

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES  
Monday, August 11, 2008  
7:00 p.m.**

Mayor Eisaman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. City Administrator, Susan Trout, took roll call with the following members present: Councilman Johnson, Councilman Peterinelli, Councilman Tridico, Councilman Finfrock and Mayor Eisaman. City Solicitor, Timothy McCormick and City Treasurer/Fiscal Director, Mary Perez were also present.

**\*\*\*PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE\*\*\***Councilman Johnson

**\*\*\*COMMENTS/BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR\*\*\***

**Tom Billeck, 423 Concord Avenue, Greensburg, PA.** Mr. Billeck, "I'm here tonight to address a few things that I've been reading. I haven't been able to attend every meeting in the past six months, but I've been to a few. I spoke at one several months ago. I've been reading what's been in the paper. I've been reading the minutes once they are posted. There's a few things that I'm not happy about in regards to what I've been reading, but, in addition to that, there are some things that have come to light to me recently that have made me want to address Council. I've lived here in town for 11 years. I've been watching and listening either at the meetings or reading the minutes and a lot of the focus is being put on college student housing. I don't want to dwell on that, but what I do want to mention is I think maybe some other areas are being ignored as a result of this. So much focus has been put on this in such a negative light in my eyes that these other things are going by the wayside. I'll give you a personal experience. I had an appraisal done last month on my home. Now I had an appraisal in 2004. In the last year alone I put \$12,000 in stuff that would directly affect the value of my house; roof, electrical entrance, soffit and fascia, new porch, railings and new landscaping, which is all stuff that would immediately affect an appraisal. I had an appraisal done and this is four years ago. My house with all the improvements that I've made, which was \$12,000 last year and that's not counting all the other years that I put money into it, appraised at \$19,000 less. I know some of you are going to say, 'yes, that's the market'; it's not just the market. I've sat around and watched houses become dilapidated in my neighborhood. I went around today and I'm going to give you some photographs that I took. I apologize because I could've brought 50 more in. These were done in 10 minutes while I took my baby in her stroller. I walked up O'Hara and from O'Hara to the railroad station on Pennsylvania, Harrison and Concord. I know all of you are from the City but I don't know how many of you actually drive those streets. Unless you have a reason to be right there, not everybody would. These houses are falling apart. I counted over 15 for sale. I counted countless ones for rent. I counted five vacant homes; just abandoned homes. Now I'm not saying that college students are the answer to that, but when you limit these people as to whom they can sell to and who can live there, you surely are limiting me. When I asked the appraiser why I got that appraisal, she said, 'in this area especially nobody can sell a house'. People are afraid to buy them. There are limitations. I hear this over and over about the integrity of this part of town wanting to be saved, what integrity are you speaking of? There are well over 50% rental properties. Most of the people who own these homes don't live there. Yet the people who want to buy them and improve the homes, can't. They can't rent to whom they want. They can't do those things. I'm watching my home depreciate because of it. Obviously my house isn't depreciating by the outside, the inside or the work that I've put into it. She said, 'oh, no, it's here'. And you hear this, location, location, location. I feel like I'm being shot in the foot. When I bought that house, I went to Seton Hill. When I bought that house I intended to live there and rent the other units to whoever was available. And when I say to whomever, out of the 11 years that I've had it, at least six or seven have been a college student. Never had a problem; never had a police officer to my house. Now I'm not saying that you have to allow the streets to be full of college kids, but my house is devalued because of this. Nobody will buy a house in that area at all. I don't know how anybody gets off doing this. You have a responsibility to every owner there, not just some. And I understand that there are many parts of Greensburg that are primarily residential, single-family dwellings. This isn't one of them. I have a duplex and behind my duplex I have a couple-car garage with an apartment above it. My value of my house decreased by \$19,000 in four years. I know the market stinks, but it's not just the market. I feel like you guys have tied my hands. I couldn't even sell my home right now and leave if I wanted to. I didn't want to move from Greensburg. I student taught at Greensburg Middle School. I have ties to this area, but I am ashamed of the decisions that have been made; very

