles stated that this is what we are going to do for the community. He stated that Mr. Hendricks will meet him and go to see this man's church and then go see his house.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any other comments.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

[15-6421](#)

R201

Approves two transfers: (1) Fire – \$220,000 in EMS for Premium Pay; (2) \$11,250.00 in City Council for Granicus for a one-time fee for Boards and Commissions – Setup & Configuration in the amount of \$2,250.00. Boards and Commission Online Group Training in the amount of \$0; and New Subscription Fees for Boards and Commissions in the amount of \$9,000.00, the total cost will be \$11,250.00.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R201 Transfer Funds](#)

[City Council for Granicus for a one-time fee for Boards and Commissions – Setup & Configuration in the amount of \\$2,250.00 Allotted Premium Pay Was Used and More Is Required Due to Shift Vacancies Resolution #30751](#)

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any questions from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

Two suggested proposals to suspend the rules, introduce and vote on a motion to override the mayor's veto; motion to reconsider the General Fund budget and amend what passed with the Mayor's proposal.

1. Resolution to override the Mayor's Veto.
2. Reconsider the General Fund Budget and amend it to reflect Mayor Tuerk's second version at 2%.

Attorney Charles Smith asked Council to be clear what Rules they are Suspending. The Rules require five votes to override a veto. Council is not Suspending that.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated ok.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that the Rules permits reconsideration of an ordinance following a veto and Council may override the veto by passing a Resolution, but it requires five votes. He stated that he doesn't know if they want to Suspend that.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he believes what Mr. Zucal is asking is to Suspend the Rules to put this item on the agenda.

Attorney Charles Smith stated to place this on the agenda in terms of timing. Suspend the Rules to put it on the agenda.

A motion was made by Ed Zucal, seconded by Ce-Ce Gerlach, to Suspend The Rules.

[15-6436](#) R203 Overrides Mayor's Veto

Sponsors: Gerlach, Mota and Mr. Zucal

Attachments: [R203 Veto Override](#)

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mr. Hanlon and asked if there are any comments or questions from his colleagues or comments from the public.

Mayor Matt Tuerk asked Mr. Hendricks if it is worthwhile to read the text of the veto statement. He stated that he is not sure the public had an opportunity to hear the rationale behind the veto.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that it is on the agenda. It is on the website.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated ok. He stated that he would only add as commentary that obviously when the mayor chooses to veto the decision of a City Council, that is not something that they take lightly. His choice to veto Council's decision to proceed with amendment that in his belief would cause damage to the city was the rationale behind the vetoing and the motivation is to ask City Council to reconsider. Before Council is the veto legislation which he hopes that they will elect no to override so they might have further discussion on how they can adequately meet the needs of the residents of the city of Allentown.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mr. Tuerk.

Ms. Paulette Kish, 1028 E. Chew Street, stated that as a poor child growing up, she remembers a statement made if you live in the area, you pay taxes. For years in the city, it is crazy that there are not taxes raised. That is how a city maintains itself. Allentown has been going down, down, down, and down and she does not know if it is political reasons to say they did not raise taxes. In the meantime Allentown is losing. There is no reason not to pay taxes. She stated that she thinks it was Benjamin Franklin that said that you die and you pay taxes. She stated that is what you do and this city has gotten so far behind that we have to pay a six percent to catch up. She commended Mayor Tuerk on saying no taxes. How can you sustain a city and you got to get to a level where everyone can meet the tax needs. She stated that for Council to say they are going to veto no taxes when all these things in the city. Every time she ask for something in the city, it is they don't have the money . They don't have the money. They don't have the money. If you have a level of taxes that you

can sustain, it makes sense. She stated that she is now a middle class person who wants to stay in the city because she loves the things, but things aren't just not getting done. The eastside Allentown park is awful. Finally, they are getting a pool after 10 years, but they can't have the pavilion and can't fix the tennis courts. They can't do many things in the city because you do not raise taxes. That is just ridiculous to her. She stated that Council has to come together with the Mayor is to compromise to meet all the needs of the people in the city and get to a level that says no taxes. It is not even reasonable if you want a city to sustain itself. She stated to please consider some kind of Resolution that you can some how get together that the residents can get a sustainable level so as her mom as a poor woman raising two children could pay her taxes. She could pay her taxes. She knew that had to be done. Not at seven or eight percent, because for years, none have been paid. She asked Council to please consider a compromise and not say no tax increase. It makes no sense if you live in the city and want to maintain the level that all residents: middle class also want to live in and enjoy everything.

Ms. Tinku Khanwalkar, 208 N. Marshall Street, stated that she is a resident of the city of Allentown. She is also a member of the Allentown Environmental Advisory Council, but she is here today to speak as a concerned resident of the city. She stated that her message is basically the same as the person there before her. She stated please, let's not follow in the steps of the federal government and the inability to compromise and do the right thing for the city. Overriding the mayor's veto today would signal that City Council is unable to compromise even a little bit. Despite the compelling comments that were submitted by the Allentown Environmental Advisory Council for the November 4th meeting, in which the City Council's 2024 budget modifications eliminated the position of Sustainability Coordinator and gave some really strong comments on why that is not a good idea and other cities smaller than Allentown have gotten these positions filled and are benefitting greatly, reducing their costs, bringing in more money, saving themselves from having to raise taxes as much down the road and developing a more sustainable city as a result. They are not able to do that because the city does not have that position. City Council likely denied having that position and she believes at some extent it is because they do not have a City Council member attending the EAC meetings and hearing about all the wonderful things that the city could be doing with such a Sustainability Coordinator position. City Council is required to have such a person attending the Allentown EAC meetings. The ordinance that was approved by this City Council back in 2021 required a City Council liaison to the Allentown EAC. Precisely, they believe for this reason. Because these kinds of really significant things are being missed because they don't have someone from City Council listening to the conversations, understanding what the EAC is talking about, and

making the right decisions. The people of Allentown has actually spoken on November 7th, the majority of them voted to pay all of Council more, to pay the Controller more. The residents are willing to incur appropriate expenses. Let's do the right thing for the city now and for future generations and include a Sustainability Coordinator for the city. She stated that the city deserves it, the children and grandchildren deserve it.

Ms. Enid Santiago, S. Jefferson Street, thanked Council for being here today and listening. There is a such thing as a check and balance and she remembers at a meeting at 9:00 AM in the morning half the city decided to stop by and you heard every single last person that stood up here, including a senior citizen that was almost in tears because he could not afford another dollar. She stated that they have to understand that the city is having the water raised next year, the trash raised next year. She stated that she does not know who does not pay taxes here, but she pays taxes. She remembers a few years ago, the 27 percent tax increase that they just received. She stated that they need to understand that this is not the time. She stated that she stood in line with the Salvation Army last week and signed up 40 additional families to their food bank. Not the ones that were already in line, 40 additional families to a food bank. She stated that she needs everyone to stand strong and understand there is a check and balance for a reason. You made a decision. You made the right decision. Another dollar could break a family. Incomes are not going up. What do you think is going to happen to the renters. Right now, there is no rent control in the entire state of Pennsylvania. A landlord that is going to get a \$30, \$40, \$50 or \$100 tax increase is going to raise the rent \$100 or \$200 a month. She stated that they are seeing this right now. She could only imagine what is going to happen. She stated that she does not want any more people being unsheltered in the city. She stated that she knows that is not a problem of the city, but it is. When they are knocking on the doors of the nonprofit because they don't have a place to go. She stated that she had no answers. She stated that they have no more answers. They have nowhere to put these people anymore. She stated that she recently took in three little girls, and their sister. That is four people. She stated that she already has her grandmother living with her because she can't afford to live on her own. How many more families need to live like this in the city. It sounds like a few people that want taxes raised. She suggested a Go Fund Me to go ahead and donate any money they feel they have extra in their pocket. She stated that people like her don't have that. She stated that they don't have an extra dollar. She stated that she does not have another 50 cents. She is applying for LIHEAP this year for the first time in a decade and there are more just like her. She stated so please stay strong and stated that she is asking them to stay strong and if another \$7 is not going to break somebody's pocket, why are we talking about it here today. It should not matter. She stated please, say no and we cannot have

another tax increase.

