



**Luzerne County Council**  
January 06, 2020  
Luzerne County Court House  
Council Meeting Room  
200 N. River Street  
Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18711

**Minutes**  
**Reorganization Meeting**

**Call to Order**

The Luzerne County Council convened for a Reorganization Meeting in the Council Meeting Room of the Luzerne County Courthouse on January 06, 2020 at 6:41 PM. The meeting was called to order by Clerk of Council Sharon Lawrence.

Ms. Dennis stated that per Council Bylaws, at the Reorganization Meeting, the Clerk of Council acts as Chair until a new Chair is selected.

**Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence**

**Roll Call**

**Present**

Walter L. Griffith, Jr.  
Harry Haas  
Linda McClosky Houck  
Lee Ann McDermott  
Tim McGinley  
Chris Perry  
Kendra M. Radle  
Sheila Saidman, Esq.  
Robert Schnee  
Stephen J. Urban  
Matthew Vough

**Also Present**

C. David Pedri, Esq., County Manager  
Laura Dennis, Esq.  
Sharon Lawrence, Clerk of Council

## **1. Motions regarding nominations and selection of Chair of Council**

**Motion to Open Nominations:** Mr. Schnee

**Mr. Griffith called Point of Order and stated according to the Charter, there is supposed Public Comment prior to any official business being handled by Council. Ms. Dennis responded that it is a Reorganization Meeting and Public Comment will be available after the selection of Chair and Vice-Chair.**

**Second:** Mr. Vough

**Vote:**

All Ayes - Unanimous

**Nominations Open**

**Ms. Radle nominated:** Tim McGinley

**Second:** Ms. Saidman

**Mr. Stephen J. Urban nominated:** Linda McClosky Houck

**Second:** Mr. Griffith

**Motion to Close Nominations:** Ms. Saidman

**Second:** Mr. Haas

**Vote:**

All Ayes – Unanimous

**Nominations Closed**

**Roll Call Vote:**

Seven (7) for Tim McGinley by Ms. McDermott, Mr. McGinley, Mr. Perry, Ms. Radle, Ms. Saidman, Mr. Schnee and Mr. Vough

Four (4) for Linda McClosky Houck by Mr. Griffith, Mr. Haas, Ms. Houck, and Mr. Stephen J. Urban

**Mr. Tim McGinley is the Chair of Luzerne County Council (7-4)**

**Mr. McGinley took over the Meeting.**

## **2. Motions regarding nominations and selection of Vice-Chair of Council**

**Motion to Open Nominations:** Mr. Vough

**Second:** Ms. Saidman

**Vote:**

All Ayes - Unanimous

**Nomination Open**

**Ms. Saidman nominated:** Chris Perry

**Second:** Mr. Schnee

**Mr. Griffith nominated:** Linda McClosky Houck

**Second:** Mr. Stephen J. Urban

**Motion to Close Nominations:** Mr. Haas

**Second:** Mr. Vough

**Vote:**

All Ayes - Unanimous

**Nominations Closed**

**Roll Call Vote:**

Seven (7) for Chris Perry by Ms. McDermott, Mr. McGinley, Mr. Perry, Ms. Radle, Ms. Saidman, Mr. Schnee and Mr. Vough

Four (4) for Linda McClosky Houck by Mr. Griffith, Mr. Haas, Ms. Houck, and Mr. Stephen J. Urban

**Mr. Chris Perry is the Vice-Chair of Luzerne County Council (7-4)**

**Public Comment**

**James Goodwin (Trucksville)** stated he was the Chair of the first Home Rule Study Commission. He congratulated all new members of Council, and spoke about long time acquaintances Walter Griffith and Stephen J. Urban. Mr. Goodwin stated Mr. Griffith is correct and should be supported.

**Brian Shiner (Kingston)** spoke about Home Rule Charter and said it came about in 2012 because the people were tired of corruption. Eight years later, it is still corrupt. Mr. Shiner stated the Sunshine Law and the Charter were violated. There is to be public comment before any official action is taken. The selection of the Chair and Vice-Chair is an official action. Mr. Shiner commented on who was selected Chair and pointed out reasons why that person should not have been selected. He also commented on the new members and that nothing has changed.

**Sam Troy (Wilkes-Barre)** strongly urged Council to consider re-opening the Budget. He is disappointed with the budget and tax increase. Mr. Troy stated it is in the best interest of the citizens of the County for Council to go back and look to eliminate or reduce the tax increase. He asked if the Hotel Tax could be increased to cut in to the property tax increase. Ms. Dennis stated it would require State action and Mr. McGinley confirmed.

**Joe McCabe (Exeter)** asked where the money was coming from for the Courthouse window project. Mr. Pedri responded it was funds from the 2017 Energy Savings Borrowing.