ashamed. I know there are pressures being put on by some, but I bet that a lot of those people that owned those houses that are saying they don't want college kids haven't had an appraisal in a while; haven't seen what's happened. If you just walk the neighborhoods and look. I'm going to give you and I have two sets; I'll just let you guys pass them on. The pictures I'm giving you are not pictures of just the ugly homes. I could give you a lot more of the eyesores. I'm talking about walls falling down, sidewalks that are lifted this high, areas that are so overgrown that you can't go down the sidewalk; you can't walk your child down the sidewalk. Windows are completely smashed out of entire garages that are not being fixed. Places that look like somebody lived in them and their windows are broken. You can't walk down these streets without seeing how bad it's getting. I'll give you an example. Eleven years ago when I bought my house, maybe in my ignorance, I didn't lock my front door. In the past five years, my car has been broken into twice, most recently Friday. A mirror was smashed off my vehicle along with nine other vehicles on my street that same time, and you're worried about college kids? Cut me a break. I don't understand when you're talking about the single-dwelling homes, okay. Go up by the Middle School and down, you have a lot of single-dwelling homes. Go to the left of O'Hara and you have about 60% single-dwelling, maybe 40% rental. Go a little further, all single-dwellings. But that specific area has been duplexes, triplexes and rental properties; well over 50-70% of those homes are. And even the people who don't want it don't realize what's happening to the value of their home. I know countless people, myself maybe being included but I don't know financially right now, but countless people who would buy properties in that area, rehabilitate them and rent them. But not under the current conditions you have posted. The appraiser told me she had nothing to compare it to. They have to stay within a certain realm, within a certain distance, and most of the houses that are like mine or even close to mine, they're not selling. No one will rent them. You can't rent to available people. I'm very upset. I'm very upset and disheartened by your decisions and the way you're handling things. I sat here and I can't tell you what month it was but I offered, and you took my name, Mayor, to sit on any committee that you want. I never got a phone call. Yet all these decisions have been made. I pay my taxes to you guys. I know that typically when there's a Council or School Board or any group of people that are representing the public they seek members outside, from their community, to help in the advisement for a process such as this. I offered. Tell me when; I'll be there. Not a phone call. I know you can't answer me this, but at least you can ask yourself. What integrity are you saving? That doesn't look like integrity. That doesn't look like support to our town. The way it's written; I saw the revisions. Those are revisions? I don't really see them as an advantage to anybody. I don't want to beat a dead horse, but I was to leave Friday with my wife and kid to go on vacation. I held off until tonight to leave, because this upset me; my house depreciating, my car being broken into. I mean you're not going to get any worse with the college kids. You're not going to get any worse by tying people's hands so they can't sell their homes. The one picture I showed you is a house that had caught fire several years ago. They fixed the house but not the garage. The roof is caving in. You talk about a hazard for kids. There's no glass whatsoever, and that's in my back alley; one house from mine. The garage right next to it; no windows, and the roof is falling in also."

Mayor Eisaman, "If we can keep that set we'll have the Code Enforcement go through the neighborhood."

Mr. Billeck, "What are you going to do to help with the selling of these homes? It's not your responsibility to sell them, but when you put the limitations on, you're only hurting them."

Mayor Eisaman, "But we've also had neighborhoods that have gone from duplexes and triplexes and converted them back to single-families and they have now become single-family neighborhoods again for the most part in Greensburg."

Mr. Billeck, "So you're saying when I bought my home as an investment so that it would have the three units, now I should change it back to a single-dwelling?"

Mayor Eisaman, "I didn't say that. I said there were neighborhoods where they converted houses back."

Mr. Billeck, "Is that the big plan for that part of that community?"

Mayor Eisaman, "I think part of the Elm Street Program....."

Mr. Billeck, "Isn't the Elm Street Program not going to happen possibly?"

Mayor Eisaman, "It's there."

Ms. Ciampini, "We're going to start in '09."

Mr. Billeck, "Well the last time I spoke to the gentleman who was pushing that he said he didn't know when it would go through, if ever."

Ms. Trout, "It started."