Mr. Deiter Krechie (sp), N. Marshall Street, stated that he has been living there for three or four years. He took a look at what the city is doing on budgets and salary increases. This young lady that was just here was quite right. The poor in the city can't afford a tax increase. How can you afford to sit here and get a two and a half time increase in your salary. He asked if they budgeted that. Where is it coming from. These people right now can't afford a tax increase. He stated to Ms. Affa that the last time he was here said that the last tax increase was 27 percent. He asked her, is that what you are shooting for in three or four years? You are going to kick the ball every year and every year, until one day this woman and her constituents or her friends are going to be nailed with 27 percent. He asked is that what you are shooting for? He asked what is wrong with 2.5 percent a year. He stated that Council's salary increase of 2.5 times and you can sit here and look into these people's eyes and say, I got mine, did you get yours. He stated that is not how it works. You got to be honest and open with everybody. He stated that if they want that kind of salary increase, you got to make sure that these people may not get a tax increase this year. When, next year? Five percent the year after that. It will be seven, to eight, to nine percent. He asked if the city has programs to help these people. He stated that he lives on the west end and don't mind paying a few dollars more. He stated that he is not rich, but he doesn't mind because he can afford it a little bit better than the folks that the young lady was just talking about. He stated that you guys increased your salaries by two and a half percent. Where is the money coming from folks. It is not a lot. It is \$90,000 total from \$36,000. It does not break any banks. He stated that the gall to sit here and vote yourself that increase and look at these people and say you are not going to have a tax increase next year, but wait until we raise it for you with 20, 15, and 30 percent. That is not how businesses operate. He stated that they take money from the public to spend. Are you spending it right? Are there programs for these people? There are programs that take it from the public.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks commended everybody for the increase you voted for his Councilmembers and himself. He stated that understand this, none of them will be getting that increase, unless or until such time they run again, and win. There will be no money in the budget for increases for Council. At a minimum, not for at least two years. He stated that his colleagues work extremely hard and put a lot of hours in. It was a fair and honest increase that was given. He stated that they will not see it, unless they run again. He stated some of his colleagues won't see it for four years and only if they run again. He stated that those three members that were most recently elected, will not get that for four years.

Ms. Candida Affa also added that Council did not vote it in, the citizens voted it in. She stated that they are the ones that voted for Council to have the raise.

Ms. Barbara Miller, 2119 W. Washington Street, stated that she apologizes coming before them not appropriately dressed, but she did not have to change when she got home because she spent the whole day doing volunteer clean up mowing and weed-whacking at the Union West End Cemetery. She stated that it is Ms. Affa's favorite cemetery. She stated that her reason for addressing Council is that she ask them not to override the mayor's veto. The tax increase that he is asking for a senior like her on limited income, but not in financial distress, obviously. She stated that she can handle that. What she would not be able to handle would be a failure to do a tax increase which will start to undermine the city's services that she really depend on. She stated from what she sees, they get real value for the money from the city and the city employees. She truly believes this tax increase is modest, appropriate, and necessary. She thanked Council for listening to her and asked them not to override the mayor's veto, but rather adopt the budget with a modest increase that he asked for. Although, that increase is not going to hurt someone like her, she would look for ways as a citizen of Allentown to help the folks in her city who feels that it would help them and try to help them get the services they need to be able to live their lives the way they need to.

Ms. Betty Cauler, 2212 Tilghman Street, stated that she was going to congratulate them on their raise, but she guesses she won't. She gave a shoutout to Ms. Affa and Mr. Napoli for the \$9,500 donations for the FOP PAC for your campaigns. Now, it makes a lot of sense why the two are you are the only two that voted no on the budget amendments. The budget the you passed two weeks ago did not include a tax increase. She stated that you can get rid of Lights in the Parkway. She stated that she can care less. You can get rid of the 4thh of July fireworks. She stated that it has been sh*tty for the last few years. What she cares about is the gentrification of the downtown and the increased cost of everything from gas and groceries to interest rates which affects her as a senior. She is basically living on credit. Sure, she can swallow a tax increase, but she is living on credit. Some day the piper is going to come calling for her and it is not going to be pretty. If the tax increase was going to address the problem of homelessness which is going to be caused in large part of all those beautiful highlighted, smoked glass high-rises that you are putting up around the city in the NIZ and the Keystone Opportunity Zone which means their taxes are cut. If it was going to address food insecurities and affordable housing for the 27 percent of the city that lives at or below the poverty level. If the increase was going to nonprofits with boots on the ground taking up the slack with city services, then she would be all for it, but

it is not going to that. It is going towards things like a Sustainability Czar which she would like to know what that is. A new Arts and Cultural Coordinator. Is that necessary? And, those workers that are still fortunate enough to have generous life sustaining pensions and benefits. she apologized to Chief Roca that she is bringing up the police. She was just looking at their hiring people. She stated that the starting salary \$66,445 a year. Average three year salary of a patrolmen, \$96,000. Major medical, vision, dental, prescription plans. She stated \$75,000 basic life insurance policy. Holiday, sick, vacation, personal, military and funeral leave. The pension plan after 20 years with no minimum age requirement, post retirement health coverage at 75 percent. Shift differential, holiday pay, longevity pay, clothing allowance and on and on. People in the public sector no longer have pensions. She does not know how many people out here still have a pension. When she brought up to the mayor for the seniors, the prospect of putting a freeze on property taxes and assessments for people over 65. He basically blew her off. She stated that she hopes that they vote to override the veto because even though she is living on credit, she can't afford anything else. There are a lot of people who can't.

Mr. Pas Simpson asked that this City Council stated with what they voted on in the beginning and override this veto. Unfortunately, one out every five students in Allentown School District is homeless and hungry already. They can't afford a tax increase. There are so many working homeless people in our city right now. They cannot afford a tax increase. There are ways to get more money. He stated that the city can be more creative, apply for federal funding, by putting together groups, organizations. There is state money that they can apply for. He stated that the city can't afford any more taxation. The city has to be a little more creative by putting more burden on the people that is already burden. We cannot increase violence. Poverty is violence. If you increase taxation, you are increasing poverty. He stated that someone said 27 percent of our city lives under the threat of violence. That is poverty. He stated that is before you start to shoot at us, before you start to not protect us, before you let us down. He asked as much as they may or not think they need a two percent tax increase, we can't afford a .5 percent tax increase. He stated that they can't afford a .1 percent tax increase. He stated be creative and work within other budgets. Use federal money, use state money, learn to work together in collaboration. Collaboration is key. If they work together in other ways, the city can apply for other money. He stated but, please don't take another dollar from us.

Mr. Eddie Aviles, Eddie Cares, stated that they care talking about raising the budget. He stated that he spent his day yesterday, family of four, a family of six with four kids. Nine, eight, seven, a five year old girl and the mother is pregnant, the father is in car. They have been in the car for over a

month. No help. They been to every resource in the city. He is the last person they called for help. He ended up putting them in a hotel. He stated that he did not get any resources from Broken Promises or your buddies that you are travelling to Puerto Rico with. They haven't helped him. They never gave him a can of soup for Puerto Rico and you are out there trotting around on his island. The day before on a Friday, a woman goes back to her tent and finds an overdose body in her tent. He stated that he takes care of Gordon Street everyday. There is a whole 60, 70 people living in the woods right now, he has about 15 people living in cars and stated to Mayor Tuerk and you want to talk about raising taxes. Shame on you.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated to Mr. Aviles to address him.

Mr. Eddie Aviles stated that he is the elephant in the room. He stated that he likes looking people in the eyes.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated no, you look at me and speak to me.

Mr. Eddie Aviles stated that we have a problem here and have a City Council members doing outreach in another country. He doesn't care if you are doing it for your nonprofit or not. You work and was elected to do service here, not out there.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated stop the bullying.

Mr. Eddie Aviles stated that he is being straight up with you. He asked what are you doing in Puerto Rico.

Ms. Cynthia Mota told Mr. Aviles to mind his own business.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked the officers to remove Mr. Aviles.

Ms. Jessica Ortiz, Ortiz Ark Foundation, stated that she is going to read a statement.

Mayor Matt Tuerk asked Council to hold until we have another police officer in here, please.

Ms. Jessica Ortiz asked Mayor Tuerk is he insinuating that she is going to do something that you need a police officer. She stated that together they can improve opportunities for our youth, prepare people for jobs of the future, preserve the quality of life, strengthen public safety and ensure the quality of housing for Allentonians. She stated Mr. Allentown Mayor Tuerk's campaign. She stated today she is asking them to remember that quote that he campaigned on. Remember, the Allentonians. She stated that she

will give Council the same facts she gave last time, but will get deeper. A dozen of eggs costs \$4.25, per pound of chicken is \$1.83 to \$3.69, ground beef is up to \$7.00 a pound, a gallon of milk can go from \$4.21 to \$8.00, depending on your neighborhood, especially in the low income areas where the prices are higher. The price of butter is \$4.81 a pound. A loaf of bread can average from \$2.42 to \$6.00, depending on your neighborhood. Chocolate cookies are considered a luxury, begins at \$5.00 to \$15.00. Coffee that the average American drinks very much is \$6.00 a pound, American cheese is \$4.66 to \$8.77. Bacon which is an American staple for breakfast is \$6.96 to \$27 a pound. When you say \$6.00 is minuet, it is not. The average senior lives on an income from \$721.00 to \$1,100.00 a month. The average rent in Allentown is \$950 for a room. Last year and this year, the total of seniors dying went from 11 percent to 50 percent due to suicide. She stated that 18 percent of our seniors are committing suicide. A water increase, a school tax, a county tax, is killing people. She stated that Pas Simpson says that poverty is violence. It is beyond violence. Her food bank went from serving a humble 60 people in a park, to 350 to 500 people. She stated that she has to separate bags to feed people. She filled out this week alone, for leaders and individuals like you, welfare, food stamps, LIHEAP applications like Ms. Santiago said. It is not easy for people to live. People are killing themselves for suicides because they are stressed. She stated that the youth see the dismay. They have nothing to look forward They are living in houses with six to seven families. Could you imagine? She stated that Council said last week there were some threats and she has received many calls. Her intention was not to threaten anyone on City Council or the city. She stated that those are the actions that they do everyday. Those are the fires they put out. she wasn't saying that she was going to post addresses or intentionally harm. What she is saying is that the people like Pas said, when they get scared and they have to make decisions, these are the things that they are preventing in the community and it needs to be acknowledged because, 1: they don't get funded; 2: if the money keeps and the poverty keeps and the scarcity and the hunger keeps, the city will be like the zombie apocalypse fighting for our lives and it is going to get scary. She stated that they are seeing it now with the people in the homeless camps are killing each other. The kids are fighting within their own homes because cousins supposed to be cousins. Not living in the same houses. She stated that they need Council to understand not getting bullied by lunches and fancy dinners and promotions and things like that. That is not an accusation, that is facts. She stated that the citizens voted for Council and trusted in you. She stated that they didn't all vote for them, but need them to think about the citizens and the struggles that they are going through. It is not easy and very hard.

