

**DRAFT MINUTES
GENERAL COUNSEL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING JANUARY 10, 2019**

Present: Councilwoman and Chair Bartolotta, Councilman Daley, Councilwoman Kleckowski and Councilwoman Salafia. Staff: Deputy General Counsel Kori Wisneski and Director of Human Resources Justin Richardson

Public: Kisha Michael, Arts Coordinator

Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

Approval of Minutes

Councilwoman Kleckowski moved approval of the minutes from the October 11, 2018 regular meeting. The Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Salafia. The MOTION passed unanimously by those present and voting.

New Business:

A. Ordinance – Children’s arts program; fees (14-22.1)

Deputy General Counsel Wisneski briefly introduced the arts ordinance. Discussion ensued regarding the cost for children/families to attend the summer camps. The benchmark for free or reduced fees for camp used to be whether a family qualified for free or reduced lunch. This benchmark, however, is outdated now that most Middletown schools have free lunch. This presents a budgetary issue because some families who could afford the regular fee would qualify for free camp based on the current ordinance.

In light of this, Director Michael is proposing a change to the ordinance, which takes into consideration a new benchmark for free or reduced camp fees. Director Michael talked with Recreation and the BOE to determine how they come up with fees for camps. She explained that this update ordinance will still provide an avenue whereby those who cannot afford to attend camp for the standard price will still be able to attend. She came up with a new benchmark for determining who qualifies for free and reduced camp fees. The changes were made to sections 2A and 2B of the ordinance. Director Michael explained what each benchmark is and what the changes mean.

Councilwoman Salafia questions what the standard rates are. Director Michaels explained that it is \$300 for a 5 week camp for the first child, then \$180 for the second child, and then \$120

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for each additional child. Councilwoman Bartolotta asked if this is something that will be easily processed without embarrassing anyone. Director Michael assured her that the forms will be discrete and no one should be embarrassed. Councilwoman Kleckowski had a question about the Medicaid add on and wondered whether social security disability fell within one of the qualifying benchmarks. Director Michaels said she would make a mental note to look it up but believes it falls under one of the benchmarks. She was asked to update at the next Common Council meeting. Councilwoman Kleckowski asked another question regarding the program being self-sustaining. Director Michael explained that she will be up for budget review and the answer to that question will be fleshed out after the budget review.

Councilman Salafia made a MOTION to approve the ordinance. The Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Kleckowski. The Motion passed unanimously by those present and voting.

Other

- A. Discussion of 2019 GCC dates** – Councilwoman Bartolotta stated that there was a request from one of the commission members to change the date. After a brief discussion regarding dates and availability, the commission decided to keep the dates the same on the second Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Councilman Daley made a motion to accept the dates. The Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Salafia and was approved unanimously by those present and voting.
- B. Vacancy Report** – No discussion.
- C. Legal Bills** – None to report.

There was a brief discussion regarding an email from 2014 about whether an ordinance could be drafted about prohibiting the City from business with companies that owe taxes and/or are suing the City. Attorney Wisneski stated that her office never received a request to draft the ordinance, but nonetheless, such an ordinance is not advisable. She explained that the City already has the ability to deny building permits if an entity has overdue taxes. She also explained that our purchasing ordinances also allow bids to the lowest responsible bidder that is in the best interest of the City. This language is expansive enough to allow the City to review its experience with the company and decide whether engaging that company in the future makes sense in light of that experience. Finally, Attorney Wisneski explained that there are a lot of reasons that an entity might sue the City and to prohibit that entity from receiving business when they are legitimately challenging a tax assessment or zoning ruling would be unfair. The Commission agreed that such an ordinance is not advisable.

Adjournment:

MOTION to Adjourn by Councilwoman Salafia. The Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Kleckowski. Motion was unanimous and meeting ended at 7:06 p.m.