Mr. Billeck, "How will that reflect on my area where I'm living currently?"

Mayor Eisaman, "We're hoping some of the neighbors will utilize the dollars as matching grants to fix up their properties."

Ms. Trout, "Steve Gifford has had two to four neighborhood meetings in regard to your very neighborhood and discussed with the neighbors their concerns about their neighborhood so they could focus Elm Street in areas they felt were necessary. The one resounding thing that was told to him in those meetings was that people want to revitalize their playground. That was their first priority and that's actually happening. On Wednesday you're going to see a box truck drop a delivery of playground equipment that's going to be replaced there, I believe, within the next two weeks."

Ms. Perez, "That's actually happening on Wednesday."

Ms. Trout, "That was the feeling of the neighbors at that time."

Mr. Billeck, "That certainly was one of mine."

Ms. Trout, "That was one of the first initiatives that came out of those neighborhood meetings. The meetings occurred; the plan was put in place. Did they specifically sit there and target certain homes and say 'your house needs this, your house this'? No. As a group they decided that was a neighborhood initiative. So in answer to your question, that's a start."

Mr. Billeck, "I guess when you say targeting a home, anybody that applied for student housing was targeted. Why not target all equally? Those homes are just falling apart. Do you want to come through my house and check it out? You're more than free to. If you find something you want me to repair, I'll repair it. I don't know how we can limit these homes."

Ms. Ciampini, "We did go through your neighborhood. I believe there were 35 notices sent out to property owners. So they are started in a process, Tom, where they are notified of whatever the violation might be; paint your house, replace windows, side your house. There is a Property Maintenance Code and Les's staff did send out letters to numerous property owners."

Mr. Billeck, "What is the process then? How long do they have?"

Mayor Eisaman, "Then we go to a magistrate court and the magistrate provides the timetable."

Mr. Billeck, "What do you do when these people just walk away from their homes?"

Mayor Eisaman, "Once again, it's the magistrate who makes the decisions. We just keep going back at the timeframe he establishes for the property owner, 2 days, 30 days, 60..."

Mr. Billeck, "I saw at least five vacant homes, not to mention the ones for rent or for sale. I mean you talk about just safety issues."

Ms. Ciampini, "On behalf of Mayor and Council they have targeted your neighborhood to be restored. That's why the grant funds were allotted to that neighborhood. That's why we are trying to take a closer look."

Mr. Billeck, "There are a lot of really nice homes there but they're not worth anything."

Ms. Ciampini, "That's an effect of the economy at large."

Mr. Billeck, "It's not just the economy though when you're looking at the fact that it was a very obtainable place for me to rent, and I've been renting to people for 11 years. I always could rent. I could be selective anytime I wanted. But I don't know if that would be the case now. I really don't. I'm seeing 'for rent' signs up for months. Yet we have 50 kids going to the Marriott. I'll give you another example of something that strikes me as odd. I'm not prepared to move and just rent my downstairs to somebody else, a college kid or anybody. I do rent the upstairs to a young lady. My wife and I live downstairs with our baby. We have an extra room downstairs. Her brother is going to Seton Hill; I couldn't even have him move in."

Ms. Ciampini, "If he's by himself, he can."

Mr. Billeck, "No, I have a tenant upstairs who goes to college. Now we're talking about individual dwellings. I'm not talking about opening up my house and putting another four kids in there. If I have a duplex, I can't rent to one kid upstairs, one downstairs. Or because it's a three-bedroom apartment downstairs, I couldn't put two kids there. I couldn't put my wife's brother in our spare room and a tenant upstairs. Don't think that I haven't thought I'll just do it. But I also know that it will take nothing for someone to make a simple phone call and then I'll have a hassle trying to find housing for anybody else. What you're doing is unfair. It's not just unfair; I don't know how you can get away with it. I'm not asking and I'm not saying that every part of Greensburg that is single-dwelling should be. I can only speak about the areas from Concord to Harrison and Pennsylvania and Concord from O'Hara over to the train station. It's falling apart and nobody can rent or sell their homes. It would be quite easy if they were allowed to. Thank you."