Ms. Connie Santos, 827 Jefferson Street,

Ms. Connie Santos, 827 Jefferson Street - Allen Garden Apartments, stated that they, the citizens of Allentown, especially those of them that rent are struggling at this time. She stated that her rent just increased by \$300 a month. She is retired, gets a pension and social security. She is working full-time, but is 68 years old and not going to do that forever. How is she going to afford rent, utilities and these things she knows next time, next lease renewal is going up again because they have to cover all of these increases. She stated that she knows someone who just had her rent increase by \$400 a month who is a single mother of three children. This person struggles on a monthly basis. Fighting eviction every month. She has to decide whether to pay her rent or does she put food on the table. She doesn't know how many times she supplied food to that household. She doesn't know how many times she paid the RCN bill because she works from home so that she can continue to work. She stated that she is working, but working to support two people. There are three children in this home. The decision was made. She is like many, many other citizens of this city that she knows. She is going to leave this state in the beginning of next year because she can't afford it here. She is going where it is more affordable living and it breaks her heart because the people are extremely close to her.

Ms. Karen Ocasio, NAACP - Allentown Branch, stated that her voice is a little horse. She stated that she has been sick this past week. She stated that the NAACP gets a lot of calls from people that are in need and resources are very limited on what they can do. There is a woman that is being evicted from her home even though she paid a whole year's worth of rent because her house now has mold. She can't find another place to go in this city because the rents are so expensive. She is on a fixed income and no one has been able to help her with anything. She stated that she wants to speak on her own behalf and this is not a pity party at all, but like the previous person said, they are living on credit. She stated that her dad this past week and had to put it on credit. That is another expense. She stated that her mom is on a fixed income. She is on disability after working so many years for Lehigh Valley Hospital. She stated that she can't afford to move out on her own because she can't afford an apartment in this area or a home because people are coming with cash offers and she can't compete with that. She stated that she is a single mother and don't have anybody else to fall back on and now she has to help her mother who is a newly widow. She reminded Council of the people that actually vote in this city. It is the majority of the people who are on the west end. It is not these people in need. While people are worried about voting, our people are worried about getting food on the table or how they going to meet that rent or that light bill or the water bill or the sewer bill. How are they going to feed their kids. How are they going to put shoes on their kids feet. For the first

time since she was 10 years old, they will go to one of the drives to get a turkey because this year, they can't afford it because how expensive everything is. That is the type of thing that they are enduring in this city. She stated that they can't afford another tax increase. She stated that they had 27 percent just a few years ago, in 2019. She stated that they can't afford that tax increase. This is about the people. This is about the community and that is what Council should be focused on. She stated that is why they were all elected in these positions to worry about the public, but if Council is not worrying about the public then they have to vote them out and that is just what it is. She stated that please do the right thing and stick the no increase because it is detrimental for the community.

A motion was made by Ed Zucal, seconded by Ce-Ce Gerlach, that this Resolution be Suspend The Rules. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

A motion was made by Daryl Hendricks that this Resolution be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Cynthia Mota, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, and Natalie Santos

No: 3 - Candida Affa, Daryl Hendricks, and Santo Napoli

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that a motion was made to consider the override and adoption of the budget that the mayor's budget at two percent. The Motion was made by Mr. Napoli and seconded by Ms. Affa.

Mr. Michael Hanlon asked to restate this and asked if the Motion is to reconsider the Bill that the mayor voted to bring it in front of them and have the mayor address his proposal.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated yes.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated yes.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he can address the two percent that he forwarded to City Council.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach asked if Council has to vote on that if that was a Motion.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated yes, it has to be public comment.

Ms. Ce Ce asked Attorney Charles Smith if Council has to vote if there was a Motion made. Should they entertain the Mayor's two percent increase memo. She stated that it was seconded. There is a Motion on the floor. Do they have to vote to entertain this.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that Council has to entertain comments prior to voting on it. He asked if they can state the Motion.

Mr. Michael Hanlon asked if he needs to restate.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that the Motion to reconsider the General Fund Budget and amend it to reflect Mayor Tuerk's second version at two percent.

Attorney Charles Smith asked if there were any comments from the dais or from the public, then vote on it. He stated then he will entertain comments from the Mayor.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were comments from his colleagues.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that it should be procedurally consistent.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that the reason that she is going for this is because she thinks Council needs to listen to the Mayor again. Two percent, she understands everyone's concern. She stated that she is not in favor raising taxes. No one is. The woman that was up here earlier said which is true, we will always pay taxes and if they don't right now everyone is saying we can't, we can't, we can't and this isn't the right time. When is the right time? What is going to happen next year? Someone talked about the 27 percent and that increase was because the city did not have a tax increase for 13 years and now, the city has not had one in five years. She stated that her fear is that if they don't negotiate and consider this two percent. She believes in the beginning and now he has cut a lot of that fat off. These are the things that they are concerned about with the upgrades and so forth. He went to the drawing board and now her concern is public safety, the paramedics, public works, and the roads. Things that can be affected if they don't raise the two percent. She stated that if they don't raise it this year, she is going to be sitting here next year and the year after and the year after and have to listen to the same thing over and over and over again. So many of the citizens complained on the 27 percent and said quote on quote and this was in the paper, why can't we do it in increments. This is an increment. This is two percent. She stated that her fear is, what about next year. She stated that they might come next year and it might be worse. What is going to suffer? Your services are going to suffer. The paramedics were there within two minutes to save that man's life. Things are things that you taxpayers, property taxes, not county, not school. Just your property taxes is what you are concerned about. She stated that this is what you should get for that. You should get the best police department, the best fire department, the paramedics should be there when you have having a heart attack and the roads. These are the

things that your property taxes have to pay for. She asked how are we going to do this if we never raise the taxes. She stated that she doesn't see the economy being much better next year. Then they are going to sit here the same way and hear the same things, but next year, it might have to go up to four percent or five percent. This is the reason that she believes the two percent is something that is negotiable. She stated that she thinks that they need to negotiate. They just can't sit here and say no for absolutely no reason. She understands the plight of so many people, but telling them that if they don't raise the taxes now, when do you think we should raise the taxes. She stated to someone in the audience, don't raise your finger at me up there. Be polite.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that a number of people in the public have alluded to the fact that when and if we raise taxes, they don't do so in a vacuum. She stated that if they knew that the cost of water wasn't going to go up by hundred dollars. If they knew that the school taxes and know they go up every year. If they knew that wasn't going to happen and the sewer rates weren't going to increase by 11.6 percent. If we knew that one or two bedroom apartments in the city of Allentown didn't increase by 41 percent. If a studio apartment in Allentown did not cost \$1,611, then two percent raise in taxes would be ok. Unfortunately, a two percent increase in taxes is happening combined with everything else so that a two percent increase actually feels like more to the average person. She stated that if they look at the MIT calculator, the living wage in the Lehigh Valley for two adults and two children is a little over \$38,000 a year. For one adult and one, stating that would have been her household growing up, \$34,000, almost \$35,000. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average wage in the Lehigh Valley is \$27,000. That means the average person in the Lehigh Valley and in Allentown does not earn a living wage or does not earn enough to survive. She stated that she will not be supporting this tax increase. She stated that they heard that if they did not support a 6.9 percent increase, it would be devastating. That it would cause damage. Then when they were presented with a 4.57 percent, they were told if they did not pass that it would be devastating and cause damage. Now, they are being told that a two percent increase if Council doesn't pass that would be devastating and cause damage. What would really help her, is at some point from the administration to get some specifics. Not just, hey, if we don't raise taxes by two percent fire trucks aren't going to show up. No, no, no. How many shifts will be decreased. How many uniforms will not be purchased. How many potholes will not be filled. How many lights will not be strung up? She stated to get those specifics because what is not clear to her is at 6.9 percent increase, it was going to be devastating and cause damage, but nothing specific on how the damage will be caused and specifically how it will be devastating. Not just a general statements of what might, could and possibly happen. That would just be helpful to really get