**ADDITIONAL ITEM #1**

**Mr. Griffith would like to make a motion to introduce an ordinance to reopen the budget. Copies of the ordinance and attachments were distributed to Council and made available to the public.**

**Motion to introduce Ordinance to reopen and amend the Fiscal Year 2020 Budgets**

**by:** Mr. Griffith

**Second:** Mr. Stephen J. Urban

**Ms. Dennis stated that public comment is needed before the vote.**

**Mr. McGinley asked for public comment.**

**The following citizens spoke in favor of reopening the Fiscal Year 2020 Budgets:**

**Charles Olah (Edwardsville)**

**Brian Shiner (Kingston)**

**James Goodwin (Trucksville)**

**Sam Troy (Wilkes-Barre)**

**Matt Maso (Freeland)**

**Joe McCabe (Exeter)**

**Council members asked questions and discussed the ordinance and the attached budget amendments presented by Mr. Griffith.**

**Motion to Call the Question by: Mr. Haas**

**Second: Ms. Houck**

**Roll Call Vote:**

Five (5) Yes by Mr. Griffith, Mr. Haas, Ms. Houck, Ms. McDermott and Mr. Stephen J. Urban

Six (6) No by Mr. McGinley, Mr. Perry, Ms. Radle, Ms. Saidman, Mr. Schnee, and Mr. Vough

**Motion Failed (5-6)**

**Ordinance is not Introduced**

### **ADDITIONAL ITEM #2**

**Mr. Griffith would like to make a motion to introduce an ordinance placing a question on the April 28, 2020 Primary Ballot regarding a Solicitor for County Council.**

**Motion to introduce Ordinance placing a question on the April 28, 2020 Primary Ballot to amend Article VI Section 6:04 A of the Luzerne County Home Rule Charter by:**

**Mr. Griffith**

**Second: Mr. Stephen J. Urban**

**Mr. McGinley asked for public comment.**

**There was none.**

**Council members asked questions and discussed the ordinance presented by Mr. Griffith.**

**Motion to Call the Question by: Mr. Haas**

**Second: Ms. Houck**

**Roll Call Vote:**

Six (6) Yes by Mr. Griffith, Mr. Haas, Ms. Houck, Ms. McDermott, Ms. Radle and Mr. Stephen J. Urban

Five (5) No by Mr. McGinley, Mr. Perry, Ms. Saidman, Mr. Schnee, and Mr. Vough

**Motion Passed (6-5)**

**Ordinance is Introduced**

### **ADDITIONAL ITEM #3**

**Mr. Stephen J. Urban would like to make a motion to introduce an ordinance regarding the \$5.00 vehicle fee.**

**Motion to introduce Ordinance repealing Luzerne County Ordinance No. 2018-04 by:**

Mr. Stephen J. Urban

**Second:** Mr. Griffith

**Mr. McGinley asked for public comment.**

**There was none.**

**Council members asked questions and discussed the ordinance presented by Mr. Stephen J. Urban. Ordinance No. 2018-04 was also discussed. It was suggested the ordinance be tabled until PENNDOT can come in and speak about the matching funds program.**

**Motion to Table by:** Mr. Schnee

**Second:** Ms. Saidman

**Roll Call Vote:**

Seven (7) Yes by Ms. McDermott, Mr. McGinley, Mr. Perry, Ms. Radle, Ms. Saidman, Mr. Schnee and Mr. Vough

Four (4) No by Mr. Griffith, Mr. Haas, Ms. Houck and Mr. Stephen J. Urban

**Motion Passed (7-4)**

**Ordinance is Tabled**

**Additional Comments by:**

**Joe McCabe (Exeter)** commented on the state grant money (gasoline tax) and the Water Street Bridge.

**Tim McGinley** stated he was humbled to be selected as Chair for Luzerne County Council. Mr. McGinley congratulated Mr. Chris Perry as the Luzerne County Council Vice-Chair and is looking forward to working with Mr. Perry as a Republican counterpart. He stated Council has worked very well together regardless of Democrat, Republican or Independent and will continue to work in that manner. He asked Council to work together for the good of the County and all the citizens. Mr. McGinley is looking forward to 2020 and future accomplishments.

**Motion to adjourn:** Mr. Haas

**Second:** Ms. Houck

**Vote:**

Eleven (11) Ayes - Unanimous

**Meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sharon Lawrence  
Clerk of Council

\* Audio of this meeting can be found in its entirety on the County Council webpage <http://www.luzernecounty.org/county/luzerne-county-council> or by contacting the Office of the Clerk of Council at (570) 825-1634 or via email to [sharon.lawrence@luzernecounty.org](mailto:sharon.lawrence@luzernecounty.org)