Mayor Eisaman, "Les and Barb, if you could, get us an update on those notices that were sent out; where we are status-wise, between the magistrate's office and everything."

**Dee Cook, 223 Walnut Avenue, Greensburg, PA.** Ms. Cook, “I would just like to take the opportunity to thank the City for a small kindness. One of the advantages we have of living in the City is that we’ve got the leaf pickup in the Fall, but something that’s even nicer is they will pick up brush if you’ve been cleaning out your yard. You can call the City and they will come and get brush. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, a Sunday afternoon, my husband and I decided to attack a couple of our shrubs. Usually we take care of our own debris, but on this particular day we thought we’ll put it out for the City for a change. Early the next morning, very unexpectedly, my mother passed away and I was going to be having out-of-town company. Tuesday morning I called and left a message with the Street Department, and I did make a special request. I said, ‘if you could get it out as soon as possible I would really appreciate it as my mother passed away and I will need all the parking space that I have’. I was up at 4:00 the next morning because I couldn’t sleep and at 7:00 I heard this outrageous noise and it was the Street Department and I was the first person that they came to that particular day and I just want to say thank you. Whoever is in charge of the Street Department, please tell the guys it really meant a lot and it was a special little touch. Then I have to address once again the neighborhood situation. I feel very badly for this gentleman that says he has lost \$19,000 in the value of his house. I do think a lot of it is the economy right now and the over inflation. I also have looked at that area quite often and I have noticed how many houses are for sale. I live in Academy Hill. When I bought there 34 years ago, it was a cheap place to live. I couldn’t afford to live other places and I bought inexpensively into the neighborhood and I have probably put at least \$150,000 into my home and property over the course of the years. When I bought my first house it was a duplex. It is now a single-family home. When I bought my second house up the street from the first house it was also a duplex. It is now a single-family home. There are three other homes on our block that were also apartment homes, but because about 15 years ago the neighbors got together and wanted to do something about improving our neighborhood and developed a community organization, more and more people have taken pride in living where we live and have continued. I was one of the first people in the area that bought a property and began to restore it with my husband. And then another couple moved in across the street and began to restore their home. And suddenly we weren’t the ‘bad place’ to live anymore. Every place resurrects; even Harlem, New York, is resurrected. So I encourage you, get your neighbors together, resurrect. Thank you for your time.”

**\*\*\*APPROVAL OF LAST MONTH’S COUNCIL MINUTES\*\*\***Councilman Tridico **MOVED** to approve the minutes of last month’s Council meeting, and Councilman Peterinelli **SECONDED**. No discussion. **Unanimously all voted in favor.**

**\*\*\*APPROVAL OF MONTHLY BILL LIST\*\*\***Councilman Finrock **MOVED** to approve the monthly bill list and pay the bills as the money becomes available. Councilman Johnson **SECONDED**. No discussion. **Unanimously all voted in favor.**

**\*\*\*REPORTS OF COUNCIL\*\*\***

**Councilman Johnson**, “The final day for swimming at Veterans’ Memorial Pool will be Sunday, August 24, 2008. Council would like to thank everyone who purchased season passes and those who participated in our swimming programs. Your support was appreciated. On Saturday, August 16, 2008, Habitat for Humanity will be having their annual kid’s triathlon at Lynch Field. They will be utilizing the swimming pool and walking track for about two hours in the morning starting at 9:00 a.m. The Kirk S. Nevin Arena is ready to begin another ice season. Our program information and public session times will be advertised soon. You can access the City’s website at [www.city.greensburg.pa.us](http://www.city.greensburg.pa.us) to read about what we’ll be offering this season. That concludes my report.”

**Councilman Peterinelli**, “Last week Laurel Highlands Fence completed making repairs to several sections of the fence along the Jack’s Run channel walls. Today, Kovatch Tree Service began clearing the trees along the channel at portions of Jack’s Run. This work is expected to take a week. The Street Department has completed more paving projects. To date, the crews have placed 2,100 tons of asphalt. Also, with the County, our Street Department crew was paving the Five Star Trail and the County is paying for the material. I think the County is hoping to have the whole trail paved some day.”