those. She stated that the way that she would envision it is perhaps the administration has done this, picking a specific department and showing them that if Council does not do this two percent tax increase, how that specific department will be affected at a micro level and therefore affect the services of residents. She stated that they have not been shown that. Maybe some of them have when they met with Matt. She stated that she has not. She stated that it would be helpful to get that. The city has million dollar skyscrapers, beautiful buildings that have went up, Council has been told that this development supposed to help everything. It is supposed to help the economy, but here we are talking about raising taxes on residents. She stated so again, something is not working. She stated that she looks forward to having the administration present very specific ways that not passing a two percent increase will affect the services, not just general statements.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that Ms. Gerlach stole mostly what he was going to say. However, he has something else. What he is very concerned about is the fact about how the Steps Program is being manipulated to incur raises for people that aren't even allowed to have them. When that Steps Program was introduced about four years ago, it was to bring a lower guy that was hired. He stated a janitor that was hired 20 years ago, making \$22 an hour. The janitor gets hired tomorrow, is making \$32. The purpose of the Steps Program was every anniversary year, they would go up a Step so that at some point, they would be pretty much be closer together. That is not what was done here. He stated that the administration manipulated the Steps Program and that's why the city needed a 6.9 percent, a 5.47 percent, and some of the reason why the Mayor is asking for a two percent. He stated yes, sometimes taxes have to be risen/allowed. However, he used examples with 13 positions that are red lined positions. He stated that he checked his facts with people. The purpose of a Red Line is that you are at the top of that Step. The only way you can get raises is either through a cost of living percentage which is already instituted when you take that position or percentage. He stated that he checked with the best. He stated or the percentage that you allow at Budget time. Other than that, the only way they can go up is if they go to a different position. He gave an example of a Sergeant to a Lieutenant. He stated that they are not in the Steps. He is just using that as an example. He stated that the mayor is using some of them.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that if they are not in the Steps, then you should use an example in the Steps.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated ok, the Captain of Police which is in the two percent as well which technically they are not legal to get the Step increase.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that is correct.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that you have it in your two percent proposal.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated the administration is suggesting that City Council take action to retain institutional knowledge that exceeds 80 years.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that is not what he is talking about. He is talking about properly presenting a Budget that is factual. Not what you would like Council to do to keep personnel.

Ms. Cynthia Mota stated that she thinks that the community is going to suffer. She stated that Mayor Tuerk has spoken to her numerous times saying that this house that cost \$80,000, they will be pay \$6.00. She stated that Mayor Tuerk has given her different numbers that with all due respect does not make a lot of sense. She stated that what she can tell him, she is there in the community and sees people suffering. She stated that \$6.00, \$10.00 is a big difference for a lot of people. She stated that they see inflation going up and everyone knows that. At the same time, we don't see the salaries going up. She stated that she is disappointed. She stated that she does understand that the city needs money. At the same time, we just came out of Covid and have to be mindful of that and still getting people right now that still don't have a job. Due to Covid. Things are not getting better. She stated that they did not listen to the community.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked his colleagues for their efforts and working for this budget. What they have before them is a compromise between this body and the administration. While none of them are completely pleased with the final product, it is in the best interest of those people most affected, the taxpayers of our growing and diverse population. The reduction in the trash fee is substantial and will in most cases offset the modest two percent increase. Again, he commended his colleagues for their diligence in lowering it from the amount which was originally proposed at \$120. This will offset almost everybody's increase at two percent. Without this slight increase, he believes the city will place great pressure on the bureau heads to continue to deliver service at a level that the citizens have come to expect and desire. This compromised budget strongly supports EMS technicians, along with a proponent for police command. He stated that he values the emergency services as most of the citizens do. He encourage his colleagues to vote yes, to accept this compromise. It is reasonable. Water fees are going up \$100. That is a 25 percent increase compared to previous years. He stated that they as a city are asking for a two percent increase. He stated that is not unrealistic.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated just to be clear, this is for the Motion to override

and they will have an opportunity to speak again on.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated Council already voted against the override.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that the override was voted on. He stated as he looks at the Motion that is in front of Council, it is really a Motion to reconsider and amend to reflect Mayor Tuerk's second. He stated that he thinks they should hear from the mayor because that is part of it before you vote. It is not broken down should Council reconsider it and then let the mayor's proposal you made it a bundled Motion. He thinks Council should hear from the administration because if they vote on it, what you are voting on is that they should reconsider it and accept the two percent. He stated that is the question that is in front of them.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that the reason he asked is because he wants to hear from the administration first before making his comments. He stated that he wants to hear what they have to say.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that given the way Mr. Napoli framed his Motion, he thinks that is appropriate.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that he wants to make more comments after they hear from the administration. He thinks that the reason he voted for that is that he wants the public to hear what he has proposed. He stated that it is important.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that the Controller wanted to weigh in too.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if anyone on the dais that did not have an opportunity to speak that wishes to.

Mr. Santo Napoli stated that he will speak afterwards. He wanted to make sure that he had the opportunity.

Mr. Jeffrey Glazier thanked Mr. Hendricks and stated that he wants to toss a little bit of context out there. He stated that he took a look at last year's budget, the 2023 budget as they know has a five year projection in the back of it. If you look at the projected 2024 budget, the administration at that point was projecting that they might need an eight percent property tax increase and expected to use \$5 million of ARPA money to balance the budget. The \$5 million of ARPA money is gone away. That has been repurposed to other useful things. What is before them now to consider is a much lesser tax increase. He stated that he is not advocating on what they should do, but he is saying that the fact that the city needs a tax increase is not new news. It is old news and projected last year and

nobody, nobody should be surprised by that. He stated God speed in their deliberations.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any comments from the public.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she prefers to listen to the Mayor before the public.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he wants to be considerate of everybody's time. There is a lot to say here. He hears what everybody offered in defense of against the override. He thinks a lot of people made fair points in kind of both directions and sometimes in the same direction as weird as that might sound. He stated that he is taking to heart what Ms. Mota said that the administration did not listen. He stated that he takes a little exception to that because they have listened a lot. The idea that a seven percent increase, he totally understands. He stated that they know him by now that he gets excited about things that they can do as a city. He believes a lot in the 870 so people who puts on that seal everyday and puts that badge on everyday or suit up in turnout gear everyday to serve our residents. He believes that are capable of doing. They are phenomenal groups of people that he gets to work with everyday. They go above and beyond for a really long time they have been asked to do more with less. He stated that he gets excited about what they can do. He stated that when he proposes a seven percent increase, he did not say it was going to devastating if they were not able to do it. He stated that he thinks a seven percent increase was ambitious. It was look at the amazing things and these incredible things that these people can do with we fully support them. The feedback from City Council as he said told him pump the breaks. Bring it back a little bit. This isn't something that we can afford this time. He worked out what he could, found some places to remove things, things were particularly galling to certain members of Council and certain members of the public. He does not ever remembers referring it as an Arts and Culture Czar. He stated that Coordinator. He stated that they cut positions that they absolutely belief will add value and bring our community together, but they could not pay for it right now. He put together a 4.57 percent increase that would fund some of the positions. Not everything that they initially proposed. Some things that he though would do a lot of good for our residents. That is something that they discussed on Saturday, the 4th and Council elected instead to go with a budget that included a zero percent increase. Cut all the new proposed positions, with a couple exceptions and commanded the administration to cut five percent from every line from Account 20 to Account 68. He stated rather than going through the exercise of showing exactly where those impacts would be Councilwoman Gerlach, he elected to work with our team to come up with something that he believes would be a compromise to listen to what people

were saying. They listened to what people on the street was telling them. They listened to what they all were saying and listened to everybody. He stated that they heard that although some of those they could make further cuts and get down to tow percent, there were some things that were critically important. Investment in public safety, retaining experienced officers and supervisors in the Police Department that will help them deliver quality police services to our residents. An investment in an Equity and Inclusion position, but dialed that back. They went with an additional Traffic person to make our streets safer for all of our residents. They added back the Sustainability Coordinator, not a Czar because they knew it was a position that was important to many Council people to the members of the public. He stated that the administration believes it is a position that can add revenue in the long run. He stated as Mr. Simpson mentioned, he thinks the city needs to get creative about how to find money to support the good things that they want to do. He stated that he hears them loud and clear, Pas, but this idea that there are funds available at the federal government level or the state government level is a fantasy. They are not just dollars around to support the things that they have to do as a city. He stated that their job as a city is to provide public safety services. It is to support the firefighters. He stated that the city was lucky to get a Safer Grant that Council just voted on that will create 12 new firefighter positions and will keep out city safer. That is absolutely fantastic. Those grants are exceedingly rare. The city does not have a grant to help them buy the rock salt that doubled in price. They need to keep the streets clear when they have snow events so people can walk to wherever they need to walk to get the critically needed supplies so that people can get to dialysis when they are suffering from kidney ailments. It won't do anything and they don't have a grant to buy new uniforms for our police officers that have gotten 30 percent more expensive. There is no grant out there for pool chemicals so the young people have a place to swim when the heat indexes exceeds 100 degrees. He stated that they are getting creative and what he proposed to Council here is yes, the addition of increased Captains that he believes maintains that critically needed institutional knowledge that Council well appreciates as someone who retired from the Allentown Police Department. He stated that they appreciate how important it was to have someone that knew what they were doing that had your six. He stated that is important for them. He stated that they know how important it is in this environment in the Lehigh Valley where paramedics are getting picked and plucked from everywhere to go and work for places like Cetronia or go and work for some of the suburban ambulance companies. He stated that the city wants to pay the paramedics a wage that would encourage them to stay in the most difficult and the most challenging and most rewarding public safety environment in the Lehigh Valley. They are asking for an increase for a Sustainability Coordinator that they think could add money for the traffic position that he believes will make the streets safer and

offering in exchange for that a cut of pretty much what they asked to cut. He stated that they took off the middle shift at Parks which means the city won't be able to keep the bathrooms open like they like to keep them opened. Throughout our Parks across the city from Roosevelt Park to Ithaca Play Lot to Midway Manor to Andre Reed Park. He stated that they cut things like improvement to the IT team that would help them retain the positions that again, the folks that put the badge on and put that seal on with a giant heart on that seal because they care a lot and they are willing to work hard for less than what they can earn in the private sector, but only so far. There is only so much you can push them to do before they break. He stated that is why the administration is asking for position increases. No one is here to get rich. He stated that the administration is cutting a lot of that stuff that he considered important. They are also proposing to cut things like the Managing Director position that they all agree that the city needs in the Mayor's office to facilitate management of the city to do better. They are willing to cut \$250,000 out of the fire overtime budget even though they know they will be coming back to Council asking for it. He stated that they are willing to cut expenses like training for the law team, expenses like Munis which they just had a kickoff of this amazing IT system that is going to help them be a more effective and efficient user of city resources, but will push that expenditure back into 2025. They will cut things like self watering planters in the parks, minor upgrades to some of the parks like drinking fountains, LED lighting in Bucky Boyle down in the first ward. Things like IT switches that will hopefully resolve your IT problem, Mr. Napoli stating he is not sure what is going on there. They will make elimination of vehicles to get there because they know exactly of a burden this is. It sucks that people have to and he said excuse his salty language, but it sucks that they are asking people to pay more. None of them wants to do that because they know exactly the situation that people feel. He stated that he was down at the Syrian Club this morning on Second Street and he saw the line of people and talked to a lot of those people who was there for the first time. There are coming from a lot of different places. Folks from New Jersey who just moved to Allentown and were at the food pantry. It is a terrible feeling to ask them to pay more, but he feels a lot worse telling our residents that they have to cut back on those services. He stated that he does not know the shape of it yet. His hope is that City Council will understand the need to make this smaller investment now so they can continue to do all those good things because there is Ms. Santiago mentioned the need for the various different city services for the people that are struggling. Those are the types of things that they want to support, but when it gets down to providing for the essential services, the things that they absolutely have to do is to make a choice between those essentials and those things that some people think are non-essential. That is what the two percent increase means that all of them, all of them every single one of them pays a little bit more so life in the city of Allentown is better for all of

them. That is what the whole idea behind the property tax is. It is the closest thing that they have in the city to a progressive tax. This is the idea behind it. A tax is a small increase, but he knows they will all feel at very different levels. It is important on what Ms. Affa wanted to and a few of the residents that this is not going away. Everything is getting more expensive and he appreciates LCA showed up with the tax increase and they have to raise the LCA fee, the increase in the garbage fee in the city of Allentown. Everywhere around them, things are getting more expensive. He stated that the neighbors in Bethlehem is proposing a 2.6 percent increase. It is getting more expensive to run the city. Things are more expensive. There are more people here than ever before. The quantity of things demanded is getting more expensive. If they don't do this now, they are going to have to do it again in the future. That is going to happen and the administration will ask for them to vote on it too. He thanked everyone for giving him a moment to talk. It is longer than he normally go on, but this is important. It is a hard decision and asked Council to join him in making that hard decision for the benefit of all the residents.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks thanked Mayor Tuerk.

Mr. Santo Napoli thanked Mayor Tuerk for that information. He stated that it really boils down to four things regarding this two percent. He stated that he has the Sustainability Coordinator which most of them agree will bring in more revenue and maybe become budget neutral at some point. An increase for Police Captains. He gets that. For what he understands, Lieutenants wind up making more than them and that does not make sense to him. His assistant managers don't make more than his managers. That is understandable. He stated that EMS is really important to him. He knows that they do a tremendous job in the city of Allentown. They have a more challenging job than our neighbors and surrounding municipalities. It is a tough job. He stated that they wonder why some folks leave Allentown, whether it is the city or school district for our suburban neighbors. It is tough here. It really is tough and for them to compensate the EMS workers is not a stretch for him. They deserve it and voters did tell them something last week. They agree that folks should be compensated properly. EMS is definitely a department that needs that help. Lastly, the traffic control. He stated that they had tragedies in the city of Allentown over the last couple of years and all he keeps hearing from everyone is we need to do better when it comes to pedestrian safety. He stated that here is a Traffic Control person and he is guessing they are going to be involved with replacing signs, doing more pavement markings, crosswalks, and school zones. He stated that these are all the things that they want. He stated that we say we want these things, but at budget time, they say they don't want that. They can't have both. He gave a speech a couple of Saturdays ago about Shrinkflation. He stated it again, in the business world there are two ways

to tackle what they are trying to accomplish, either you get less and pay the same or you pay a little more and get what you are used to. To this day and nothing changed in the last two weeks. There is no door number 3. No one has figured out another option. He does believe that the EMS department deserve the support and it goes back to the budget. When he looks at the budget and it is his first one. Almost 75 percent of this budget are workers. It is people and they are here for one reason. They are serving residents. He stated that they are serving all of them, all of us and for Council not to support them just doesn't in the long run doesn't get them to where they need to be in the city. In his world, he supports his employees like crazy because they get him to where he wants to be. They bring revenue in. They take care of business. They get him what he needs for his business to survive. It is investing in people and that is basically something that he heard from the administration. A majority of this two percent is to serve residents. It is to help people. He stated that he thinks it is really important. He believe the Controller has chimed in from time to time and has made it clear that a zero percent increase is negatively going to impact this city. He stated that the Controller is someone he finds is independent. He does not work for the administration and does not work for Council. He is someone who understands the city's finances almost as well as anyone. The fact that he mentioned this a couple of times tells him that it is a concern, if they do end up going zero percent. He stated that he does fell for seniors. He has done some research and luckily he knows that Harrisburg is upping the income requirements. So seniors can make a maximum income of \$44,000 to collect rebates. The rebates have also gone up. He stated that he has some documents here if someone wants them at the end of the meeting. For seniors that are on that line, that are struggling, there are resources out there to capture more rebates from the state and Harrisburg. He said it is important, but it was not like that a year ago. He thinks that they have it with seniors. He stated lastly, if they do zero percent, they do zero percent, but he knows enough to know that in September, October, November of 2024, Council will be doing a lot of Transfers. A lot of emergency Transfers and the monies are going to come and it will put us in a really bad position for 2025. He stated that they are setting themselves up for a really tough spot, a year from now. The one thing he takes out of this and he knew it was going to be tough and everyone told him it was going to be tough. It almost feel like we are the last ones. Other entities already raised fees. LCA came out and other folks came out. It feels like we are the last one and everyone is like no, we can't take anymore. It is not out fault that we are here in this moment. It is almost like, we as a city supposed to take a hit on the chin because what everyone else did out there. He stated that the challenges are no different. What LCA is doing and what everyone else is doing. He stated that they have the same challenges as the city and the same as a household. What you are going through in your household is what the city is going through. It

comes down to we will make a decision and say listen, either we pay a little bit more and continue on what you are getting with what residents are expecting to get or dial it back a little bit. What he heard from the administration, he dialed back a lot of things. He does appreciate the fact that he was able to compromise. It is good governing. He stated what he saw was dialed back and tells him that he got to the bare bones. To him, EMS, Traffic Safety, and again, thinkin about the tragedies over the last couple of years. The Police Captains and the knowledge that they want to retain in the city. These are not issues that they will call fluff or what they call pork in Washington. It is real stuff and residents are going to feel everyday of the year. It is important and he gets what people are going through. He has information for seniors. At the end of the meeting, they are welcome to come up and get them.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there was a comment from the public.

Mr. Michael Hanlon suggested that on a reconsideration, you only get one bite at the apple and it is tonight. He is thinking that it would be wise to reconsider the Bill without the mayor's proposal, get it on the table, and if the mayor's proposal doesn't pass at least you can flip that to a future meeting. If not, he stated that the mayor can introduce a new Bill. He asked is it a Chuck or an Adam question.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that Council has to withdraw the Second on the Motion. You have to do a Motion to Reconsider should they Reconsider it.

This Resolution was approved.

Attorney Charles Smith asked if they want to reconsider and want the zero percent Budget back in front of them.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated yes and they need public comment.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that Council can certainly take public comment on that issue.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that at this point, is there any comments from the public.