Mayor Eisaman, “It’s actually the Five Star Trail paying for the materials, not the County, per se?”

Councilman Peterinelli, “Well, Five Star. That’s it.”

**Councilman Tridico**, “Dancer’s Closet will soon have a new home on East Pittsburgh Street ‘caddy corner’ from Rite Aid. Gloria Compton, owner of the Dancer’s Closet, purchased the old B & B Alternator building, and she is planning on making improvements to the façade along with signage and lighting. Earlier this evening a public session was held to share the designs of the replacement of Alley No. 1 and the Laird Street bridges. Both of these bridges are slated to be replaced in the summer of 2010. That concludes my report.”

**Councilman Finrock**, “On the revenue side of the ledger, one of my concerns going into this year was with the economy being the way that it is that we would take a hit on revenues. Currently we are at 66% of the budget and that is exactly where we were as of July 2007. So revenues have held up their end of the bargain. On the expense side of the ledger again, given the cost of fuel which bleeds into the cost of everything else that you buy and sell, we thought we would have some problem on the expense side. We are at 54% of the budget and this is actually 1% lower than last year and that’s a tremendous achievement given this economy. Congratulations to the supervisors and to their leadership of Sue and Mary. I think they did a good job so we’re in very good shape as far as the budget is concerned. Thank you.”

**\*\*\*MAYOR’S REPORT\*\*\***

**Code, Fire and Police Reports.** Mayor Eisaman reviewed the Code, Fire and Police reports. Copies of these reports may be obtained at the respective offices or the City Administration Office.

**\*\*\*INTRODUCTION OF BILLS\*\*\***

**Bill No. 7 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF GREENSBURG AMENDING SECTION 54-10, ENTITLED ‘DISABILITY RETIREMENT’, OF CHAPTER 54, ENTITLED ‘PENSIONS’ OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF GREENSBURG, ORDINANCE NO. 1646.** Ms. Trout, “The purpose of Bill No. 7 is to adjust the percentage from 60% to 50% of the Police Pension Plan participants’ monthly average salary for police officers who incur a total and permanent disability due to injuries or mental incapacities which did not occur in the line of duty. This is in conjunction with a recent judge’s order that came down.”

**\*\*\*COUNCIL APPROVAL\*\*\***

- a. **Hiring of Seasonal Recreation Department Employees.** Ms. Trout, “Council approval is for the hiring of the following employees at the Kirk S. Nevin Arena: Michele Cribbs as the Public Session Supervisor, at \$8 per hour; and at \$7.15 per hour, Christine Watson and Leah Fontana as cashiers; August Sander, Steven Solochier and Greg Smith as skate guards; and Mallory Earle and Matt Thomas as skate rental employees.”  
Councilman Johnson **MOVED** to approve the hiring of the Seasonal Recreation Department employees, and Councilman Peterinelli **SECONDED**. No discussion. **All voted unanimously to approve.**
- b. **Hiring of Parking Garage Custodian/Maintenance Employee.** Ms. Trout, “Joseph Garlowich is recommended to be hired in the position effective August 12, 2008 at the rate of \$9 per hour. I need to explain that Council did hire somebody at the last meeting, but he declined the position.”  
Councilman Tridico **MOVED** to approve the hiring, and Councilman Finrock **SECONDED**. No discussion. **All voted unanimously to approve the hiring.**
- c. **Agreement between the City of Greensburg and Ehrlich/Rentokil for the Robert A. Bell Parking Garage.** Ms. Trout, “Council approval accepts the renewed agreement without a price increase for pigeon control Hot Foot Repellent treatment services for the period of August 1, 2008 through July 31, 2010 at the rate of \$155 per quarter.”  
Councilman Peterinelli **MOVED** to approve the agreement, and Councilman Johnson **SECONDED**. No discussion. **All voted unanimously to approve.**