Mr. Victor Martinez, 1125 Colorado Street, stated that he owns a business and employs 26 people. All of those people live in the city of Allentown. All of the people will be impacted by a tax increase. The property that he owns where his company is a very expensive property because it is a big piece of property where he has to have the antennas and the office of his radio station. He stated that tax increase will not mean just a couple of dollars for him. It will mean hundreds of dollars for him. He understands what doing a

tax increase means because he is going to feel it and his staff is going to come to him wanting him to give them a raise, but if they don't learn from the past, we will make the same mistake again. He stated that some of them were here for the 13 years that you did not raise taxes. He stated that they were part of the problem and came in 13 years later and stuck them with a 27 percent tax increase. He stated that they are doing it all again and it is never a good time to raise taxes. No one ever wants their taxes to be raised. Next year, the School Board is going to raise our taxes again, the water is going to go up again, the electricity is going to go up again. Next year, it will not be ok to raise taxes. The following year either. The following year either. It will never be the right time to raise taxes. He stated that he have not heard anyone proposing, ok, let's not raise taxes this year, but let's do it in two years or in three years which means if they wait another five, six, seven, or eight years, they will be back at square one with another 20 percent, 30 percent tax increase all at once. He stated so while he doesn't want his taxes and his staff taxes being increased, he will Second what the Councilwoman said and take it in the chin and take two percent this time and give him another one or two percent next year. Next year, everything is going to go up again. Instead of waiting five years and having to pay it all at once at 10, 12, 15, 20, 25 or 27 percent. He suggested to put the big boys pants on and realize just like all of them have to pay more, the city has dozens of vehicles running 24 hours a day. Gas is more expensive. He stated that we have contracts and whether we like them or not, we have to pay them. That is an increase of a \$3 million in our budget to fulfill those contracts. He stated that he is a business owner and knows how that works. He asked where are they going to get those \$3 million to pay those contracts. He asked where are we going to get the money to pay the \$4, \$5 a gallon that it takes for the police, the fire, the EMTs to pay the gas. He does not want his taxes and staff taxes increased, but he doesn't want Council to come to him in five years and tell him that now you are going to stick him with a 10 or 20 percent tax increase. Let's compromise and put our big boy pants on and try to work something out. Maybe two this year and another two in another two years and do it a little bit at a time instead of all at once.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that the discussion is to pull the Bill out of committee. It is not a tax increase. That would be the next discussion.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that is the discussion at this time. They are pulling the Bill back to zero.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that her intention is to vote yes because she supports the zero percent tax increase.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated excuse me.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that something is up.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked Mr. Hanlon to repeat so we all understand it.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that the only thing that you are doing is taking that Bill that you passed with no tax increases, Bill 95. The only Bill that the Mayor vetoed . You are now reconsidering that, putting that in front of you to act on at a future date if you don't do anything or nothing. If you don't do this, it is dead in the water and then the mayor has to introduce another Bill on December 6. You are getting away from that headache.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that her intention is to vote yes because she supports that the zero percent tax increase and if that two percent memo were to fail, she would want the revert button budget, the budget that Council would go back to be that zero percent and not the 6.9 or some other random number. She stated that is why she is voting yes. Not because she supports the two percent. That is where she is coming from.

A motion was made by Santo Napoli, seconded by Candida Affa, that this Resolution be amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Candida Affa, Cynthia Mota, Daryl Hendricks, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, Natalie Santos, and Santo Napoli

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that someone should explain the Mayor's amendments. There is a copy on website and copies here if you want it.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that in the simplest possible form, the amendment proposes to because they are amending the zero percent budget. They are saying add back the Captains raises of about \$12,000, add back the upgrades for the paramedics, add back a Sustainability Coordinator, add back the MWII in Traffic, remove the five percent cut across the board, remove the 10 percent cut the original amendment. He asked Mr. Hanlon if he had the amendment. He stated that they are adding back the 10 percent that you cut from all overtime, five percent across the board. Reverse many of those things, but then in exchange they will cut out and continuing to remove the majority of the personnel changes. His proposal is rather than making the five percent cut and the 10 percent cut to overtime that they take \$250,000 out of Fire overtime, that they would move the HR Director salary to permanent wages. He stated that might have already been done in your amendment. That we took the \$130,000 out of the Consulting line for the HR Director and moved it to permanent wages. He thinks that they are proposing to continue with the elimination of the Managing Director's salary of \$126,984. They have the removal of an erroneous electric expense in CED of \$11,500. The removal of Training and Professional Development in Law of \$9,185. The removal a Munis payment of IT of \$55,980. The removal of the and you already took out the

HR Consultant, but the upgrades to alarms in parks and basically cutting the 46 Accounts down \$147,000 and \$846. Cutting the 68 account with Parks self-watering planters at \$15,000. Cutting the 72 Account which is the equipment account of \$246,900 and that includes a CED bathroom upgrade at Alliance Hall. He stated sorry, Health Bureau. Public Works removal of a Master and Pole Install on Hanover Avenue. Parks reduction and equipment and IT switches and reduction in equipment and finally in the Finance Department and correction of the Trexler Trust Transfer fee. Moving two vehicles from CED to the Rental Fund and eliminating a Public Works vehicle and eliminating a fire command SUV. He stated that he thinks that covers it.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that and the combined personnel reductions.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that the combined personnel reduction he believes totaled to approximately \$986,000.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that is before us now.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that Mr. Napoli proposed it and Ms. Affa seconded that.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that this is for the approval of that two percent budget.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated compromise budget.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that is what is in front of you right now.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated yes or no.

Attorney Charles Smith asked Council if they want to entertain.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any comments from the public.

Ms. Valerie Chambers stated some of them know her and she is back. She stated that she moved back here October 2nd. She has been reduced to be able to afford, maybe a one or two bedroom with a shared bathroom and bath. She can't find one. She owned a house in Old Allentown that was restored. She and her husband restored five properties in Old Allentown under Daddona. There is no affordable housing in this city whatsoever. She stated that a best friend of hers and someone that Candida knows is paying close to \$1,200 for a hovel. It is less than 500 square feet. It is owned by the former no show Senator's brother. The rent has gone from \$840 to \$1,125. He pays for heat. He pays electric. He

pays everything. This is not acceptable. It is not acceptable that she, who owned and restored houses in this city cannot find a place to lay her head. No one can afford \$1,125 for a room with a shared bathroom and a shared kitchen. It is ridiculous. Why is it such a push for a Sustainability Coordinator. Does it have anything to do with Karen Tuerk.

Attorney Charles Smith and Ms. Chambers if she is speaking out in favor of or against the two percent compromise budget.

Ms. Valerie Chambers stated that she does not pay real estate taxes. She is speaking for whatever Ce Ce says to tell them the truth. She stated that Ms. Gerlach is the only person in Chambers that she trusts. She stated that if she says yeah, then she is going to say yeah. She stated that she does not own any property. She can't afford an apartment.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that he just was asking because that was in front of Council.

Mr. Pas Simpson stated that he asked that they stick to that zero percent. He knows that there is some new faces in the room today and some familiar faces. Nothing of them were here on that Saturday morning that is asking for this current increase. He stated that they spent hours in this room and had people come in at 9:00 in the morning. People came straight from work. People did not sleep. People were here until 3:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon as they listened why they should not raise the taxes in this city. He stated as he said before, poverty is violence so any increase is an act of violence. It is an act of violence against the population. He agrees with the mayor that there are nicks and crannies and little things that they can't get grants for. There are larger things that they can't get grants for and then they can re-appropriate those dollars. They can re-appropriate dollars that they can apply for grants in different spaces. They don't have to continue to put burden on the people, if they actually work together. Collaboration, unlike what the mayor says does get you to the federal level. It does get you to the state level. All federal and state dollars that are out there when groups come together to do greater. He stated that they can take those monies and he is speaking of his organization Big Happy Consultants. He stated that he does get five minutes. He is also a business owner and also run a nonprofit so he also knows how to count dollars and cents. It don't make dollars and it don't make sense if we are raising the taxes when we haven't made anyone safer. What is going to wind up happening and our police are already asked for Credible Messengers. As they been hearing that for five years. He has been at the meetings for five years saying the same thing. Those people that could have been on the streets from help, still won't be on the streets for help and we will now have more people on the streets because an increase causes

more people to be homeless, causing more people to be hungry. As you may try to balance out your conscious, let's balance out that there has been a 41 percent rent increase over the last few years. As you increase and somebody said something is going to increase every year. Things are not going to go up 11 percent every year. The water is not going to go up every year. It did not go up last year at this point. The school taxes are not going to go up at the same level. He suggested they stop and pay attention to the people that are hurting the most because if you don't those are the people that will hurt you the most. You can keep raising the top and dragging the bottom and thinking everyone of us is safe in the middle. It is crazy.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that Kari Holmes handed in a card.

Ms. Kari Holmes stated that she was born and raised in the city of Allentown. She loves the slogan, a city for all. She stated to President Hendricks that it is necessary to add another voice to the fact that this city for all and the last time she was here at a City Council meeting, the mayor told them as a community that city services would suffer, if you made a vote to investigate very serious claims of discrimination. Claims that cry out that they are not all being equal in Allentown. She thinks very much so to you colleagues, Councilwoman Gerlach's point. We hear these drastic things that are going to happen if we don't have an increase. She stated that they don't hear about this increase benefiting us all. Because the fact of the matter is they all don't feel like when they step out of our house if we live on Ridge Street or we live on Chew Street or we live on 4th Street that we are getting the same city services that those of us who live on Cedar Crest Boulevard are getting. It is not that we feel that our roads and streets and our neighborhood shouldn't be safe. It is also letting you know that we must as a city and you must as city officials do a better job in appointing the dollars that are being allocated. It cannot look like you are not just looking out for those that you feel that can vote you back in and to keep your seat to continue and causing them to feel that they are ignored. It is necessary that Council and the Mayor are going to agree on anything, there must be at least five meetings. They should be mandatory. She invited Mr. Hendricks to make them mandatory in Allentown, east, north, south, east and west and in Center City Allentown to carry the people that voted them in and the people they vowed to represent all of them to hear their voices, not just when it comes to City Council and not when it comes a time when you can bang your gavel and say quiet down, be quiet because the fervor in this room is about the fact that even when you pass a budget which we will be very boisterous about. They are going to come back and say it must represent all of us. The hires that the mayor is presenting do not represent all of us. They already let them know that they believe a number of them that the hires that he has made are not representing all of them. She stated

that they also believe as community leaders: Black, Brown and all of them that the city budget is not addressing all the needs of all of our children. The city budget is not addressing all of the needs of all of our community organizations. It becomes necessary for them to hear them deeply. To hear all of them deeply because it will come to pass that all of them will vote and not just the points of interest or the individuals of interests of one of other seats that you represent of your colleagues. It is so very important that even though and she truly believes that you, President Hendricks believes this and it needs to be represented as she is closing up that the votes that you receive and each and every person they know make these calculations for the seat you are sitting in. They will be supporting by certain individuals, but when you took that oath to be a City Council member, President Hendricks you took that oath to represent all of us. Not just those who voted for you. If the mayor does not conduct those meetings, she urged City Council to make them mandatory before our budgets are passed so they will have at least five meetings to ensure that the community is heard as all.

Mr. Jeremy Bender, 1553 W. Turner Street, asked if Council voted to not override the veto and this fails, this motion you are on right now does that mean at some point on the 31st of December propose a new amendment. It goes back.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that the city has no budget. He stated that the city starts anew.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that from their understanding they don't pass a budget then they just don't have a budget. They have until December 31 to get a budget passed.

Mr. Jeremy Bender stated that it won't default. He stated that it was not clear from all that was going on.

Ms. Valerie Chambers stated that she would like to ask why is such a push for a Sustainability Coordinator. Does this have anything to do with this being a position for Karen Tuerk.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that you can make a comment. You cannot ask questions.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that is inappropriate. His wife is employed by Muhlenberg College.

Ms. Valerie Chambers stated sorry, you are out of order.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated ma'am, please address me. You can make comments. You cannot ask questions.

Ms. Valerie Chambers stated that an Environmental Science Lecturer is not needed in a smart budget. She asked if every time an employee gets redlined, will they be promoted to a new grade. Is this something that all employees be afforded.

Ms. Jessica Ortiz stated that first she wants to apologize, especially to Mr. Hendricks. She stated that she allowed her trauma to be her response, but this is very, very near and dear to her heart. It is not about her. While she went out outside to calm down, she called her daughter because they made a comment about rent rebates. Currently at the Ark, they have 38 seniors, just seniors not on the disabled list from 2022 who have not received their funds. She stated 56 from 2023. She stated if they want to talk, let's get it right. There are 24 percent of homes which are cost burden. If you don't know what that means, she will tell them like a realtor. That means 24 percent of homes from the city of Allentown have been foreclosed on in 2023. That is what we are talking about. That is what they are talking. She stated that they are talking building buildings for noncitizens. She stated that they are talking about making development for noncitizens. They are talking about raising rents. Last year, and she said it over and over again, this year their landlord at the Ark and she is a homeowner raised the rent from \$1,200 to \$1,900. Again, they funded themselves. Her mortgage which individuals helped her work it out today to see the tax increase and how it was affected and how it continues to affect. She even got on the phone today to talk to lenders to see the big impact. She stated that her mortgage is going to go up \$220, depending on the numbers you guys are doing. You know what is \$220. It sounds like six percent, but when you put it all together and you amount the amounts of escrow, that's how much an individual who lives in Center City like herself who bought her house for \$40,000 with a six percent interest loan. When you put the water up and the sewer up, this is the amount because Allentown's debt has instability. What they are requiring of citizens of Allentown who owns a home with mortgage companies she hears the no, but she is saying as a professional is that they have additional funds in the escrow accounts. She stated each one of them owns a home. She stated call your mortgage and ask them because she keeps hearing the no, the no. She stated that she is not going to continue to respond with the trauma, the attacks and the bullying and things that other people shouldn't be able to say. You can call your mortgage. That is how much hers is going up. She stated that she is not saying theirs, but her house that she bought for \$40,000 for six percent that's how much her note going to go up.

Ms. Susan Samuel, 2415 W. Tilghman Street, stated that she is originally

from New York City and a business owner and started that first 24 hour childcare which she was looking to bring here. She found herself in a situation where she did a lease with an option to purchase property and then which when it came time to purchase the property, the landlord then did a bamboozle on her and tried to raise the purchase price \$70,000 and kick her out. Here she is having to retain an attorney behind this. At the same time as a business owner in which for the city of Allentown, they do backpack giveaway because they are a not for profit organization and have provided 150 backpacks to children in the city of Allentown. Families that need it all year round. Not just at the school year, all year round. She stated that they have been doing it for three years and each year it has gone up. You are talking about taxes now, that's putting her in a predicament because she is looking for a location. She stated that she is fighting a property where she invested \$30,000 to fix it up and now the owner where she was paying \$1550 a month is trying to raise it to \$1,900 and kick her out and keep everything that she put in there. Everyone says New York is expensive, but she is literally looking to take everything back to New York because of what's going on now. She stated now, the city is proposing this tax increase. She stated that she is a businesswoman and she does not see how she is going to make it to even survive while still fighting to live and not be on the street and at the same time look for a location for the facility, but has been providing support to families. She stated 150 already this year they have helped children and families. The name of the organization is It Takes a Community to Raise a Child.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if it takes anybody else. He asked if there were any further comments from his colleagues.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that Mr. Zucal had something about the steps not being right. She remembers at some point that Council tried to fix that to make sure that were here last time were making more. She asked if they are saying that is going to get messed up.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated what he initially said was that at the time the 6.9 percent was presented to us. Most of those upgrades were upgrades that involved the steps. A guy at Step 18 was going up to a Step 20 and getting an \$8,000 raise. The Step Program was intended ever, ever to give raises at Budget Time. It was to elevate people as they were here in time.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated for clarification, the proposals in the original 6.9 percent budget included a number of reclassifications. He stated that Mr. Zucal is talking about an 18 to a 20. To be clear, the HR team and the budget team and the department team evaluated the positions on what the positions are doing and recommending the Classification Increase. Those are all off the table at this point.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated that is another way to manipulate the Steps Program. He gave another example and stated the Inspectors, and these are numbers that he does not have memorized. He stated say they are Step 15 and they will go up to a Step 18 as they complete those certifications. There is a thing that the job description is changing. That is fair.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she has one question. She stated to the administration, Mayor Tuerk you were able to list pretty specific items with the two percent increase that would be cut back. You listed some specifics. She asked if you can list the same specifics if it were to go down to zero percent.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that they will have to cut additional items. They might not cut those same items and you might come up with a different list of things. There is a complexity to budgets. As an example, because they chose to eliminate the Fire Administration positions, they also eliminated the Fire Command SUV. Those things go together. If City Council elects to do a zero percent tax increase, they will figure it out.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated so you will figure it out.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that they have to figure it out somehow. A zero percent increase is not going to be an additional and they have to come up with another \$765,000 that they have to figure out. They have to look at things and think about how often they collect any number of things that they could get a call for. He is not going to say who it was, but someone called him about a dead deer on the sidewalk in front of their house. They were able to make a call and get that dead animal collected within hours. They don't have that same flexibility when they have to reduce services. It has a tangible impact on the quality of life for neighborhoods and residences. If City Council continues with and you have right now the Bill that says five percent cuts across the board and they will figure out how to make that work and that is what you will see next.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that her understanding if they were to pass a zero percent and say no to the two percent increase that you can even do that in January. You would not have to come back right now. You staff will have time to really drill into the numbers and determine what that would look like at a zero percent increase.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated from what he understands the existing Bill says to them consistent with what Controller Glazier said. Don't micromanage them. Let them figure out how to make the cuts. If they have to make a five percent cut across all items, they are going to focus on the things that they