- d. Natural Gas Agreement between the City of Greensburg and Hess Corporation.** Ms. Trout, “Council approval is for a 1-year agreement @ \$1.06 per decatherm, the measurement they utilize for gas, representing transportation costs from the Nymex trading point to the Dominion Peoples city gate. The City reserves the right to convert to a fixed commodity price if rates drop at any time during the life of the contract.”  
Mayor Eisaman, “How does that compare?”  
Ms. Perez, “It is an increase of about \$0.10 per decatherm.”  
Mayor Eisaman, “Which means a 10% increase?”  
Ms. Perez, “This is just the transportation; not the actual usage of the gas.”  
Mayor Eisaman, “But it was \$1.06? So prior to this it was \$0.96?”  
Ms. Perez, “Yes, it was \$0.966; a little less. Over the past contracts that we’ve had it has been as high as \$1.10, so it has fluctuated. This is not the highest that it’s been.”  
Councilman Finrock **MOVED** to approve the agreement, and Councilman Tridico **SECONDED**. No further discussion. **Mayor Eisaman abstained, and all others voted unanimously to approve.**
- e. Tap Relinquishment Agreement between The Hempfield Township Municipal Authority (THTMA) and the City of Greensburg.** Ms. Trout, “Council approval relinquishes a tap we had purchased from THTMA in 2002 in conjunction with building Shuster Field specifically by the parking lot, I believe.”  
Councilman Tridico, “When does it take effect?”  
Ms. Trout, “As soon as it’s approved we have to send the notification to THTMA.”  
Councilman Tridico, “We won’t have to pay monthly?”  
Mayor Eisaman, “Probably up to the approval date.”  
Ms. Trout, “We now pay quarterly, and we want to eliminate those bills.”  
Councilman Tridico **MOVED** to approve the relinquishment agreement, and Councilman Finrock **SECONDED**. No further discussion. **All voted unanimously to approve the relinquishment agreement.**
- f. Janitorial Services Agreement between the City of Greensburg and ServiceMaster by Stiffey.** Ms. Trout, “Council approval accepts the option to renew the agreement with ServiceMaster by Stiffey for an additional year effective September 10, 2008 until September 10, 2009 at the same price of \$32,520 and under the same terms as currently in place. This is exercising our option which was something we had in the agreement.”  
Mayor Eisaman, “Administration feels comfortable with that pricing in comparison to what other .....”  
Ms. Perez, “Yes, we had another company do a walk-through and give us a ‘ball park’ figure, which was almost nearly double this.”  
Councilman Peterinelli **MOVED** to approve the agreement, and Councilman Johnson **SECONDED**. No further discussion. **Mayor Eisaman abstained, and all others voted unanimously to approve the agreement.**
- g. Assignment of Lease from Federal Signal to Banc of America Public Capital Corp. (BAPCC).** Ms. Trout, “Council approval reassigns the lease for the Elgin street sweeper. All terms remain the same as previously approved except the payee has changed.”  
Councilman Finrock **MOVED** to approve the assignment of the lease, and Councilman Tridico **SECONDED**. No discussion. **All voted unanimously to approve the assignment of the lease.**
- h. Agreement between the City of Greensburg and ‘municibid’.** Ms. Trout, “Council approval authorizes the City Administrator to enter into a 1-year on-line agreement effective until August 5, 2009, with *municibid.com* registering the City with the online municipal auction site to be utilized for the purchase and sale of municipal equipment. Based on population, the City’s annual subscription fee is assessed at \$200.”  
Mayor Eisaman, “That also means we can put additional equipment on at no additional cost other than the \$200 fee?”  
Ms. Trout, “That would be correct.”  
Mayor Eisaman, “Primarily we’re going to use it for the street sweeper to start off?”  
Ms. Trout, “We do have some other equipment we’d like to try.”

Councilman Peterinelli **MOVED** to approve the agreement, and Councilman Johnson **SECONDED**. No further discussion. **All voted unanimously to approve the agreement.**

**\*\*\*ADJOURNMENT\*\*\*** Councilman Johnson **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. **SECONDED:** Councilman Finrock. Unanimously all voted in favor to **adjourn.**

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

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**Susan M. Trout, City Administrator**

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