don't need to do to continue to operate as a city government. The primary thing they do is plow the streets, sweep the streets, cut the grass in the parks, respond to fires, respond to 911 calls, make sure the paramedics show up, and inspect apartments. He stated that he can keep listing all the things that they do and provide administrative support for those things. There is a lot of stuff that they are obligated to do. He stated that they do a plan review. He stated that they have mandated as a City Council years ago that the people mandated. They inspect apartments. There is a lot of stuff that they have to do that they can't turn off. There are contracts they have that they can't turn off. They have to go to the things that they can turn off. The programs that they all enjoy. It sounds Grinchy, Mr. Zucal and it sounds, the fireworks and he does not know exactly how she describe them Ms. Cauler. It sounds terrible, but those are the places that they are forced to turn if they have no other option. That is where the revenue increase that they are asking for allows them to provide or attempt to maintain levels of service that we come to expect for Allentown residents he believe deserve, including a flu vaccine for Mr. Zucal.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she appreciates that. She stated that it would have been cool knowing that a lot of them didn't want a zero percent increase, just like you were able to give some specifics for two percent. If you would have maybe had some specifics of the zero percent, knowing that there are at least some of them up here are aiming for. She asked about the chemicals in pools, how many less chemicals you are able to buy. How much less salt? The specifics, how much many cots will not.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated that he can give her specifics on Public Works for instance. Some departments started that effort. He stated that Mark provided them with things like a Traffic Engineering Consultant that they would be cutting it down to \$15,000. It allows for less work to be done to make our streets a little bit safer. Line painting for the streets. He stated that they have a line painting contract that they budgeted \$160,000. They cut that back to \$120,000. It has an impact. Those are just some examples. He asked the team and stated that he believes in a small increase and how they can do better for all of the residents. If Council elects to stick with zero percent, they will take it back and figure out how to get that five percent cut across the board. Again, it will mean and Councilperson Napoli alluded to that. They will be showing up hat in hand in September and in October of next year because there are practical realities in regards to police overtime. There are practical realities associated with fire overtime. He stated that sometimes his team beats him up for it. This is a consequence of a zero based budget. He stated to the team, this is what they are actually going to do and it doesn't give a ton of latitude to project what the future holds. He stated that Vicky is in his ear often about the consequences of a major snowstorm. Let's say you pass a

zero percent budget, they make the cuts, and they have a devastating snowstorm in January. The first thing they are going to do is come back to them with a transfer request to say hey, this screwed up the whole budget and they have to allocate differently for the rest of the year. Those will begin as soon as they don't have things that don't go according to plan. The two percent allows them again to provide the level of service that they both believe the residents deserve. It is really hard, He knows it and they know it. They talk to many of the same people. They been through the same experience and know what it is like. It is hard. He knows what it is like.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated no comments.

Mayor Matt Tuerk stated they can comment. He stated that he knows what it is like. It ain't easy. The consequence is that we have to reduce the things that we do and that means that all the calls that they get about traffic at 14th and Highland or the bright light at 19th and Highland or the dead deer on Jefferson Street or the neighbor who has the accumulating trash for a Sweep Officer. All that stuff slows down because our team upstairs is trying to do more with less. They are fraying at the edges and even though they are coming and working on Saturdays, there is a point in which they say that they don't want to come and work on a Saturday. They want to go to North Whitehall and want to work four days a week for more money and they walk. What the city is left with is less experienced which slows everything down and deeply unfair to our residents. He stated that he truly understands the situation that all of the residents face. He stated that \$6 is \$6, right. That is not nothing. That is breakfast at McDonald's for a kid. It is \$7.89. He stated that he knows how much it is. It gets you part of the way for breakfast at McDonald's. That has an impact. That is real, right. It is real across the board for everybody. He stated that when they pay taxes they are looking at Mr. Martinez mentioned that the more taxes that his business will pay. The taxes that business pays is the taxes that someone says about the green tinted windows and the skyscrapers in the NIZ. The additional taxes that they pay goes to where it is needed. It goes to help all of our residents. It is not just a tax on residents. The increase in property tax is paid by all property owners in the city of Allentown. The greater numbers are paid by the higher valued properties. He stated that is why he calls it a progressive tax. That means if you build a \$100 million building in downtown Allentown, and you are paying \$50,000 in taxes and the city is asking you to pay another two percent of \$50,000 is another \$1,000. That \$1,000 goes to support services in the places that need it the most. That is what the challenge is here. He stated that he over-did the answer to the question. He does think deeply about this.

Ms. Ce Ce Gerlach stated that she appreciates the Mayor's comments.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there were any other comments by his colleagues. He mentioned as Mr. Martinez pointed out so much. He stated that if they don't do it now, when? If they don't raise taxes incrementally, they are going to be left two or three years down the road raising much more significantly. The other thing that they are already obligated to do is to fulfill the contracts from working employees. Non-bargaining unit is getting a three percent raise next year. That alone is more than what they are asking for the budget increase of two percent. Otherwise they are going to continue with increased costs with decreased revenue. It won't look nice down the road. He commended the administration for their compromise. They went from seven, to almost six, down to two percent and cut a lot out of that. He strongly recommend his colleagues to vote for this. It supports those things most important to them. He stated that EMS was at the scene of that gentleman tonight who is here in person within five minutes walking here. That is incredible. That happen on October 26. He asked if anybody else.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that someone else came up earlier today and complained about our parks. Our parks are our treasure. She stated that the city has the most beautiful parks. She complained what a mess they are. The director as Council if they can put more staff on so they can clean up. It takes them days to clean up with people coming from out of state in New Jersey and New York and mess up our parks. It takes them days. Our bathrooms have to be redone. You cut that out of the budget. That is just one thing. Just the parks. She stated that Council is going to listen to when they come up there during Council and complain about the weeds that you are calling Sweep and they are not there for two weeks. These are the things that you need to want. These are the things that you are expected to have. These services when you need them. Protect out parks. She stated that they cut that out and not going to do it. The city only has a couple of pools open. They would love to open all the pools. She stated that they can't afford it. How are they going to afford the lifeguards. She asked how are they going to afford all of these things. As Mr. Martinez said, if they don't do it now. You talked about 13 years ago and she doesn't think any of them were here for 13 years. She stated that the city has not raised the taxes for five years. That is five years the city has not raised them and the Mayor is talking about what is going to happen in two more years. That is seven. Before you know it, it will be up to 13 years and a 27 percent increase. It is going to happen. it is not, not going to happen. She stated that if they don't raise the amount a little bit here and a little bit new year, it is going to happen. What happens with the State Hospital. They are practically putting a village up there. She stated that the Lehigh Valley is expanding like crazy and they are the only one that has a housing market. Florida, if you go to almost any state and all the rents. She stated that her cousin in Florida, \$400 it went up. Everybody has the same problem, but

what they need to do is what happens when the State Hospital Project at Northridge is in full bloom in five years. The city is going to need more patrols, better roads, traffic lights, and what happens when the Waterfront and all that. She stated that the city is expanding. She stated excuse me. If you want to have Council by yourself. Go out and have Council by yourself. With the Waterfront, if our city is growing and we want more for our city, we are going to have to raise taxes. It is never not going to happen. This is only two percent. Imagine what it is going to be next year and the year after and the year after if we don't do the two percent and possibly a percent or two next year or whatever. Mr. Martinez nailed it when he said he does not want to pay a higher percentage in four or five years. She thanked the ones that listened and the ones that weren't rude.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there was anybody else.

Attorney Charles Smith asked for Council to restate the Motion.

Mr. Michael Hanlon read the Motion. The Motion is to amend Bill 95 for the General Fund Budget that the Mayor vetoed with his two percent proposal that he reviewed. He stated that is the proposal that is in front of you and it is on the website.

Mr. Ed Zucal stated just so that they are clear, a yes vote means that you don't approve of the two percent. He asked if he is correct.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated no.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that a yes vote means that you approve of the two percent.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated as amended.

Attorney Charles Smith stated if you are in favor of the two percent compromise budget that will be an affirmative yes vote. He stated that is why he asked the Clerk to clarify.

Mr. Daryl Hendricks stated that means we have no budget and Council will be back at the table at some point and renegotiating for such. He thanked them all and stated that they will move on.

Attorney Charles Smith stated that they still have a Resolution to deal with.

A motion was made by Santo Napoli, seconded by Candida Affa, that this Resolution be amended. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Candida Affa, Daryl Hendricks, and Santo Napoli

No: 4 - Cynthia Mota, Ed Zucal, Ce-Ce Gerlach, and Natalie Santos

[15-6435](#) Veto Message
Mayor's second proposed adjustment

Attachments: [Veto Message](#)
[BP-Final-2 Percent Reductions One Page Summary](#)
[2 Percent Reductions One Page Summary revised 11.7.23 4.00pm](#)

[15-6358](#) Bill 95 2024 BUDGET AND TAX RATE
An Ordinance of the City of Allentown, County of Lehigh, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing the General Fund, Administrative Order Fund, Risk Management Fund, Debt Service Fund, Equipment Fund, and Golf Fund Budgets for 2024.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [Bill No. 95 2024 BUDGET AND TAX RATE](#)
[Budget Amendments - Nov 4](#)
[Mayor's 2% Proposal Final](#)
[Councils Adopted Budget Amendment](#)
[Veto Message](#)

ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION (To be referred to Committee with public comment prior to referral) : There are no ordinances for introduction.

RESOLUTIONS FOR INTRODUCTION (Can be voted on or Referred to Committee):

[15-6433](#) R202
Denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness – 213 N. 11th Street

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [R202 HARB Resolution to DENY - 213 N. 11th St](#)
[213 N 11th Street Final Review](#)

Mr. Daryl Hendricks asked if there are any comments or questions from his colleagues. He asked if there were any comments from the public.

REFERRED TO THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

GOOD AND WELFARE: NONE

ADJOURNED: 9:23 PM

[15-5720](#) Council Rules

Procurement Procedures
Code of Ethics

Attachments: [Council Rules 2023](#)

[Contract/Procurement Procedures from the Code](#)

[Ethics Code](#)